Trinity College Dublin
The University of Dublin

Draft Minutes of the Human Resources Committee

Thursday, 13th October 2022, 10am to 12 noon
Conducted Remotely on Zoom

PRESENT:	Prof. Ross Mc Manus (Chair)
	Ms. Orla Cunningham (Chief Operations Officer)
	Ms. Antoinette Quinn (Director of Human Resources)
	Dr. Siobán O'Brien Green (Vice Provost / Chief Academic Officer's nominee)
	Prof. David Shepherd (Senior Lecturer)
	Ms. Louise Ryan (Chief Financial Officer's nominee)
	Prof. Derek Nolan, (nominee of the Dean of the Faculty of Engineering, Mathematics and Sciences)
	Prof. Gareth Brady (nominee of the Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences)
	Ms. Rachel Mathews-McKay (Board nominee)
	Ms. Sinead Mac Bride (Equality Committee Representative)
	Dr. Tomás (Eoin) O'Sullivan (Senior Dean)
	Mr Andrew Duffin (Group of Unions Nominee)
APOLOGIES:	Ms. Patricia Callaghan (Academic Secretary)
	Ms. Breda Walls (Chief Operating Officer's nominee)
	Prof. Lorna Carson (nominee of the Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences)
	Mr. Peter Donohoe (External Representative)
VACANT:	SU/GSU Representative
IN ATTENDANCE:	Ms. Eimear Reilly (Deputy Director of Human Resources)
	Ms. Megan Josling (Human Resources)
	Ms. Mary Leahy (Head of Employee Relations)
	Ms. Fidelma Haffey (Head of Talent)

Items for specific Board attention are denoted XXX

Section A1

HRC/22-23/1   **Minutes of the Last Meeting**
The minutes of 8th June 2022 were approved by the Committee for signing by the Chair.

All members of the committee introduced themselves as new nominees were appointed in some areas since the last meeting. The Committee welcomed Professor Derek Nolan as the new nominee of the Dean of the Faculty of Engineering, Mathematics and Sciences; Professor Lorna Carson as the new nominee of the Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences; new member Dr. Tomás (Eoin) O'Sullivan (Senior Dean) and Ms. Megan Josling as the new Committee Secretary. Ms. Orla Shiels, the Chief Operations Officer was welcomed in place of Ms. Breda Walls for this meeting.

Section A2

HRC/21-22/2   **Matters arising from the Minutes**
No action or follow up items from last meeting

Section A3

HRC/21-22/3   **Director of Human Resources Report**

The Director of HR report was structured according to the three pillars of the HR strategy, namely people advocacy, people capability and people operations.

People Capability

The new Head of School inductions took place 11-12 October 2022 to support the development of new role incumbents. All other Learning and Organisational Development events ongoing.

Ongoing projects were highlighted as: the Career framework; reward and recognition; and job sizing. It was emphasised that role-grading is a rigorous process and 90% of the roles put forward thus far have been re-graded (upward).

In terms of Senior Academic Promotions, an interim change of policy for the next call has been developed. (Agenda item on this meeting)

People Advocacy

The wellness survey outcomes were published on T-Net and the Weekly Wrap-Up. It was stressed there will be engagement with the University and this will be further rolled out through information sessions led by the Head of Learning and Organisational Development.

An update was given of the Cultural Transformation Group established at the start of the year. The group is developing a proposal on behavioural values for Trinity. This will be shared with the Provost soon and brought to a future HRC. Further engagement across the University will take place in 2023.

The new Dignity and Respect Policy and Sexual Misconduct Policies have been developed. (Agenda item at this meeting, Oct HRC).

Data for the Gender Pay Gap Report is in being socialised with stakeholders. The University is obliged to publish the report within 3/4 months of collecting the data which would be early December. HR will bring this item to the next HRC meeting.

People Operations

Delivered by the Deputy Director of Human Resources.

The committee were informed of an increase in resourcing levels and that recruitment is challenging.

September/ October was described as a busy period. This period there is no backlog which was achieved through understanding our data and developing better support processes at peak times.

E-leave roll out is continuing . Acknowledgment that managers require higher support than employees during this transition to this system. Additional improvements are planned for the system (e.g., inclusion of types of leave such as maternity leave and parental leave).

HR are working towards streamlining payroll processes to reduce associated risk due to manual aspects of the process.

The team are working with IT to simplify the process of the Researcher Nomination Forms.

The HR dashboard from the Workforce Planning Team will be circulated to all HR committee members going forward.

It was noted that there are approximately 960 researchers within the University. In response to a committee query as to whether researchers are considered non-permanent academic staff, it was confirmed that they are recruited under specific purpose contracts connected to a research grant.

Another committee member requested that the abbreviation be amended for the Faculty of Engineering, Mathematics and Sciences to STEM not FEMS.

ACTION: A document on Behavioural Values from Cultural Transformation Group to be brought to a future HR Committee Meeting.

ACTION: Gender Pay Gap Data to be brought to the next HR committee meeting.

Mary Leahy, Head of Employee Relations Entered Meeting

Section B1   **Oversight of Policy Matters**

XXXHRC/21-22/4   **Draft Dignity and Respect Policy & Draft Sexual Misconduct Policy**
Presented by Antoinette Quinn, Director of Human Resources
Siobán O'Brien Green, Equality Officer & Mary Leahy

The HR director opened the session acknowledging the teams who worked on the two policy documents.

The Policy Revision was instigated by the 2019 Framework for Consent in Higher Education which directed Universities to tackle sexual violence and harassment. An action was submitted to the Department of Education covering institutional culture, processes, policies and targeted initiatives.

To align the policies to the Framework and Action plan, the existing Dignity and Respect Policy (D&R) was redrafted, and a new Sexual Misconduct (SM) Policy written. This process involved extensive consultation with staff and students. The aim was to create policies that were clear, simple, easy to navigate, supportive and not to act as a barrier. Key areas of change include: concerns can be addressed rather than having to lodge a formal complaint; introduction of a screening panel; proposed introduction of dedicated advice and support employees; and the policies covers staff, students and non-college personnel.

Positive feedback was received from college community. However, it was stressed that action, not just a policy, is required. The committee were informed that it would take €450-550k p/a to implement and act on this policy successfully. This would include hiring a Consent Manager, appointing a screening panel, constructing a website, developing a 3-tier training programme, and an awareness campaign.

The Equality Officer further explained that as part of the Athena Swan Charter there is a public sector duty to tackle sexual violence. The Provost, on behalf of TCD signed up to the Charter. HEI's must also have a gender equality plan in place. It was noted that research funding will be contingent upon institutions overtly tackling gender inequality.

The committee were invited to comment and consider for approval after it was stressed that there is a need for endorsement from top down. Also, that there needs to be a commitments of funding and resources.

The Committee considered the following questions and comment:

(1) A concern was raised that Heads of Schools would be put on front line with these policies, without the proper tools to address the issues arising. The Employee Relations manager informed the committee that detailed training and awareness will be provided to contact persons,

such as a Head of School, when the policies are in place. Support channels will also come in operation once the policies are approved.

(2) Attention was drawn to the code of conduct for Academic staff already place. Clarity was sought regarding what route and policy would apply to behaviours and investigation outcomes. It was recommended that if a complaint was considered well founded under the new policies, the relevant disciplinary process would be followed.

(3) There was some debate around the scope of the policy in terms of who is contractually linked to the University and thus covered by the policy. For example, would Alumni or Visitors to the campus be ccovered by this policy? Argument was made that if there is no contractual agreement with a person, then the University would have no right to address issues arising under the policy. In response it was noted that Alumni have University email addresses, and that bullying/harassment/sexual misconduct can happen via email and thus are covered by the policy. It was noted that increased legal costs could be incurred in implementing the policy. In terms of visitors, the Irish code of practice changed recently and calls out that non-staff should also be covered by policies. However, it was acknowledged that it can be difficult to get a visitor to comply with an investigation under an organisational policy. The request was made to note that implementation of these policies will require increased resource allocation to internal legal structures. It was also suggested that a sentence is included in the policy that it does not interfere with the right to take matters to Gardaí. The ER manager confirmed this is already included in the drafted policies.

(4) The source of funding to implement the policy successfully was identified as a key barrier that would need to be addressed. It was mentioned that Minister Simon Harris would announce an additional €1.5 million funding nationally to support an implementation plan to address issues regarding sexual violence and harassment in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), with hopes of some of that funding being allocated to Trinity College. However, it was recommended for further committee presentations that the financial implications of implementing these policies need to be explicitly addressed at the relevant college committees and sources of funding identified otherwise there will be a risk to implementation. Failure to satisfactorily

deal with these issues will potentially give rise to litigation which is very expensive.

OUTCOME: Chair noted acceptance and support of committee

Mary Leahy, Head of Employee Relations Exited Meeting
Fidelma Haffey, Head of Talent entered meeting

XXXHRC/21-22/5   **Senior Academic Promotions: Interim Review of Process**
Presented by Antoinette Quinn, Director of Human Resources
Fidelma Haffey, Head of Talent

The committee were informed that there is dissatisfaction and a perceived lack of clarity with the current Senior Academic Promotion Committee (SAPC) Process. The Provost committed to an SAPC review and asked for an interim review to support a final call under the current policy.

The proposed interim changes were established through consultations with the Provost, VP/CAO, 3 Deans, 3 Committee Chairs and IFUT reps. All proposed changes will be communicated through the dedicated website and information sessions once approved.

The amendments proposed included the following:

- Devolving decisions to faculty level
- The VP/CAO will chair all the Faculty Senior Promotions Committee's. This in turn requires a change to JAPC. (The Chair for JAPC was the VP/CAO. Now it will be the VP/CAO or nominee)
- Brand new panels (at faculty level)
- Onus on the applicant to bring forward 6 external referees with the purpose of speeding up this aspect of the process
    - The referees cannot be a supervision, co-author, or co-applicant
    - The Head of School will also need to sign off the referees

- Changes in application form which includes the new referee template
- Feedback will be provided to those who are unsuccessful

Clarification was sought by a committee member regarding the role of the Head of School in signing off the referees. It was proposed that Heads of Schools will need to meet with the applicant to ensure they have done their due diligence. It was also confirmed that there will be a defined list of acceptable/nonacceptable referees (as noted above). Following on from this, another member highlighted co-authoring in certain fields is inevitable, though there might be no actual conflict of interest as a result of no direct communication between parties. In response it was noted that if this were the case, the applicant should reach out to HR and the Head of Talent to iron out any potential conflicts of interest. A suggestion was made that applicants need to explicitly confirm they have asked their referees if they are willing to provide a reference. The HR Director and Head of Talent agreed.

One committee member mentioned they had been asked to review why UCD has a 70% SAPC success rate while TCD has a 30% success rate. Findings suggest that while a similar number of appointments were made more academics apply for promotion in TCD than UCD when they might not be ready. The proposal was made that information sessions are needed to clarify requirements.

OUTCOME: The Chair noted committee approval

ACTION: Memo to be submitted to Board for the 19/10/2022 meeting. The HR committee will be updated with the outcome.

Fidelma Haffey, Head of Talent exited meeting

Section B2   **Any Other Business**

HRC/21-22/6   **Update on Blended Working as Shared with EOG June 2022**
                            Presented by Antoinette Quinn, Director of Human Resource

Members were informed that the Blended Working Policy and Processes would be re-communicated with the University Community within the week. This would include notification of further online information sessions. A point was made that more time is needed before the policy can be reviewed. However, that managers should reach out to HR if there are any issues in implementing the policy.

It was noted by some members that blended working was a positive change post-Covid.

Some concerns were raised in discussion. Firstly, information sessions should reference the legal right to switch off which is new case law in this area. It was pointed out that this is also a new legal risk. It was also pointed out that office space hasn't increased even though staff numbers are increasing. 'Hot-desking/ Desk-sharing' was proposed as a potential solution. There was another point made that working in the office and spending 4-5 hours in teams' meetings is not feasible. In response an example was given of HR practices, whereby once per quarter all HR colleagues are called in together to build social connection. However, the rest of the time office days were dependant on what worked for the team. The HR Director stressed that what's most important is that the business of the university is paramount and remains undisturbed.

OUTCOME: The Chair noted a broadly positive response from committee.

HRC/21-22/7   **School Administrative Managers Title**
Presented by Eimear Reilley – Deputy Director of Human Resources

The Deputy Director of HR detailed that in the statutes, School Administration Managers are titled 'School Administrators'. A case was made that the term was outdated as the role has expanded and has a much wider breadth of responsibility. It was requested that the existing title is replaced with a new title of 'School Managers'.

OUTCOME: There were no objections, and the Chair noted the committee's approval of the change.

HRC/21-22/8   **AOB**

A question was raised under AOB regarding role grading and the effects to morale due to unsuccessful re- grading. The committee noted that there have been 70 cases to date of which 90% were re-graded. All cases are reviewed by 3 HR representatives and 3 external representatives. All cases require clear consensus. It was agreed that the conversation will be taken outside of the committee for an individual case.

Section C   **Items for Noting**

HRC/21-22/9   There were no submissions under Section C.

Signed: ………………………………………………….

Date: …………………………………………………