

Trinity College Dublin

The University of Dublin

Minutes of the People and Culture Committee

Thursday, 17th April 2025, 2pm to 4pm

Trinity Boardroom, TBS

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Prof. Darryl Jones (Chair)
Mr. Séamus McManus (Director of HR)
Mr. Noel Gorman (Chief Operating Officer)
Mr. Andrew Duffin (Group of Unions rep)
Ms. Paula Hicks (College Staff Member)
Prof. Lorraine Leeson (AVPEDI)
Prof. Sylvia Draper (Dean of STEM)
Prof. Eoin O’Sullivan (Senior Dean)
Mr. Lucky Khambule (External Staff Member)
Ms. Fidelma Haffey (Head of Talent, in attendance)
Ms. Gillian Connolly, secretarial support

ATTENDEES FOR SPECIFIC ITEMS:

Ms. Susan Maguire, Deputy Director of HR and Head of HR
Partnering

APOLOGIES:

Mr. David Treacy (Undergraduate Student)
Ms. Kathryn Whyte (External Member – Head of Corporate Services, Office of
Public Works)
Ms. Neha Deshmukh (Postgraduate Student)
Dr Rachel Moss (College Staff Member)

Section A1

PPC/24-25/39

Apologies and Introductions

The Chair welcomed members of the Committee and noted apologies received. As this was the first Committee attended by Mr. Noel Gorman, the Chief Operating Officer and Mr. Séamus McManus, the Director of Human Resources, a round of introductions of Committee Members was conducted to formally acquaint all members.

PPC/24-25/40

Action:

Minutes & Matters Arising

The minutes of the 13th of February 2025 were approved.

Action:

Mr. Andrew Duffin raised a point regarding an inaccuracy in the the Gender Pay Gap data. Mr. Andrew Duffin raised a point to re-state a potential issue with the Gender Pay Gap report as discussed on the 13th of February meeting. The point raised is that the Gender Pay Gap defines both the mean and median GPG based on hourly pay, certain pay elements such as tool allowance or overtime are included in the calculations. Including these elements change the Gender Pay Gap as such elements are not consistently applied across all staff or comparable institutions.

The Chair noted that the Gender Pay Gap is intended to progress to Board and that he is uncertain to its current status.

The Director of Human Resources clarified that this item should be progressing to Board.

The Chair provided an update on TrinityINC, he noted that this item was presented to Board on 26th March 2025. Progress had been slightly delayed due to scheduling misalignments. Board affirmed its commitment to address the concerns raised regarding the TrinityINC fund.

Ms. Paula Hicks asked for an update on Union representation on the sub-committees. The Chair clarified that this matter sits with the Registrar, as it pertains to broader statutory considerations. He noted that any change to committee membership would require an amendment to the Statutes, which is beyond the authority of committee members to address.

Ms. Paula Hicks asked for an update on the Staff Disability Working Group membership.

In response to this, the Chair advised that he has received a

document to review in relation to this from the Head of EDI, Siobán O'Brien Green.

The Director of Human Resources advised that he had a meeting with the Head of EDI, Siobán O'Brien Green and Acting Equality Officer, Mr. Joel Mc Keever to discuss the work of the Disability Working Group.

Action:

The Director of Human Resources confirmed that a call for expressions of interest for the HR Co-Chair would be circulated shortly to support the compliance of this working group.

The Director of Human Resources proposed the addition of an HR colleague to act as Secretariat for People & Culture Committee.

No further matters arising.

A3.

PPC/24-25/41 Verbal update from Committee Secretary & HR Director, Mr. Séamus McManus.

The Director of Human Resources provided a verbal update on each of the key areas within the Human Resources Department, including HRIS, Recruitment, HR Partners, DR&C and the HR Service Centre, Learning and Organisational Development, Academic Promotions and Progressions and HR Operations. His update highlighted current activities, ongoing initiatives, upcoming changes, recent achievements and milestones in each of the key areas.

The topic was opened to the Committee for discussion:

Prof. Lorraine Leeson raised a point regarding opportunities for promotion and progression for individuals that are working across interdisciplinary fields, noting that challenges may arise for those not formally affiliated with frameworks, such as pillars or indicators.

Ms. Fidelma Haffey, Head of Talent responded to this by acknowledging this as a valuable point, noting that this issue had been raised by the Schools and will be considered and discussed further by the Faculty Working Group Leads as part of the Senior Academic Promotions Review Project.

A4.

PPC/24-25/42 Verbal update from Chair of EDI Sub-Committee & Associate Vice-Provost for EDI, Prof. Lorraine Leeson.

Prof. Lorraine Leeson provided a verbal update on key items discussed at the EDI Sub-Committee meeting held on 1st of April 2025. The following updates were highlighted:

1. **New EDI Sub-Committee Members**
Prof. Lorraine Leeson mentioned that 29 applicants applied for 2 open seats. Following a selection process, *Ms. Lynnea Connelly* (College Counselling Service) and *Dr. Catherine Elliot O'Dare* (School of Social Work and Social Policy) were appointed. She further mentioned that a reserve candidate has accepted and will be considered for an upcoming vacancy in June 2025.
2. **Aging in College**
Prof. Lorraine Leeson mentioned that Prof. *Rose Anne Kenny* presented to the EDI Sub-Committee on the *Connecting Generations* project, highlighting key themes including technology, facilities, communication, staff experience, and mature student engagement.

The EDI Sub-Committee is exploring the potential to re-establish a working group on Aging.
A meeting with the Provost is scheduled for July 2025 on the theme of ageing, following up on work to date.
3. **ISL/English Staff Interpreters**
A presentation was delivered at the last EDI Sub-Committee on the significant impact of ISL/English interpreter services on inclusion for deaf and hearing colleague engagement. It was noted that current TDA funding expires in February 2026; We are exploring the mechanisms by which ongoing funding for these roles can be made available.
4. **EDI Fund 2024/25**
Prof. Lorraine Leeson mentioned that this fund supported 22 initiatives, including projects focused on inclusive physical activity, wellbeing of early-career researchers, a women in research conference, a neurodiversity intervarsity conference, Pride celebrations, and ethnic minority mental health support, amongst others.
5. **Athena Swan Submissions**
Prof. Lorraine Leeson highlighted that five Schools are in the process of preparing submissions for Bronze Awards or Bronze renewals for the April-June 2025 window. She advised that the submission deadline is 6 June 2025 for all applications; a significant workload was noted.

6. **Race Equality Officer Role**
The internal recruitment process for this was unsuccessful. The role is now being advertised externally. The recruitment call remains open until 9 May 2025, with interviews scheduled for 29 May 2025.
 7. **Disability Act Returns**
Prof. Lorraine Leeson mentioned that the NDA template was received only recently, despite the statutory deadline of 31 March. Concerns have been raised through the IUA to DFHERIS, who have been in touch with the NDA in this regard.
 8. **Care, Carer Costs, and Leave Matters**
Prof. Lorraine Leeson mentioned that there is ongoing work on issues relating to childcare places/ maternity leave and researchers/ carers funding reimbursement from bodies like Wellcome Trust, SFI, etc. all of which have been raised via our Athena Swan work.

Child-care places are at a premium in Dublin (Dublin Chamber of Commerce, Jan 2025). This is impacting on parents taking up roles in Dublin. We plan to work on exploring collaborative options to further support Trinity staff and students, as places available within the Day Nursery are limited and the Nursery is at capacity (51 places).

Maternity Leave and Postdoctoral Researchers:
Prof. Lorraine Leeson mentioned that EDI is working collaboratively with FSD, Deans, HR, Office of the Dean of Research to determine the average number of individuals on postdoc contracts who take maternity leave, look at barriers to securing/extending contracts (e.g. scope of funded project), cost to College (where relevant) and what elements might need to be referred back to funders. This is a really complex matter.
- Action:** In response to this the Director of Human Resources noted that he will follow up with Prof. Lorraine Leeson on points related to Maternity Leave.
- Care-Related Research Supports:**
Prof. Lorraine Leeson mentioned that the reimbursement of care costs funded by bodies such as Wellcome and SFI is currently not permitted under Revenue rules. The matter has been escalated to the HEA and will be brought to the IUA for a sectoral approach.
9. **EMBRACED Project**
Prof. Leeson mentioned A Training of Trainers workshop on race equality in higher education will take place on 13 June 2025 for Trinity staff, led by the University of Limerick in partnership with TCD, Galway and MIC (Limerick). This project is funded via the HEA's EDI Fund.
 10. **HEIs as Places for People Project**
TCD is leading this HEA-funded initiative with RCSI, TUD and University

of Galway. This takes a multi-layered view of our spaces, considering especially environmental design, heritage buildings and future proofing to facilitate access for all, across the life cycle. Prof. Leeson mentioned that IHREC and AHEAD present at our 1st Mutual Learning Exchange in RCSI on 2 July.

11. **National LGBT+ Staff Network**

Trinity hosted the inaugural meeting of the National LGBT+ Staff Network, supported by the Acting Equality Officer and the TCD LGBT+ Staff Network.

12. **International Conference on Gender Research**

The EDI Office presented Trinity's work on inclusive gender equality. It was noted that Ireland's national target for women Chair Professors is 40% by 2024, with Trinity currently at 37%.

In response to this, Ms. Fidelma Haffey acknowledged the significant impact of this work and commended its contributors, mentioning SALL.

The Chair agreed, noting the fundamental importance of this work.

13. **International EDI Commitment**

Prof. Lorraine Lesson mentioned that TCD has been invited by CNRS (France), alongside other GE Sustainable Champions, to co-develop a Statement affirming institutional commitment to EDI.

14. **European Commission Recognition**

TCD was positively highlighted in the Independent Expert Report to the European Commission (January 2025) regarding the impact of Gender Equality Plans across the European Research Area.

Section B:

PPC/24-25/43 B1. To receive a verbal update from the Chair on the College's strategic planning Process.

The Chair provided a verbal update on the current status of the College's strategic planning process, highlighting some key points:

Board reviewed the draft version of the document on the 26th of March 2025, and while there were several observations from the Board, a full discussion on these points will take place at the next Board meeting.

The Chair referenced the challenges faced by Universities globally at present and highlighted that Trinity must be a place of belonging for all individuals to respect one another. He further mentioned six key

commitments that fall under the category of 'People'.

Action:

The Chair discussed the People Projects, the project now has a dedicated People Projects Manager, Ms. Michelle Hogan, who will be invited to attend a meeting of the People and Culture Committee in the new Academic year.

PPC/24-25/44 B2. To note and discuss memo on the actions for the Staff Disability Working Group.

The People and Culture Committee members were asked to note the actions in progress of the Staff Disability Working Group. The Staff Disability Working Group, formally reporting to the EDI Sub-Committee, is being reformed to support this work with the strategic and operational support of the EDI Office and Associate Vice- Provost for EDI. To facilitate this, the following actions have been agreed:

The Acting Equality Officer, as Secretary to the SD-WG is working with the current SD-WG Co- Chair, Dr Patricia McCarthy, to draft revised Terms of Reference to reflect these new priorities and the changes in legal context which will be brought to the People and Culture Committee for review.

Membership of the Working Group will be reviewed, engaging with previous members and with consideration of the needs of the reformed group. This will be brought to the People and Culture Committee for review.

The Director of Human Resources will appoint a Co-Chair from Human Resources for the Working Group to connect HR expertise which is essential for the implementation and compliance of this work.

The EDI Office will continue to engage with external stakeholders in the IHREC Public Sector Duty office, the DFHERIS EDI Office, and the National Disability Authority, with the insight and support of colleagues including the Secretary's Office as appropriate.

In response to this, the Director of Human Resources informed the Committee that the focus is to get the

group up and running with the appropriate representation.

Action:

The Director of Human Resources will circulate a call for expressions of interest to colleagues in Human Resources to be the Co- Chair for the Disability Working Group.

The Director of Human Resources highlighted that the current representation for individuals with disabilities, as outlined in the Disability Act, is not being met in the College. He further mentioned that this group must consider ways to progress and achieve this target.

Prof. Lorraine Leeson raised the point about the disclosure process through core portal, mentioning that surveys have been conducted, showing a much higher rate of individuals identifying as having a disability, approx. 10%. Less than 3% of these individuals are self-disclosing this information. A discussion took place for the need to improve self-disclosure and explore ways to encourage better reporting.

PPC/24-25/45 B3. To receive an update on proposed changes to College's Recruitment Policy

The Deputy Director of Human Resources, Ms. Susan Maguire presented on proposed changes to the College's Recruitment Policy. In collaboration with the Secretary's Office, HR is undertaking a review of their policies with a view to updating and revising them where appropriate. It is within the scope of this work that the Recruitment Policy is being brought forward to propose changes and revisions. A number of the proposed changes are minor, and others more substantive to include principles for recruiting Research Assistants and Research Fellows which have not been included in the policy to date.

The Deputy Director of Human Resources provided an update on the background and consultation of this work to date. The Recruitment Policy has been informed by a comprehensive consultation process, including workshops, stakeholder feedback sessions, and analysis of collected data. The Recruitment Policy was brought to the Research Committee in January 2025 to update the

Committee and seek further inputs

This process has been supported by the Dean of Research and the Research Committee. The Deputy Director of Human Resources advised that the Research Committee and Dean of Research agreed to establish a working group to brainstorm and address scenarios that occur. The planned rollout is in September 2025.

The topic was opened to the committee for discussion:

Ms. Paula Hicks raised a question that Postdoctoral Researchers are not included in this cohort under review, she highlighted that in the research area, there are many positions that need review but noted that this could be another body of work.

The Deputy Director of Human Resources in response to this advised that the College has an existing document, the Academic Titles in Trinity College that addresses these research positions and also requires a review.

Ms Paula Hicks raised a concern regarding the 12 month timeline for a direct nomination period, noting projects have outputs for certain dates and highlighted the additional workload on Human Resources.

In response to this, the Deputy Director of Human Resources responded highlighting the need for agility, transparency regarding the delegation period.

The Dean of STEM shared feedback from the Heads of School Committee, she noted that this was their first time reviewing the policy document. She suggested that input from the Deans be sought.

In response to this, the Deputy Director of Human Resources noted the feedback, and raised the point that this item is due to be presented at EOG and that the Dean would have had the opportunity to provide input at that stage.

Action:

The Director of Human Resources also noted the feedback,

he advised that the policy wording would be reviewed and that a revised version of the policy will be brought to the next meeting of the People and Culture Committee.

Prof. Lorraine Leeson mentioned aligning the policy with IUA guidelines, highlighting the potential impacts on the Gender Pay Gap. She also mentioned the importance of transparent recruitment, she highlighted that the College does not include the HR4 logo.

A further discussion took place regarding clarification surrounding job titles and the IUA salary scale for researchers.

The Chair acknowledged the points raised by the Committee and thanked the Deputy Director for her contributions as it was her last day.

The Deputy Director of Human Resources thanked the Chair in return.

Section C

PPC/24-25/46 C1. Initial discussion on proposed committee workplan for AY 25/26

The Director of Human Resources presented an update on the draft Committee workplan for the Academic Year 2025/2026, based on the following key themes: Strategic Planning & Alignment, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) & Policies, Risk and new HR / People & Culture Strategy, Talent, Learning & Organisational Development, Annual Review & Future Planning.

PPC/24-25/47 C2. Proposed provisional AY 25/26 committee meeting dates

Action:

The Committee approved the proposed People and Culture Committee dates for the Academic year 2025/2026.

PPC/24-25/48 C3. Any Other Business

No further items were raised, and the meeting was concluded.

Signed:

Date:.....