



Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin

UNITY IN VARIETY



**A strategy for joined-up public
affairs and communications by and
within Trinity College Dublin, the
University of Dublin**

“The essence of the beautiful is unity in variety” - Felix Mendelssohn



I would like to thank all those who contributed to this strategy. More than 40 people from across the college gave up their time to meet members of the Public Affairs and Communications team. Others contributed through the various committees to which this strategy was presented - Executive Officer Group, Board, the Library and Information Policy Committee, Corporate Services Division SMT Committee, School Managers and Heads of School. Particular thanks goes to Sally-Anne Fisher and the other members of the Public Affairs and Communications team for their contributions.

Tom Molloy, May 15, 2020

PREFACE



The spread of the coronavirus in the early months of 2020 was a tragedy for hundreds of thousands of people, upended all our lives, and caused our lives to change in a way that was entirely unexpected.

The unprecedented closure of the Trinity campus together with the rapid and largely successfully shift to teaching online acted as a catalyst for many trends in communications and public affairs.

The coronavirus and the economic turbulence that will result from the crisis will accelerate the change in how ideas circulate and how reputations are created. The threat to the mainstream media, which is examined here, will require

thinking in the months and years ahead as media organisations disappear or mutate into something quite different.

An interesting example of this is the move towards good rather than perfect communication. Almost every television broadcast now includes footage produced by phone cameras. It's a bit rickety, but it works. We can all make potential news footage now. Having good ideas will matter more than ever. This should be good news for a university such as Trinity which is Ireland's leading research centre – a veritable hotbed of ideas.

Here in Trinity, we aim to produce a new public affairs and communications strategy every three years to reflect the fact that this is an area that is continuously changing. There are plenty of challenges in the public affairs and communications fields but this strategy offers solutions which can be adopted by everybody within the college community giving us all the opportunity to play our part in public life both here in Ireland and further afield.

In essence, this strategy will ensure we pay more attention to how we say things. It will allow us to build the right platforms to deliver those messages so that the authentic voice of Trinity's many experts will be heard in the media, in the political system, and by our global partners.

As the coronavirus raged, our voice was undoubtedly heard. A united Trinity played an important role in helping to fight the pandemic. Once solutions are found to the health crisis, Trinity will have another role to play in helping to rebuild society and the economy in the wake of the crisis. This strategy does not offer solutions to society's challenges but it does offer suggestions about how we can help to ensure that our discoveries and ideas are heard in a busy world.

May 2020

Dr Patrick Prendergast
Provost

INTRODUCTION

Few organisations in Ireland have as many stakeholders or as many messages as Trinity College Dublin, the University of Dublin. This creates countless opportunities but, taken together, the thicket of messages is also a threat when it comes to clearly communicating what we do and what we need. An endless stream of messages can make it difficult for our many friends, supporters and stakeholders to understand what we seek to achieve or what we require. A coherent framework can provide that authorship for diverse communications objectives with diverse audiences and stakeholders.

This strategy charts a course of action to simplify our messages by (a) reducing the number of messages (b) explaining ourselves more clearly and (c) pulling together the various areas of college which amplify our messages.

The strategy builds on previous strategies which created a focused public affairs and communications team. Those strategies tended to look at the nuts and bolts of the public affairs and communications unit and its functions. In this way, they were quite intentionally inward-looking strategies. This new strategy is focused on creating the necessary tools to harness the many other parts of the university which communicate, or could communicate, with the outside world. The benefits of collaboration, which include cohesion, new connections and new opportunities far outweigh the challenges and complexities associated with working together in a common pursuit.

This strategy aims to develop ways in which we can simplify our messages, unify our communications people and enable an engagement-led approach to implementation via the Public Affairs and Communications team. It is proposed to rebrand the unit to 'Trinity Communications' to create a strong centralizing resource in communications for the university.

Simplify our message

Feedback from many quarters suggests we lack a coherent Trinity story. Staff and students have expressed the wish for a narrative about Trinity that captures the main elements and purpose of a 21st century research intensive university such as ours. A story such as this must be concise and will necessarily omit many important elements of Trinity's complex identity. It is not intended that a short narrative replace all other stories but it is hoped that it will help everybody who wants to communicate on behalf of Trinity by providing a framework and point of reference as inspiration for those who want a narrative in an accurate and consistent manner. Many of our 18,000 students, 3,000 staff, and over 100,000 alumni long to be ambassadors for Trinity.

Ultimately, we want to persuade the public that Trinity transforms lives and society as a whole. Our message is that Trinity benefits those who study here but also those who will never come here whether they live in Ireland or whether they live further afield.

This is an eternal message but it is perhaps particularly relevant in times such as ours when the idea of third level education and the role of independent research is being challenged from many quarters. After the European elections in May 2019, an RTE exit poll revealed that 76% of Irish voters agreed with the statement that they are "tired of listening to so-called experts or elites who do not speak for me". Similar opinions can be found elsewhere. We must communicate in a manner which is inclusive, generous and which explains our mission to the public.

The first part of this strategy discusses what we want to say about ourselves and why. It suggests a process that would enable agreement around messages and a method to share those messages across the college community and beyond.

Huge progress has been made on improving Trinity's brand identity over the past five years. In the past 12 months, the launch of the philanthropic Campaign with the theme "Inspiring Generations" has given Trinity a focus for further refinement of our identity. The campaign followed a detailed examination of Trinity's brand and has resulted in some notable successes. This communications strategy outlines the next steps that need to be taken to augment the evolving brand essence and identity. Those steps include the core messaging discussed above as well as issues such as 'tone of voice'¹ and a distinctive visual style so that websites, publications and social media are distinctive and reflect Trinity's values.

Alignment of communications units

Previous public affairs and communications plans have tended to see communications as a centralised activity. While communications should often be centralised, the reality is that several areas within Trinity have made significant investments in communications and do it well. Sport has a dedicated communications function. Some research institutes such as the Trinity Long Room Hub or Global Brain Health Institute (GBHI) together with the SFI centres based in Trinity and largely funded from Trinity resources also have communications functions. The build-up of decentralised communications is the result of the strategic ambitions of individual units; however communication between areas is poor. Other areas, such as medicine have no specialised communications or marketing functions.

The second part of this strategy puts forward a list of alignment initiatives to unify communications and public affairs efforts which take place in many parts of the college for many different reasons and with many different projected outcomes. Each project can work as a standalone project but, taken together, it is envisaged that the projects will make a significant difference to how well the college communicates and how unified the internal communications network is.

Engagement-led implementation

The third part of the strategy sets out a number of marked evolutions in where and how we communicate and proposes an evolved and agile team structure designed to support the strategic plan together with a number of KPIs against which the success of the strategy can be judged every year for the next three years.

The appointment of a Deputy Director in early 2020 will follow a recommendation from the mid-term review of the last communications plan. That post holder's main task will be to ensure that this plan is implemented in full despite the need to respond rapidly to the challenges of day-to-day issues.

The development of this strategy was informed by:

- The conclusions of the previously mentioned interim report into the previous Public Affairs and Communications (PAC) strategy which expires in 2020. That report concluded that the next strategy should clearly identify the purpose of Trinity's public affairs and communications efforts and work more closely with the rest of college to achieve that aim.

¹'Tone of voice' is a technical communications and marketing term. It is how the character of your organisation comes through in your words, both written and spoken. It's not about what you say, but rather the way in which you say it, and the impression it makes on everyone in your audience who reads or hears you. See www.ucl.ac.uk/cam/brand/guidelines/tone-of-voice for an example of such a document in a university context.

- The changing external environment within the media and political landscapes
- The [university's 2020-2025 strategy](#) with its overarching theme of 'Community and Connection'
- Key dependent university strategies²
- Consultations with key stakeholders, both internal and external such as Executive Officers' Group, college officers, heads of school, Library and Information Policy Committee, Corporate Services Division senior management team, school administrative managers, Irish Universities Association etc.
- PAC strategy workshop with all of the PAC team and an external facilitator
- Reviewing case studies of communications and public affairs best practice in other HE institutions.

² Global Relations Strategy III (www.tcd.ie/strategy/documents/global-relations-strategy-and-implementation-plan.pdf), A Living Research Excellence Strategy (www.tcd.ie/strategy/documents/tcd-research-excellence-strategy.pdf), the Inspiring Generations campaign (<https://www.tcd.ie/campaign/about>), Grand Canal Innovation District (www.tcd.ie/innovation-district/Report-of-GCID-Advisory-Group.pdf) etc.

3

STRATEGIC PILLARS

Community and Connection are the overarching themes of the university strategy 2020-25. The PAC strategy aims to underpin that document and its vision - 'We are a globally connected community of learning, research and scholarship, inspiring generations to meet the challenges of the future' - in a focused manner.

Key objectives

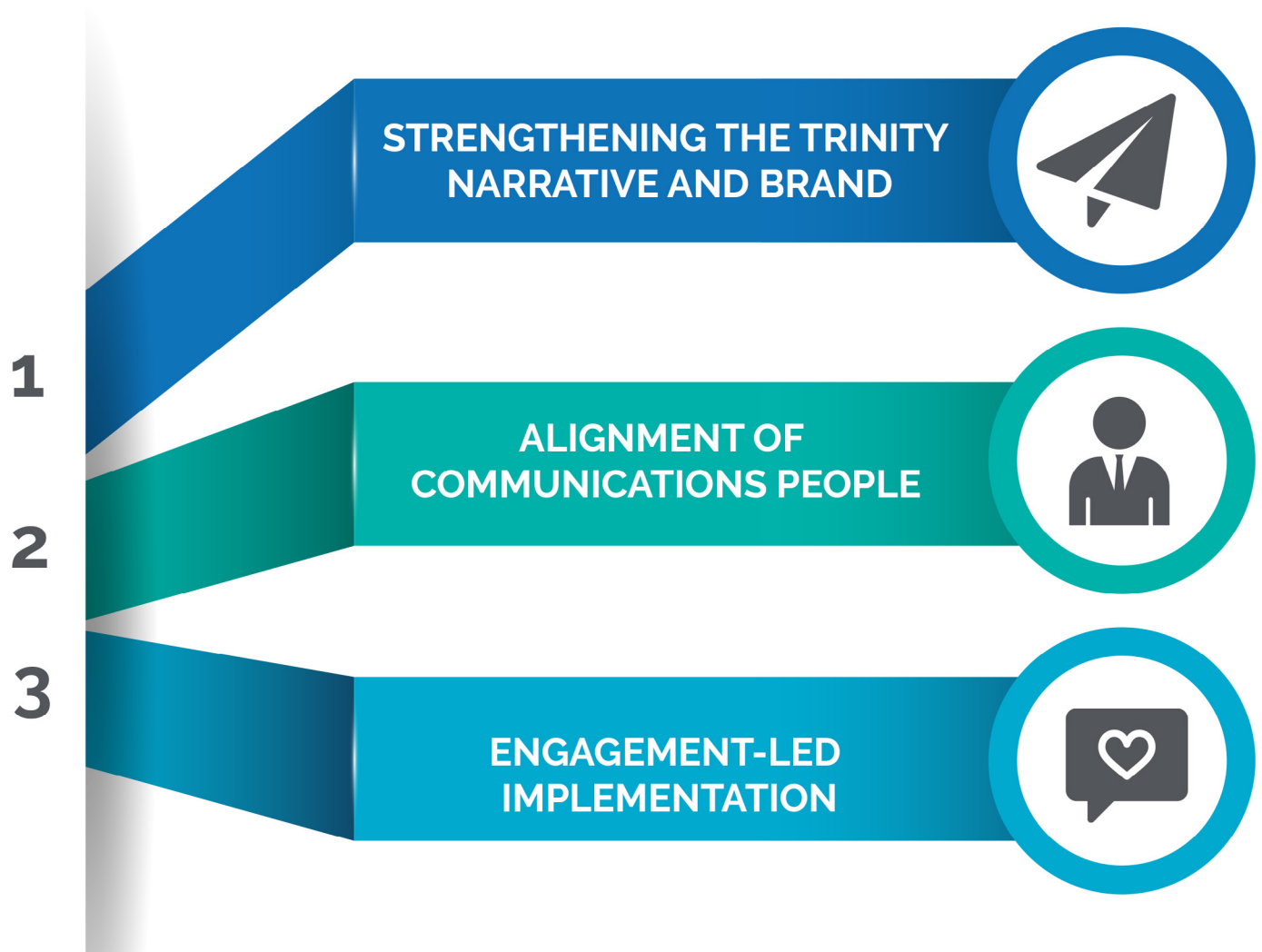
To support the university in its 2020-25 strategy and in realising its vision, in addition to responding to the mid-term review's recommendation to identify a small number of priority objectives, PAC's key objective are to:

- Broaden the public's understanding of a research university – for instance, those activities that show Trinity as a source of creativity, innovation, entrepreneurship, and ground-breaking research as well as teaching and learning.
- Align the communications and messaging from across the university, in a way that they enrich and support the overarching Trinity story.
- Engage and unify diverse parts of Trinity through, and with, communication.
- Educate and influence other departments on the themes and emerging trends in communication, media and engagement strategies.

Key themes inherent in these objectives include

- Broader understanding
- Deeper connections
- Strategic alignment
- Influence

In addressing these themes,
our **PAC strategy** is founded on
three key pillars as follows:



PILLAR

1

STRENGTHENING THE TRINITY NARRATIVE AND BRAND



1.1

A coherent framework

1.2

Prioritised campaigns

1.3

Branding and identity

1.4

Digital first

1.5

Working together

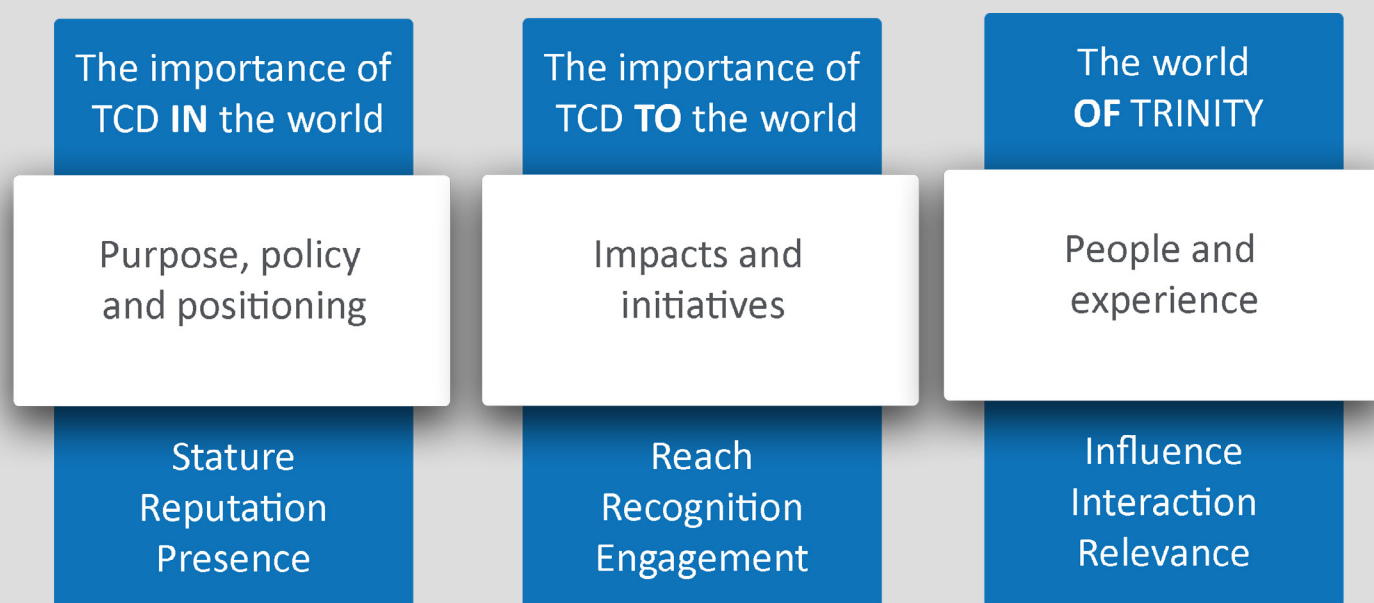
1.1 A coherent framework

The 1990s version of communication was about consistency, repeating the same things over and over until they land. Modern communications is about coherence; we can and must say different things about Trinity and reveal different aspects of its character and story. However, like any book, the chapters must have a form of authorship and coherence that makes sense.

The framework we have devised shapes the myriad of stories that Trinity must tell into three over-arching communications objectives.

The framework is intended to provide a unifying influence that shapes and informs how every member of the college community can think about communication. It provides a lens through which stories can be told, so that each one contributes to the overarching coherent Trinity story.

A COHERENT FRAMEWORK



The importance of Trinity **in the world** is about its positioning and purpose, its status and reputation. The stories and themes that are anchored here affirm Trinity's place in the world, and express Trinity's point of view on matters of education, teaching and learning, on research, policy-making, on industry and workforce and so on.

The importance of Trinity **to the world** is about the impacts and initiatives that influence on a global scale. The stories and features that derive from this pillar elevate the achievements and contributions of research outcomes and their real-world impacts. They highlight new initiatives such as E3 and the Cancer Institute and their intended contribution to the world and include stories with an engagement plan that connects university impacts with the communities of practice and relevant publics.

The **world of Trinity** is first and foremost about Trinity people (staff, students, alumni) and their networks. Many of these stories may emanate from within the walls of Trinity but extend far beyond.

The world of Trinity is about the physical place, the culturally diverse campus, the teaching and learning environment, the spirit of entrepreneurship and innovation that exists, and the expanding nature of the world of Trinity as the campus makes further international connections.

While much of this might seem abstract, a framework to aid decision making around communications will be of great value to Trinity. Every enduring story has, regardless of plot, characters and setting, an underlying theme. This framework is intended to inspire consideration of a story's underlying theme, rather than its leading headline. The number of topics which this university can engage on is almost limitless, but the public's attention span is limited in a busy world with plenty of other distractions. It is time to accept that we cannot be all things to all people in the public's mind. We must decide what we wish to communicate about and be ruthless in execution. The value of a framework lies in its ability to provide both a deeper context, and act as a practical tool so that every story contributes to a cohesive over-arching Trinity narrative. Coherence, not consistency is the objective.

To further unite communications and support the 2020-2025 university strategy, this strategy sets out a focus on what campaigns we will prioritise,

1.2 Prioritised Campaigns

Research-intensive universities face a particular challenge; the public in most countries broadly supports the funding that underpins universities' educational mission but has remained largely indifferent to universities' research mission. For a university such as Trinity, it is clearly essential to both the university's funding model and *raison d'être* that the research mission be supported by a sustained public affairs and communications campaign over several years. To push this message successfully requires us to remain silent on many secondary issues and possibly even primary issues. The related issue of appropriate funding for teaching might, for example, be best left to the Irish Universities Association and other universities which have vested interest in this area but are not perhaps as engaged with the research agenda. By agreeing to a relatively small number of messages, we know when we are using our resources effectively.

To this end, this strategy identifies two key campaigns for its three-year duration which are contained in the college's new strategy for 2020-2025. The first campaign is around the importance of university research for society – what is often called **research impact**. The second campaign is around **sustainability** – and the many ways in which a university such as ours can help society survive the environmental challenges which we all face, contribute to their solutions, and to describe the efforts of the college community to ensure Trinity is a good corporate citizen.

What we say is no more important than how we say it - academic language has its place in communicating with peers, but not in communicating with the public.

1.3 Branding and identity

Now is also a good time to explore and extend our brand identity by reconstituting the identity management committee to review and renew the brand as the university pushes further into digital and video platforms. By extending the terms of reference (see appendix III), the committee will oversee many aspects of this strategy's implementation and ensure that the brand is both vital and revitalised.

All institutions and companies have a brand identity by accident, design or default. Universities are usually interested in branding issues for two reasons: to protect their reputation and, sometimes, to alter their reputations. The first part of a brand identity revolves around issues such as crests, colours, fonts and signage. These issues have been largely resolved thanks to the work of the identity management

committee. A second task now awaits. This task is to agree what we say, how we speak of ourselves and how we depict ourselves. In Boston, Harvard speaks almost entirely about leaders. The university's brand identity hinges on describing students, alumni and business figures as leaders. Elsewhere in the same city, MIT has chosen a different brand identity. MIT positions itself as an institution with a unique and pragmatic approach to doing things. It stands for a way of thinking rather than an institution. These are only two examples from thousands but they underline the reality that the best known universities in the world do pay attention to how they present themselves.

It makes sense for Trinity to think hard about what brand identity best reflects the university. Such an exercise usually starts with an external brand audit which asks key stakeholders such as government, funding agencies, donors and regulators about how they perceive the university. This can then be charted against other institutions and form the basis for measuring our brand – something that ultimately shapes, and is shaped, by the rankings published by the various ranking agencies.

Of course, a university such as ours is not an island. Trinity is literally the centrepiece of Dublin city and a flagship for the country as a whole. As we work to understand our place as a 21st century research-intensive university, we should also work with the city and government agencies. Trinity needs Ireland's reputational strengths and Ireland needs Trinity's strengths. As we make the case for an excellence strategy for the Irish higher education sector, we need to ensure that we continue to be seen as a national champion of which the public and the Government can be proud.

Alongside this reputational audit, we need to agree on the appropriate tone of voice for the university. Our tone of voice is an expression of our values and way of thinking. Like an individual, what we say is dictated by our principles, experiences and aspirations but how we say it is informed by our personality. As an example, here is a sentence chosen completely at random from the College Calendar aimed at students who become pregnant. "The policy on supports for student parents, student carers and students who experience pregnancy lays down guidelines for good practice in the College's provision for, and commitment to, those students who have parental or caring responsibilities or experience pregnancy during their time as students in College."³ This sentence could be replaced by a shorter sentence along the lines of: "If you become pregnant, there are clear guidelines in place to help you."

Before we begin the web transformation project, we will develop a tone of voice document that covers communication by the university internally and externally. This document, which will be available online will help to make communication clearer for both students and staff. It will be used during training linked to the new website and general training courses in communications organised by PAC. Nobody wants to tell people what to say or how to say it but such documents are essential when creating documents with hundreds of authors such as the website where more than 400 people are registered to input text and information. Like the style guide for a newspaper or academic journal, there must be internal consistency when it comes to spelling, titles, tone etc on websites and some other publications or the entire experience is jarring and confusing.

A tone of voice document cannot be created on a whim; it needs serious deliberation among stakeholders and professional guidance to create it. Development of this document will be managed by the Identity Management Committee and require close collaboration with many parts of college.

As most people think visually, it is necessary to develop a similar document for the photos and videos commissioned by the university. This brief will then be given to photographers employed by the university and form part of the tendering process when photographers are picked. Photography is an important element in how we tell our story and the university as a whole spends a considerable amount of money documenting its achievements. We need to pay more attention to how we portray ourselves.

³College Calendar 2019-20 P30

Actions

PAC will collaborate with key internal stakeholders to produce a detailed tone of voice document by the end of 2020. This will be available to the College community and feed directly into the following:

#	Action	Timeline	Owner	Owner reviews the action with this person at <date>
1.3.1	Carry out a reputational audit of the university	Q4 2020 Q4 2022	K S-B (Katie Strickland-Byrne)	TM
1.3.2	Develop a brand identity document (Version 2)	Q4 2020	Tom Molloy (TM)	Provost
1.3.3	Consult, develop and publish a 'tone of voice' document	Q2 2021	SAF (Sally-Anne Fisher)	TM & IMC
1.3.4	Develop guidelines for photographers and incorporate into tender documents	Q1 2021	RH (Rob Holton)	TM
1.3.5	Training for anybody who writes for the website	Q3 2020	KS-B	TM
1.3.6	General training for those interested in communicating clearly	Q3 2021	Deputy director	TM
1.3.7	Specific training for staff in Human Resources and Academic Registry	Q3 2020	Deputy director	A.Quinn & L.Coady
1.3.8	Develop tools to help ensure tone is consistent	Q4 2021	SAF	TM

1.4 Digital First

This strategy is based on two underlying assumptions or trends that will accelerate as the decade proceeds:

- The first assumption is that newspapers and broadcasters are being replaced by digital platforms which transforms how messages are delivered and shaped.
- The second assumption is that the printed word is now less important than the digital word.

There are plenty of examples of this but one example can stand in for many. More people now listen to the Economist newspaper every week than read it.

The gradual decline of the traditional media, a trend that is now likely to accelerate in the wake of the 2020 COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic, is a particular loss for serious organisations in the public sphere such as political parties and universities. The past two decades have been marked by growing distrust of

institutions such as the mainstream political parties, churches, universities, big business, the gardaí and the other pillars of what was once the Establishment.

A mass media owned and staffed by university graduates was largely sympathetic towards the mission of universities. Without this support and the space to report our research, it becomes increasingly difficult to make our case.

The disappearance of the mass media could reduce the visibility of universities in society and the respect accorded to those universities. In a sense, this entire strategy is an attempt to mitigate this decline by working more closely with the media while also developing the skills needed to explain our research and actions using new platforms. Some of those platforms such as the website and social media will involve self-publishing while other platforms will continue to belong to the other organisations which shape opinion and disseminate knowledge in the 21st century.

This trend will be exaggerated by the move towards open publishing. While the development makes sense and is the stated policy of most research intensive universities, it will make it harder for the public to assess the value of research. For all their many faults, the large academic publishers have helped keep research in the public eye. There probably will never be another journal such as *Nature* that acts as an independent arbiter of quality in the public eye. Media relations, once the key activity of any public relations department, is now just one function among many and one which struggles to engage younger members of society⁴. The challenge for all communications strategies in all organisations is to ensure that the organisation does not ignore the still important power of mass media in today's world while preparing for the new era of hundreds of smaller digital publishers and the emergence of new media brands such as journal.ie which is Ireland's second biggest online news provider after RTE, also Reddit and other such platforms which are the main way that young people get information.

The reason for the collapse of the traditional media is well known - the rise of digital media. The internet, the mobile phone and social media have largely replaced the printed word. The findings of the international student barometer suggest year after year that the website is the single biggest factor for international students who chose to study in Trinity.

We know from our own experience that the digital word is more important than the written word in all areas of our lives except, perhaps, recreational reading but as an institution we do not act this way. Schools, faculties and administrative units are content to keep producing printed brochures, booklets and leaflets while failing to update their websites or investing in the necessary images to make their digital offering stand out.

The previous public affairs communications strategy asked for funding to underpin a **web transformation project**. That funding was secured and the project is underway. Thanks to the intense collaboration with IT Services, the university should have a new content management system by Q4 2021 and a new-look website halfway through the lifetime of this strategic plan. This is written into the college's main strategic plan. That technical development and considerable investment will make the website more secure from cyber attacks and offer every part of the university a new opportunity to improve their internet offering.

It is absolutely vital that this opportunity is not squandered. Heads of school and of administrative units will be offered help to rethink their micro sites. Individual web sites need to be prioritised: the task of updating local sites with fresh content is often ignored – something that should no longer happen in the digital age.

⁴The Press Council of Ireland's latest annual report notes that newspaper circulation in Ireland has halved in the past ten years.

To fully exploit this opportunity, the university community needs to shift from a “print first” mentality to a “digital first” mentality. Documents such as the undergraduate prospectus, the college calendar and strategic plans such as this one should be conceived and executed as digital projects and then tailored for paper if and when necessary.

This applies to everything from press releases to the forms needed to change courses or pay for products.

This sounds simple but it is far from easy. It requires a culture change and new skills from the ability to write for readers on a screen to designing visual aids or an understanding of search engine optimisation. Creating a document on Word and handing it to the printer is no longer enough if Trinity is to communicate successfully in a busy environment with as many distractions as we all face in the early 21st century.

1.5 Working together

Trinity, in common with most other universities, has a diverse group of people communicating on their own behalf (academic freedom), and on the university’s behalf. In truth, it is impossible to calculate how many people include communications among their duties. Edinburgh University, for example, calculated that up to 580 people were involved in communication of some sort⁵. The number is likely to be somewhat smaller in Trinity but whatever the number, it is vital that we use all this expertise and enthusiasm to execute this strategy.

To do this, we need to audit and list those responsible for communications and understand what they would like to know. We must also train colleagues and provide toolkits to help them do their job. It is the job of the public affairs and communications unit to devise and host the sort of events and collateral that will help our broad school of communicators to explain the university to itself and the outside world. PAC’s social media unit has led the way in this respect, holding weekly meetings open to anybody who uses social media to communicate on behalf of the college. We will now extend this sort of collaboration to the rest of our activities.

This strategy envisages much closer cooperation between the university’s marketing unit within global relations, the business school’s marketing unit, Trinity Development and Alumni, Science Gallery Dublin, the SFI centres, St James’s and Tallaght Hospitals and the undocumented number of colleagues who communicate at some level on behalf of their unit, hub, institute or discipline.

In summary, pillar one of the strategy presents a practical plan of how we will align communications throughout the university so that the clear and compelling stories we tell are reaching the right people, connecting our message and people and then helping everybody to contribute to the overarching Trinity narrative.

⁵Presentation to LERU meeting of communication directors in November 2019

PILLAR **2**

ALIGNMENT OF COMMUNICATIONS PEOPLE



2.1

The evolving Trinity Story

2.2

Staff communication

2.3

Communications forum

2.4

Specialist supports

2.5

Website Transformation

2.6

Media relations

A number of the following initiatives have been devised in response to a stakeholder consultation process. In keeping with the outward perspective of this strategy, these initiatives and projects are practical ways of streamlining disparate communications objectives and perspectives that exist around the university and developing a more coherent approach to Trinity's public affairs and communications.

2.1 The evolving Trinity Story

A clear narrative helps us to differentiate ourselves by distinguishing us from what all the other institutions are saying about themselves. More importantly, it fosters a sense of common purpose and shared direction for all inside the institution by telling the story not only of where we've come from and how we're doing right now, but where we're going, why we're going there and how we'll get there.

Every country, institution or individual has a story that changes over time. Many members of the community have requested a simple description of Trinity's achievements to date and a brief description of the university's history to use as a basis for their own stories.

That story needs to be flexible enough to form the basis for the history contained in the College Calendar or the tours of the campus to the undergraduate student prospectus or a presentation to research partners or a government minister.

To be effective, the Trinity story needs to be relevant and specific. It must also be inclusive of input from many people to reflect our many stakeholders.

Rather than it living in a strategy document, our team intends to develop resources or 'toolkits' and provide an induction session with key departments to understand their communications priorities, explore their stories through the lens of the framework and identify underlying themes. Designed to both engage and align, this initiative will mark a change in how the university unites to contribute to the over-arching Trinity story with clear and compelling stories.

Actions

#	Action	Timeline	Owner	Owner reviews the action with this person at <date>
2.1.1	Collaborate with stakeholders to produce a story and data about Trinity's achievements and history to be presented to Board on 10 December 2020.	Q4 2020	TM (Tom Molloy)	College Secretary
2.1.2	Engage annually with communications people across key departments and areas of the university, with department-specific Trinity communications alignment sessions.	Once a year in Q4 2020 Q4 2021 Q4 2022	TM	Provost (as part of annual review)

2.1.3	<p>Create a resource to be available to the university community and feed directly into the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a new guidebook to Trinity authored by PAC - scripts for Authenticity Tours guides - the website will include a page similar to the Harvard Business School's <u>Institutional Memory</u> site - a slide deck to all staff and students which tells the Trinity story - a message map with key messaging (similar to Oregon State University interactive example which filters by key audiences). 	Q4 2022	SAF	
-------	--	---------	-----	--

2.2 Staff communication

Almost everybody is used to receiving information digitally these days. Intranets have clear benefits for their staff - centralised communications, increased engagement for staff, reduction of time spent searching for institutional information, increased social and community activity promotion for staff and a reduction in all-staff email communication.

At present HR, the COO, IT Services and PAC are working together to build the first college-wide intranet. This complex and demanding project will reduce email traffic, increase knowledge of the college and help to protect Trinity's sense of cohesion.

Intranets are also important because they increase transparency. Board papers, consultation documents, job advertisements should all be easily available.

While digital communication is the new normal, nothing beats face-to-face interaction.

Actions

#	Action	Timeline	Owner	Owner reviews the action with this person at <date>
2.2.1	Launch the first phase of Trinity's intranet in 2020	Q4 2020	HS (Harsha Sinha)	TM
2.2.2	Monitor a clear set of KPIs to measure intranet success ⁶	Q4 2020	HS	TM

⁶See Appendix II

2.3 Communications forum

A communications forum/network will be established with key communicators across Trinity and related bodies such as the SFI Centres, hubs and TDA to bring unity and joined-up thinking to Trinity's communications activity. This group will monitor communications in Trinity, establish protocols, identify key messages, maximise resource allocation and act as an early warning system.

Actions

#	Action	Timeline	Owner	Owner reviews the action with this person at <date>
2.3.1	Establish a communications forum	Q4 2020	TM	Provost
2.3.2	Extend the composition and terms of reference of the Identity Management Committee to include oversight of this strategy ⁷	Q2 2020	TM	Registrar as co-chair of the identity management committee

2.4 Specialist supports

Academic Registry (AR) is the front door for the university's 18,000 students while Human Resources (HR) performs much the same function for the 3,300 staff. Understandably, considering the complexity of the range of functions provided by AR and HR, they are issue-rich environments that struggle to be understood. This is not necessarily the fault of those working in these areas. Legislation and legal considerations sometimes make clear communication difficult. Some of the subject matter is simply complex for those of us who do not pay much attention to matters such as pensions. However, in the wake of countless misselling scandals, there has been significant progress in simplifying the language around financial products to ensure more people understand what they are doing when buying mortgages, pensions and other financial products. Irish companies are following suit with banks seeking the Campaign for Plain English's crystal mark for removing gobbledygook, jargon and legalese from their brochures. Naturally this sort of communication does not replace legislation which is necessarily complex but it does explain the legislation.

The reviewers from other universities who carried out a review of HR in 2019 expressed surprise that PAC did not offer regular and routine help to HR colleagues around communications. The current PAC team is too small to provide such detailed help but the employment of a specialist who was able to turn technical language into clear copy for both AR and HR would go some way to helping these two vital parts of the university to make themselves understood by email, letter or website.

This employee should be co-funded by AR and HR but sit in PAC to offer similar services, when required, to all parts of college. They could also help with populating the intranet and maintaining the main webpages of the university, AR and HR.

⁷See Appendix III

Action

#	Action	Timeline	Owner	Owner reviews the action with this person at <date>
2.4.1	Hire a specialist writer to produce clear writing. Examples of the sort of projects that would be undertaken include clear information on the website regarding admissions and other processes in line with what is written in the statutes.	Q3 2020	TM	Chief Operating Officer

2.5 Website transformation

The website is our single most important communication tool. It is essential for student recruitment and for explaining the university's research to a larger audience. Our website will undergo a significant revamp over the next three years to improve reliability, content and appearance. This will cost more than €1m and requires input from almost every area of the university.

While the overall look and feel of the website is the responsibility of Public Affairs and Communications, the technical aspects rest with IT Services and the content is the responsibility of individual schools, faculties and administrative units.

The university's first content management system will be installed in 2021 by the Web CMS Project Team as part of the digital transformation project. This presents the university with an ideal opportunity to redesign the website to improve the user experience and how we present ourselves to the world. Experience of similar projects elsewhere shows that there must be broad agreement on the primary purposes of the site and extensive training to help the hundreds of staff members who are tasked with keeping information and images fresh and up to date.

The detailed work on the user experience and appearance of the site will be carried out by the Web CMS Project Team as well as training but every staff member who is responsible for a unit will need to think deeply about how best to present their unit to the public and follow the new guidelines which are being drawn up by the web governance committee.

At present, there is little communication or support for those engaged in the task of updating the website within schools or units. It is fair to say that this is often a low priority for heads of school and other senior leaders. The highly complex nature of the old system made it all but impossible for most staff members to take ownership of their part of the website. Sometimes the departure of a staff member signals the de facto end of any new updates on the site for years. The new system will be much more user friendly and presents a good moment for leaders to reflect on who is best suited to become the unit's web author and to appoint a secondary web author to ensure continuity during annual leave or sick leave.

Public Affairs and Communications along with IT Services will host informal sessions during term time to discuss best practice, share data on what users want and what is, and is not, working. This will offer the opportunity and inspiration for staff to really improve their sites.

Outcomes

A much better website which is technically robust, easier to use, provides extensive data and looks better. This project involves considerable input from IT Services and is called out clearly in the workplan of

IT Services and is called out clearly in the workplan of IT Services as DT3 or the Web Transformation Project. The project is underway with a steering committee, project sponsor and agreed budget⁸. When the project is complete, the following will be achieved:

- Training for those who populate the website
- New guidelines on purpose and usage by Q4 2020
- Installation of a content management system by Q3 2020
- Web governance procedures agreed by Board by fourth quarter of 2020
- A simpler and more streamlined website that is focused on the end user by Q1 2021

A number of practical shared resources have been identified through stakeholder consultation and from the PAC team as being relatively straight-forward to undertake and impactful in their implementation. These resources align the university both in their development and in the single voice that it creates.

2.6 Media relations

The university's media relations team currently consists of the equivalent of three full-time staff. This is a relatively small number of people to proactively promote Trinity's research, innovation, good citizenship and other outputs and to deal reactively to media queries which come in every day of the week.

At present, the team works as a single unit dealing with research and day-to-day issues. The urgent often pushes out the important. A more rational alignment would be to separate the daily tasks from those responsible for explaining Trinity's research outputs to the world.

A more appropriate number of media relations officers would be six full-time equivalents. This would allow for two people to deal with day-to-day inquiries and to pitch Trinity academics to the national and international media (one post at present). They could also lend support to the Global Relations by working to place coverage in countries which are of strategic importance to recruitment of either staff or students. A further five media relations officers could specialise in the following areas: FEMS (this post already exists), Medicine and health sciences (half-time post at present), AHSS (half-time post at present), Business and innovation (no post at present).

This investment in telling our research story would increase staff members to the right level to find and explain many more stories from Trinity, to work with researchers to sharpen their stories and to co-ordinate the sort of ambitious research impact campaigns carried out by other research intensive universities. Campaigns such as UCL's #discoveredAtUCL which was co-ordinated by UCL's ten-man media relations team over six months have brought 100 research stories to the attention of hundreds of thousands of people in the UK and overseas. These campaigns are neither easy nor quick. UCL required outside help and a project manager but they show what sustained focus on research can do.

Actions

#	Action	Timeline	Owner	Owner reviews the action with this person at <date>
2.6.1	Divide the media relations team into issues and research teams	Q3 2020	TM	VP/CAO

⁸Like all capital projects, this project will be reviewed as the university considers the college's finances in the wake of COVID-19.

2.6.2	Double the size of the team by expanding capacity of AHSS and Health Sciences and adding a resource to tell our story around business and innovation	Q3 2021	TM	VP/CAO
2.6.3	Create a campaign to profile one hundred stories detailing societal impacts driven by research involving current Trinity academics, with voting from the public, newspaper profiles, videos and individual help for each academic to tell their story.	Q1 2021	TD (Thomas Deane)	Provost

In summary, Pillar Two of this strategy sets out six initiatives designed to practically align those charged with communications responsibilities through tools, supports and collaborative initiatives.

PILLAR

3

ENGAGEMENT-LED IMPLEMENTATION



3.1

Engagement media

3.2

Engaging content

3.3

Public affairs

3.4

Prioritised campaigns

3.5

Local community
and civic engagement

3.6

An agile structure

3.7

Measuring Success

Engagement-led implementation requires an approach that puts the audience, the stakeholder, or the recipient of the intended message at the centre. To do so, demands an understanding of their needs, aspirations and context. We have a number of audiences and we know a lot about them, but need to do a better job of connecting with them on their terms, not ours. That means being where they are, being in the media they read, and creating experiences that interest our audiences. The obvious starting point is to poll our stakeholders to understand how they would like us to communicate. The next step is to track engagement to ensure that we are operating the best platforms.

3.1 Engagement

Engagement media

We know most prospective students access course information via the website, yet we continue to create course information for a printed prospectus before uploading it to the Trinity website. The same is true of many other publications such as *Trinity Today* which has more readers than any other publication produced by the university.

This makes no sense. Not only does this mean the university has not optimised the content for its primary delivery channel, but we have also failed to make use of the benefits of digital. For example, digital would allow us to run multi-variant testing to optimise our copy before publishing it in print and track its performance using data analytics.

A digital first strategy isn't just about optimising our deliverables for digital. It is also about changing our mindset. An important added bonus is that a digital first policy is more sustainable and reduces paper usage and benefits the environment. The communications team, and the university as a whole, has in the past been responsible for producing large amounts of paper-based communications. This strategy should lead to a reduction in the amount of paper used to communicate with the public but this is not the primary motivation. The primary motivation is to provide information on the platform most popular with our stakeholders.

Actions

#	Action	Timeline	Owner	Owner reviews the action with this person at <date>
3.1.1	Have the majority of all college publications in digital first format. Agree by Q3 2020 what success looks like here.	Q3 2022	TM	
3.1.2	Together with other stakeholders, rethink both the editorial content and distribution mechanisms for our flagship publication, <i>Trinity Today</i>	Q2 2020	TM/JT	Provost

Social media

Social media has challenged existing communications methods and that challenge increases rapidly. Potential students from every corner of the world now cite a university's social media output as an important consideration when picking a place to study, and increasingly research publications are promoted by targeted social media. At present, there are far too many dormant social media accounts which reflect badly on the university. The first step is to audit the many accounts operated by university personnel and secondly to work with heads of school and units to merge accounts which are more than three years old and have fewer than 1,000 followers to obtain critical mass. Naturally, the unit has final say over what happens to an account but it makes sense to try to reduce the number of dormant or semi-dormant accounts.

Social media can bring students, potential students and the public closer to Trinity but it also poses a danger. False information can spread quickly and social media has the potential to damage the university's reputation. It also has a role to play for good and bad in any major crisis.

Comparative Social Media Channel Followers - April 2020						
	Twitter	Facebook followers*	Facebook fans*	Instagram	LinkedIn followers*	LinkedIn alumni*
Trinity	64.3k	83.5k	80.3k	37.7k	143k	94.9k
UCD	49.9k	82.4k	79.9k	27.9k	194.5k	137.5k
UCC	51.5k	69.7k	67.8k	16.4k	81.7k	102.4k
NUIG	46.6k	75.8k	74.1k	15.1k	82.3k	61.9k
DCU	35.2k	62.7k	61.9k	14.9k	84k	62.3k
UL	26.1k	62.4k	60.6k	22.6k	78.1k	64.2k
RCSI	22k	54.5k	53.5k	9.9k	31.4k	13.8k
Maynooth	12.4k	16.5k	15.8k	7.8k	34.7k	29.3k
TUDublin	20.5k	43.4k	42k	8.4k	135K	2.1k
Edinburgh	116k	234k	227k	70.3k	220k	148k
Leiden	15.2k	78.5k	76.6k	32.7k	215k	127.7k
LMU	22.7k	88.8k	85.8k	28.3k	105.9k	95.6k

Leading Irish university

Leading European University

Facebook followers* When someone follows a Page, it means they may receive updates about the Page in their News Feed.

Facebook fans* People who like a Page will automatically follow it. They can still choose to unfollow it, which means they'll stop receiving updates about the Page.

While Trinity has the most popular Twitter, Facebook and Instagram accounts within the Irish university sector (see table above), we have some way to go to ensure that engagement is as good as it could be even if our research suggests that engagement is higher than any other Irish university. We also have some way to go to share information to ensure that the many accounts operated by schools and units reflect important information, major events or real time instructions in case of a major emergency. In keeping with the spirit of this strategy, the PAC team hosts a weekly meeting on social media issues which can be, and is, attended by anybody involved in social media.

Social media has grown up in a haphazard manner around college. Most accounts have been created by enthusiasts and there is limited access to the account. Some heads of school, for example, are unable to access the accounts that represent their school. This is not acceptable.

It is urgent that we undertake a comprehensive audit of Trinity's social media accounts. The audit should ensure that an adequate number of people have access to the accounts and that those people are linked to a centralised electronic messaging forum such as slack which will allow colleagues to source and share material and stories easily. It should also agree ownership of certain key accounts such as the LinkedIn account which straddles the careers service and HR as well as PAC.

Social media clearly offers more scope to work with students than other communications platforms to create authentic cooperation. In the course of this strategy, PAC will work with the Students' Union and other student societies to share content through shared platforms. This might enable students to showcase graduate research, different clubs and societies or their favourite spots around the campus.

Actions

#	Action	Timeline	Owner	Owner reviews the action with this person at <date>
3.1.3	PAC will create guidelines for social media and a social media style guide and have these guidelines approved by LIPC	Q2 2020	SC (Sharon Campbell)	
3.1.4	PAC will create a mechanism where staff and students can submit social media post-worthy content on the main channels	Q1 2021	SC	
3.1.5	PAC to complete audit of social media accounts operated by university and contact owners of accounts with poor engagement with suggestions to merge or otherwise improve content and impact	Q3 2021	SC	

3.2 Engaging content

Podcasts

More than 40pc of Irish adults listened to a podcast in the previous seven days, according to research in 2019. This is good news for Trinity which is home to complicated ideas. Podcasts are ideally suited to exploring the sort of complex ideas that are the bread and butter of academic life. Podcasts also help to create a greater bond between the university and its audiences. This is because the act of listening to a podcast is much more deliberate and intimate than watching a video, for example. The audience will often create an image in their own mind of who they are listening to, with an often intense and sustained amount of attention required to follow along. Podcasts are particularly useful in the arts and humanities. Perhaps for this reason, the London School of Economics excels at producing and promoting podcasts.

At present, many areas of college produce occasional podcasts which are then branded differently and promoted using different technical formats. PAC began to explore the potential of podcasts in early 2019 with weekly podcast interviews with researchers and other members of the university community. Those podcasts are clearly branded, available on Spotify, Soundcloud and iTunes and are promoted on college social media. Our analytics shows that up to 40pc of listeners for some podcasts come from North America and the UK.

The next step is to capture some of the great lectures and talks that take place in the university every week and promote these talks as well using the main platforms mentioned above and banded together as Trinity College Dublin Talks podcasts. This central repository will create the critical mass of podcasts that is popular with users.

To do this properly will require a small investment in audio equipment to record talks and manpower to edit recordings, ensure quality is adequate and promote the recordings. The process of making a podcast is relatively easy. PAC will offer seminars in production techniques but recording quality can vary for many reasons. It is important to ensure the quality of the recording is above a certain standard. To do this, all podcast recordings produced under the Trinity College Dublin Talks umbrella should be vetted by PAC.

Actions

#	Action	Timeline	Owner	Owner reviews the action with this person at <date>
3.2.1	Create a podcast specialism within PAC to help anybody in college who wants to record a podcast and promote that podcast	Q3 2020	K S-B	TM
3.2.2	Promote podcasts to alumni and other audiences through the alumni ezine, <i>Trinity Today</i> and other forums. Make podcasts to accompany this type of publication (whether digital or print) in future.	Q4 2020	K S-B	TM

Video

Video is undisputedly an increasingly important channel to communicate with our wide variety of audiences.

The facts speak for themselves⁹:

- The average user spends 88% more time on a website with video (Forbes, 2018).
- Studies show that 54% of consumers want to see more video content from a brand or business they support (HubSpot, 2018).
- Users are seeing videos increasingly on every platform. Whether it's on blogs, Instagram ads or simply YouTube, they are expecting more video content. Videos are a consumer's favourite type of content to see from a brand on social media (Animoto, 2018).

⁹<https://ie.oberlo.com/blog/video-marketing-statistics>

Viewers are 95% more likely to remember a call to action after watching a video, compared to 10% when reading it in text format (Forbes, 2017). Not only is a video a great tool for learning, but it's also very easy to consume. With the busy lifestyle that many young adults are becoming accustomed to, they might not have the time, or patience, to read long product descriptions or dig deep into written content. Videos provide them with an easy and comfortable way to digest and retain information.

We need to harness this appetite for video and increase our video production. To do this we need to both lower and raise our expectations. The time when video was always made professionally is over. Of course, some video will continue to be made by production companies or internally to very high standards but most of the video made by the university or schools should be made by Trinity staff quickly and cheaply. Too often, perfect risks becoming the enemy of good. We can learn from prime ministers who regularly talk to millions using clips of video recorded on their phones. While video is increasingly important as an alternative to email when communicating, it does not follow that all of this video needs to be preserved indefinitely. There are too unregulated, poor quality videos on YouTube posted several years ago and with single figure views. Such video is dated and uninspiring and needs to be removed.

This is not to say video is free. Videos require subtitles to be effective which in turn requires manpower. Video must be shot in a manner that allows those with disabilities to understand what is being said. Expensive sound or lighting equipment is sometimes necessary in the background and some basic training in video production makes a big difference. To save money, the equipment should be acquired centrally and lent to schools and units as needed. To improve knowledge, PAC and other areas of college engaged in video production such as IT Services should share expertise in seminars for those who are interested in harnessing this powerful medium.

Actions

#	Action	Timeline	Owner	Owner reviews the action with this person at <date>
3.2.3	Double the number of minutes of home grown video watched annually on our social media channels showcasing research and university initiatives from Year 1 – 500, Year 2 – 1,000, Year 3 – 2,000	Q4 2020 Q4 2021 Q4 2022	Deputy director	TM

Digital Screens

The digital screens around the campus are one of the simplest and most effective ways of communicating about what is happening and displaying the university's values to students, staff and visitors. Great strides have been made to introduce a uniform appearance but there is much to be done. This strategy will see the development of a new deck of slides, the introduction of those slides across all screens and technical changes which will give the ability of the central communications team to introduce slides to screens across the university when important messages need to be spread quickly. The installation of screens has tended to be a matter for individual schools and units. A study in conjunction with Estates and Facilities will examine strategic locations for new screens in prominent places such as Front Arch.

Actions

#	Action	Timeline	Owner	Owner reviews the action with this person at <date>
3.2.4	Create a new slide deck to enhance the attractiveness of the news on the digital screens	Q3 2020	OS (Orla Sweeney)	TM
3.2.5	Conduct review of strategic locations for new screens with E&F. Install technological devices to enable PAC to add slides to all screens around the college to encourage centralised messaging.	Q4 2021	TM	IMC

3.3 Public affairs

The competition for state resources is fierce, especially with respect to primary and secondary education. Moreover, the higher education is not widely viewed as experiencing a funding crisis or a performance crisis despite the decline of all Irish universities in the rankings over the past decade. Government policy is implacably opposed to fee increases and in 2020, politicians will not even discuss increases in government funding. The COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic and ensuing recession will place enormous pressure on Exchequer funding during the lifetime of this strategy.

These difficulties are not unique to Trinity or Ireland. The incoming head of the European Universities Association (EUA) warned in November 2019 that relations between governments and universities have been “diminishing” for the past two decades with politicians viewing universities as being in perpetual opposition to governments. The pandemic has challenged the financial plans of universities everywhere.

In this climate of mistrust and complacency, it is essential that we make our case for the system as a whole, and Trinity in particular, both clearly and effectively.

While the Department of Education and Skills (DES) and the Department of Business, Enterprise, and Innovation (DBEI) are a major focus of public affairs, other departments are also important to Trinity’s future. Projects such as TTEC, the E3 Research Institute, the Old Library redevelopment and the Trinity St James’s Cancer Institute all require extensive support from several government departments other than DES as well as TDs and Dublin City Council.

Now that a dedicated resource, a public affairs advisor is part of the team (as of October 2019) it is possible to have a more systematic and proactive approach in targeting support at all levels in the political system and across all parties.

While it is important to build relationships with the political system, those relationships cannot be one way. We must make the case for what we do and explain this to the political system and the voter. Trinity’s presidency of the Irish Universities Association in 2020 offers an ideal opportunity to explain the role of research in a modern university and the role that excellence strategies have played in improving university systems elsewhere.

The importance of universities to a knowledge economy can be made face-to-face with those in the political system but it should also be made to the public. Two areas detailed below, research impact and corporate responsibility, both have a role to play in making our case to the public.

The ever increasing importance of the European Commission in the research arena as well as initiatives such as CHARM-EU means that the university's public affairs arm needs to pay more attention than ever to what is happening in Brussels. Working with the European Commission on an ad hoc basis and with Irish MEPs will be a much greater priority in the years ahead.

A democratic system involves debate. Trinity will continue to engage with policy makers interested in reform of the higher education area. While we often support reform, not every aspect of proposed legislation such as the bill to reform the Higher Education Authority is welcome. Where we have honest disagreement, we will continue to make our views known to government and take part in the debate.

While most public affairs activity is opportunistic and dependent on individual projects and the outcome of elections, there are some things that can be done to improve the university's linkages with government.

Actions

#	Action	Timeline	Owner	Owner reviews the action with this person at <date>
3.3.1	Maximize State resources for Trinity	On-going	TM	Provost
3.3.2	Utilize the collective knowledge of EU, government and local policy experts to create new opportunities for Trinity	On-going	CO (Chris Oonan)	TM
3.3.3	Support university initiatives by anticipating opportunities and challenges in the university's external, political environment	On-going	CO	TM
3.3.4	Share timely updates with public officials, including a monthly email newsletter from the university sharing important university announcements	Q4 2020	CO	TM
3.3.5	Facilitate linkages between decision makers and Trinity policy experts. We can do a better job of sharing expertise with local, state and federal decision makers	On-going	CO	TM
3.3.6	Focus outreach efforts on increasing campus visits by public officials. An example might be to organise a Christmas event for legislators who are alumni, hold a 'meet the minister event' for the next Minister for Education and arrange a minimum of five individual campus tours a year for legislators.	On-going	CO	TM

3.4 Prioritised campaigns

Universities are vital for the well-being of a modern society. The solutions to COVID-19 (coronavirus) and other great challenges such as climate change are likely to be found with the help of research from universities. The public instinctively understands these links even if many people remain sceptical about some research fields. We must make the case for investment in universities by talking about the relevance of research and the importance of the necessary investment to underpin that research and teaching.

There are two three-year intensive campaigns proposed in this strategy: research impact and sustainability.

Research impact

Explaining the benefits of research conducted by universities is important if we are to retain the support of the public and government. To do this, we need a two pronged approach which encompasses public affairs and communications. In the public affairs arena, we need to ensure that policy makers understand that universities are the primary mechanism for research in most advanced countries. This will require a concerted campaign to highlight that importance of individual researchers and collaboration with universities elsewhere. This message must be directed at legislators, the civil service and the public. The tools include individual meetings, public debate and collaborations with other research organisations.

Aligned with this national public affairs campaign, we will make a concerted effort to bring the results of Trinity's research to researchers and the public overseas. This includes both engagement with the European Commission and overseas researchers. As a member of LERU, Trinity has obligations to play a role in shaping policy at a national and European level. Action is here is good for both Trinity's reputation overseas and for research eco system which underpins all university research. As recommended in the mid-term review into PAC, the approach to research communications will be reviewed in the context of the Research Strategy and the standing up for research campaign.

Actions

#	Action	Timeline	Owner	Owner reviews the action with this person at <date>
3.4.1	Work with the DoR after Trinity winning the tender for the European Commission's Researchers Night programme.	Q3 2020	TM	DoR
3.4.2	Ensure a Trinity presence at major events which offer the opportunity to tell the public about the impact of Trinity's research. Examples include Young Scientist exhibition and National Ploughing Championships	Q3 2021	Deputy director	DoR
3.4.3	Create a "Pop Up Trinity" stand to show what we do in a manner that would work in shopping centres, railway stations and the like	Q1 2021	SC	DoR

3.4.4	Pick three researchers every year from each of the three faculties and use a media and social media blitz to improve their profiles	2021-23	CO'M (Catherine O'Mahony)	DoR
3.4.5	Produce a research booklet highlighting Trinity's achievements to be circulated to an international audience	Q1 2020 Q1 2021 Q1 2022	TM	Provost
3.4.6	Locate and target opportunities to showcase Trinity research at festivals of science overseas and various fora.	Q2 2020	TD	TM

Sustainability

The second prioritised campaign is sustainability. Here, Trinity has two stories to tell. The first is our own efforts to ensure that the university does as little as possible to harm the environment. This is an important story and we are good at it but we could do more to explain what we do. We are closely watched and our students and staff want will correctly doubt our values if we do not do more to reduce our impact on the planet. The dilemma of how best to reduce environmental damage within a complex institution that has a population equal to Kilkenny City is no small question. It matters and we should talk about it, especially as so many students will soon enter workplaces and bring best practice in this area with them. Even simple measures such as the debate about planting wildflowers outside Front Gate have sparked intense debate nationally – sparking front page newspaper stories, editorials and almost 10,000 votes in an online poll.

The second story around sustainability is limited to organisations such as Trinity which carry out research at the highest levels. By talking about research into issues surrounding sustainability, new teaching methods and far-reaching initiatives such as E3, we can show the public how and why universities are relevant to their lives. Sustainability is the issue of the age. Many, many organisations are talking about sustainability. Some from genuine concern and some from more cynical motives. This is a crowded space but no organisation in Ireland is better placed than Trinity to offer solutions to the problems facing the public here and mankind. It would be wrong from a communications view point to ignore this opportunity to explain the issues, the solutions where they exist and our research to fund new solutions.

Actions

#	Action	Timeline	Owner	Owner reviews the action with this person at <date>
3.4.7	Continue to work with the Sustainability Advisor and Registrar to communicate about Trinity's efforts	On-going	K S-B	Registrar/TM
3.4.8	Devise a three-year plan to talk about what Trinity does in this area	Q3 2020	K S-B	Registrar/TM
3.4.9	Track the public perception of Trinity in the sustainability area	On-going	TM	

3.4.10	Add all research around sustainability, and sustainability education that is ongoing across the university, to the sustainability website	Q2 2020	K S-B	
3.4.11	Devise and execute a three-year social media campaign around this issue	Q2 2020	K S-B	
3.4.12	Extend the successful voting campaign for staff and students using the Onestepcloser platform to more areas	On-going	K S-B	

3.5 Local community and civic engagement

Trinity is engaged in hundreds of projects which benefit society in tangible ways. The university's civic engagement activities include student and staff volunteering, engaged research, community based learning, and public engagement.

The Vincent de Paul Society is the largest student society on campus but students and staff are involved in projects ranging from building beehives to homework clubs for children living close to the campus. Trinity also has a long tradition of close and formal cooperation with organisations such as the St Andrew's Resource Centre. The Campaign also includes an ambitious promise to work with alumni to donate voluntary help in many different fields.

The motivation for these projects is altruistic and this often means that we do not seek credit for our actions. That's a shame because the public would undoubtedly be better disposed towards the university if it understood the full extent of our engagement with Dublin and the rest of the country.

There will sometimes be tensions so it makes sense to remind the local community about the benefits as well as the occasional drawback of coexisting with a university.

To do this, PAC will create a project to work with the many other volunteer and university-led initiatives that exist in college to help foster good relations and support projects such as the Grand Canal Innovation District.

Actions

Building on the work of, and liaising with, the Civic Engagement Officer, the Engagement Advisory Group and the Community Liaison Officer, PAC will list and understand and celebrate the various community efforts carried out by members of the university and alumni.

#	Action	Timeline	Owner	Owner reviews the action with this person at <date>
3.5.1	Review a list of all civic engagement projects with the civic engagement officer to identify potential opportunities	Q3 2020	Deputy director	Registrar
3.5.2	Work with local community liaison officer to extend Trinity's footprint in GCID area	Q3 2020	Deputy director	
3.5.3	Create media opportunities	Q3 2020	CO'M	

3.6 An agile structure

An agile team structure is necessary to support this strategic plan. Communications and public affairs are necessarily reactive processes. It is easy to be blown off course as the daily agenda changes. The urgent supplants the important. To correct this tendency, it is proposed to appoint a Deputy Director who will be responsible for ensuring this strategy is implemented in full.

New hires & budget section to be developed and put in table format once agreed and costed.

3.7 Measuring success

A short list of the projects to be completed and KPIs to measure improvements in our public affairs and communications engagement will be drawn up to be used in conjunction with the list of actions below.

CONCLUSION

Many organisations and institutions seek to present a unified voice to the outside world by presenting a limited and inflexible version of themselves. Universities could not do this even if they wanted to. We are arenas for debate, inquiry and reinvention. We work best when we challenge internally and externally, devise and test a hypothesis or question orthodoxies. None of these activities are conducive to a single institutional voice but collectively they are the authentic voice of a research-intensive university such as ours. This strategy revels in this diversity rather than seeking to suppress it. By helping to give a voice to every corner of college, it seeks to amplify Trinity's varied contributions to society.

This strategy's underlying assumption is that universities have an important role to play in a modern society. The work carried out by our researchers and the role of universities in education, innovation and entrepreneurship play an important part in shaping society's response to the world's complex challenges. To play our role, we must be heard in the right places and by the right people. Good communications can amplify that contribution. We must also communicate more with ourselves and use the potential of modern internal communications tools.

Sometimes, the right place to be heard is an Oireachtas Committee. Another time, it might be a popular radio show, a tabloid newspaper or a new social media platform. Often, the right exposure involves several platforms in several countries. The single most important role of Trinity's communications unit is to work with individuals to explain their research or showcase their expertise in the right places.

Of course, there are also practical considerations. Funding agencies increasingly demand that researchers show the impact of their research. Governments and the electorate tend to support institutions when they believe that these institutions perform well and add value. But the chief reason to communicate is the one given in the university's current strategic plan to "courageously advance the cause of a pluralistic, just and sustainable society." The purpose of Trinity's communications unit is to advance that cause by highlighting the contribution of individuals and the institution.

Trinity's communications unit has other important functions; to speak to the media on behalf of the university and help explain the university's interests to the political system. It also seeks to ensure the coherence of large and disparate communications tools such as the website by expanding the university's brand identity to include new areas such as tone and narrative. The extensive consultation which underpins the strategy revealed a strong desire for a set of tools that could be tailored and deployed when explaining the university to the outside world as well as fostering collegiality.

A commitment to fairness, respect, equality, diversity and inclusion are all important aspects of life within Trinity and these values should be apparent in both internal and external communications. The language used in our communications should be respectful of diversity and difference and the key communications tools such as the website and social media should depict Trinity as an open community where everybody can find a welcome. Everybody should be able to see themselves in the Trinity story. Both the words we use and the images we choose play an important role here. It is also important to ensure that people with a disability can access information about their university easily and in line with the appropriate guidelines and policies relating to disability. We will ensure that Public sector Duty is followed in our communications: <https://www.ihrec.ie/our-work/public-sector-duty/>.

One of the running themes throughout this strategy is that the words we use to describe ourselves matter every bit as much as logos and images. Some form of structure for how we communicate is important but this cannot be a straitjacket. It must be a scaffold that helps people in a hurry and works in harmony

with all the other communication we do externally and internally. This strategy has not shied away from the desire for such aids and lays out a roadmap to create those tools.

Those communications tools will now be created according to a detailed timetable following consultation with many parts of college. This will be done under the direction and supervision of the Identity Management Committee whose new terms of reference are set out in an appendix to this document.

The purpose of this strategy is to ensure that people living in Ireland and overseas believe that Trinity is a modern, vibrant institution that is open to all and makes a significant contribution to the national and international good. To a degree, this can be measured. The University has undertaken two surveys by the polling company Behaviour & Attitudes to assess public perceptions of Trinity. Those surveys revealed significant increases in the number of respondents who rate Trinity as “modern”, “innovative” and a decrease in the number of respondents with negative perceptions such as “snobby”. At the end of the period covered by the strategy, it is proposed to conduct another survey to measure changes in public perceptions.

The next couple of years will be difficult thanks to the lingering effects of the coronavirus pandemic and a global recession. As a result, it will be a time when Trinity’s expertise and knowledge will be even more valuable than usual. Governments and the public want to know what experts think. This strategy presents a plan to ensure that our voice is heard. That we are a good citizen in a difficult world.

To recap, this strategy is founded on three key pillars as follows:

Pillar 1	Pillar 2	Pillar 3
Strengthening the Trinity narrative and brand 1.1 A coherent framework 1.2 Prioritised campaigns 1.3 Branding and identity 1.4 Digital first 1.5 Working together	Alignment of communications people 2.1 The evolving Trinity Story 2.2 Staff communication 2.3 Communications forum 2.4 Specialist supports 2.5 Website transformation 2.6 Media relations	Engagement-led implementation 3.1 Engagement media 3.2 Engaging content 3.3 Public affairs 3.4 Prioritised campaigns 3.5 Local community and civic engagement 3.6 An agile structure 3.7 Measuring success

Appendix I – Compendium of actions

#	Action	Timeline	Owner	Owner reviews the action with this person at <date>
1.3.1	Carry out a reputational audit of the university	Q4 2020	K S-B (Katie Strickland-Byrne)	TM
1.3.2	Develop a brand identity document (Version 2)	Q4 2020	Tom Molloy (TM)	Provost
1.3.3	Consult, develop and publish a ‘tone of voice’ document	Q2 2021	SAF (Sally-Anne Fisher)	TM & IMC
1.3.4	Develop guidelines for photographers and incorporate into tender documents	Q1 2021	RH (Rob Holton)	TM
1.3.5	Training for anybody who writes for the website	Q3 2020	KS-B	TM
1.3.6	General training for those interested in communicating clearly	Q3 2021	Deputy director	TM
1.3.7	Specific training for staff in Human Resources and Academic Registry	Q3 2020	Deputy director	A.Quinn & L.Coady
1.3.8	Develop tools to help ensure tone is consistent	Q4 2021	SAF	TM
2.1.1	Collaborate with stakeholders to produce a story and data about Trinity’s achievements and history to be presented to Board by the end of 2020.	Q4 2020	TM (Tom Molloy)	College Secretary
2.1.2	Engage annually with communications people across key departments and areas of the university, with department-specific Trinity communications alignment sessions.	Once a year in Q4 2020 Q4 2021 Q4 2022	TM	Provost (as part of annual review)

2.1.3	<p>Create a resource to be available to the university community and feed directly into the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a new guidebook to Trinity authored by PAC - scripts for Authenticity Tours guides - the website will include a page similar to the Harvard Business School's <u>Institutional Memory</u> site - a slide deck to all staff and students which tells the Trinity story - a message map with key messaging (similar to Oregon State University interactive example which filters by key audiences). 	Q4 2022	SAF	
2.2.1	Launch the first phase of Trinity's intranet in 2020	Q4 2020	HS (Harsha Sinha)	TM
2.2.2	Monitor a clear set of KPIs to measure intranet success	Q4 2020	HS	
2.3.1	Establish a communications forum	Q3 2020	TM	Provost
2.3.2	Extend the composition and terms of reference of the Identity Management Committee to include oversight of this strategy	Q2 2020	TM	Registrar or another college official to co-chair of the Identity Management Committee
2.4.1	Hire a specialist writer to produce clear writing. Examples of the sort of projects that would be undertaken include clear information on the website regarding admissions and other processes in line with what is written in the statutes.	Q3 2020	TM	COO
2.6.1	Divide the media relations team into issues and research teams	Q3 2020	TM	VP/CAO
2.6.2	Double the size of the (media) team by expanding capacity of AHSS and Health Sciences and adding a resource to tell our story around business and innovation	Q3 2021	TM	VP/CAO
2.6.3	Create a campaign to profile one hundred stories detailing societal impacts driven by research involving current Trinity academics, with voting from the public, newspaper profiles, videos and individual help for each academic to tell their story	Q1 2021	TD (Thomas Deane)	Provost

3.1.1	Have the majority of all college publications in digital first format. Agree by Q3 2020 what success looks like here.	Q3 2022	TM	
3.1.2	Together with other stakeholders, rethink both the editorial content and distribution mechanisms for our flagship publication, <i>Trinity Today</i>	Q2 2020	TM/JT	Provost
3.1.3	PAC will create guidelines for social media and a social media style guide and have these guidelines approved by LIPC	Q2 2020	SC (Sharon Campbell)	
3.1.4	PAC will create a mechanism where staff and students can submit social media post-worthy content on the main channels	Q1 2021	SC	
3.1.5	PAC to complete audit of social media accounts operated by university and contact owners of accounts with poor engagement with suggestions to merge or otherwise improve content and impact	Q3 2021	SC	
3.2.1	Create a podcast specialism within PAC to help anybody in college who wants to record a podcast and promote that podcast	Q3 2020	K S-B	TM
3.2.2	Promote podcasts to alumni and other audiences through the alumni ezine, <i>Trinity Today</i> and other forums. Make podcasts to accompany this type of publication (whether digital or print) in future.	Q4 2020	K S-B	
3.2.3	Double the number of minutes of home grown video watched annually on our social media channels showcasing research and university initiatives from Year 1 – 500, Year 2 – 1,000, Year 3 – 2,000	On-going Q4 2020 Q4 2021 Q4 2020	Deputy director	TM
3.2.4	Create a new slide deck to enhance the attractiveness of the news on the digital screens	Q3 2020	OS (Orla Sweeney)	TM
3.2.5	Conduct review of strategic locations for new screens with E&F. Install technological devices to enable PAC to add slides to all screens around the college to encourage centralised messaging	Q4 2021	TM	IMC
3.3.1	Maximize State resources for Trinity	On-going	TM	Provost
3.3.2	Utilize the collective knowledge of EU, government and local policy experts to create new opportunities for Trinity	On-going	CO (Chris Oonan)	TM

3.3.3	Support university initiatives by anticipating opportunities and challenges in the university's external, political environment	On-going	CO	TM
3.3.4	Share timely updates with public officials, including a monthly email newsletter from the university sharing important university announcements	Q4 2020	CO	TM
3.3.5	Facilitate linkages between decision makers and Trinity policy experts. We can do a better job of sharing expertise with local, state and federal decision makers	On-going	CO	TM
3.3.6	Focus outreach efforts on increasing campus visits by public officials. An example might be to organise Christmas event for legislators who are alumni, hold a 'meet the minister event' for the next Minister for Education and arrange a minimum of five individual campus tours a year for legislators.	On-going	CO	TM
3.4.1	Work with the DoR after Trinity winning the tender for the European Commission's Researcher's Night programme.	Q3 2020	TM	DoR
3.4.2	Ensure a Trinity presence at major events which offer the opportunity to tell the public about the impact of Trinity's research. Examples include Young Scientist exhibition and National Ploughing Championships	Q3 2021	Deputy director	DoR
3.4.3	Create a "Pop Up Trinity" stand to show what we do in a manner that would work in shopping centres, railway stations and the like	Q1 2021	SC	DoR
3.4.4	Pick three researchers every year from each of the three faculties and use a media and social media blitz to improve their profiles	2021-23	CO'M (Catherine O'Mahony)	DoR
3.4.5	Produce a research booklet highlighting Trinity's achievements to be circulated to an international audience	Q1 2020 Q1 2021 Q1 2022	TM	Provost
3.4.6	Locate and target opportunities to showcase Trinity research at festivals of science overseas and various fora.	Q2 2020	TD	TM
3.4.7	Continue to work with the Sustainability Advisor and Registrar to communicate about Trinity's efforts	On-going	K S-B	

3.4.8	Devise a three-year plan to talk about what Trinity does in this area	Q3 2020	K S-B	Registrar/TM
3.4.9	Track the public perception of Trinity in the sustainability area	On-going	TM	
3.4.10	Add all research around sustainability, and sustainability education that is ongoing across the university to the sustainability website	Q2 2020	K S-B	
3.4.11	Devise and execute a three-year social media campaign around this issue	Q2 2020	K S-B	
3.4.12	Extend the successful voting campaign for staff and students using the Onestepcloser platform	On-going	K S-B	
3.5.1	Review a list of all civic engagement projects with the civic engagement officer to identify potential opportunities	Q3 2020	Deputy director	Registrar
3.5.2	Work with local community liaison officer to extend Trinity's footprint in GCID area	Q3 2020	Deputy director	
3.5.3	Create media opportunities	Q3 2020	CO'M	

Appendix II – KPIs to measure the intranet’s success

1. User behaviour

- Number of unique users
- Number of active users
- Number of pages visited per month
- Popular pages/content
- Daily no. of logins
- Types of devices used to access
- Percentage of users who access the mobile site
- No. of accesses outside office

2. Employee Engagement

- a. Ratio of active users vs. total users
- b. Total number of likes and shares
- c. Average time spent on the platform
- d. Percentage of user profiles that are complete

3. User Profile

- Types of active and inactive users in terms of designation and function
- Content generation and interactions by College leadership i.e. College Officers, heads of areas

4. Productivity

- Effectiveness of intranet’s search
- Frequently searched terms
- Page load times
- Use of helpful links to other websites like HR, IT etc.
- Impact on other platforms especially reduction in emails

5. Content Generation

- No. of content generated centrally
- Types of content being generated
- Popular content types
- Volume of user-generated content

6. Employee satisfaction

- Annual intranet satisfaction survey asking questions about intranet content, design, search engine, and overall efficiency.

Appendix III – Identity Management Committee

(To be reviewed by EOG)

Branding, Identity and Communications Steering Committee

Terms of Reference and Membership
May 2020

1. Draft Terms of Reference

1. To ensure the implementation of the College's branding strategy
2. To develop the strategy in areas such as tone of voice and imagery
3. To develop new guidelines for digital platforms such as video and social media
4. To identify key messages to be communicated by College
5. To provide guidance to ensure College buy-in for the branding project
6. To assist with the development and prioritisation of the College's brand architecture
7. To act as a problem solving forum for branding issues
8. To review implementation of the College's communications strategy

2. Membership

1. Provost
2. Director of Public Affairs and Communications
3. Director of the Long Room Hub
4. Director of the Master in Digital Marketing Strategy
5. Senior Lecturer
6. Director of Marketing
7. Director of Communications and Alumni Relations
8. Director of Internationalisation, Global Relations Office
9. Director of Commercial Revenue Unit
10. Head of Communications

The committee will be chaired by the Provost

Project Sponsor – Provost

Project Owner – Director of Public Affairs and Communications

Project Manager – Director of Marketing

3. Meetings

3.1 The Branding, Identity and Communications Steering Committee will meet once monthly or more frequently if the business requiring its attention should so dictate.

3.2 Other College Officers may attend meetings by invitation for specific agenda items.

3.3 The draft minutes will be circulated as soon as possible for noting and/or discussion/decision as necessary.

Organization Chart

TRINITY PUBLIC AFFAIRS & COMMUNICATIONS

