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

Minutes of the People and Culture Committee

Wednesday, 21st May, 10.00-12.00

Trinity Boardroom

Present: Prof. Darryl Jones (Chair), Mr. Séamus McManus (Committee Secretary, Director of Human Resources), Mr. Noel Gorman (Chief Operating Officer), Mr. Andrew Duffin (Group of Unions Rep), Prof. Lorraine Leeson (Associate Vice-Provost for EDI), Prof. Sylvia Draper (Dean of FSTEM), Dr. Rachel Moss (College Staff Member), Ms. Paula Hicks (College Staff Member), Ms. Kathryn Whyte (External Member – Head of Corporate Services, Office of Public Works)

In Attendance: Ms. Deanna Redmond and Ms. Niamh Mc Keown (Secretarial Support), Ms. Emma Treacy Matunga (Interim Head of HR Partnering & Resourcing), Ms. Mary Leahy (Head of Employee Relations), Ms. Fidelma Haffey (Head of Talent), Ms. Michelle Hogan (People Projects Manager)

Apologies: Prof. Eoin O'Sullivan (Senior Dean)

Section A1

PCC/24-25/49 Minutes of Previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting of 17th April 2025 were approved.

PCC/24-25/50 Matters arising from the Minutes:

It was requested that updates on key items would be provided through a dashboard format reporting on progress and updates. The Director of Human Resources advised this is currently being considered to determine the best format, and the views of the Committee would be welcomed in trialling any new reporting formats. This will be particularly relevant for the People Projects, as working groups begin in the Autumn.

PCC/24-25/51 Update from Committee Secretary & Director of Human Resources

The Director of Human Resources presented an update on key HR and People and Culture matters. It was noted that Ms. Patricia Ryan, Learning & Development Manager, HR has been nominated by him as Co-Chair of the Staff Disability Working Group, alongside fellow Co-Chair Dr. Patricia McCarthy. A constructive discussion around disability issues followed, particularly focusing on the engagement of the EDI team. It is planned that now both Co-chairs are in place, the Staff Disability Working Group will meet regularly, with secretariat provided by the EDI unit. Separately, it was further noted that a meeting of key stakeholders has been convened to address concerns relating to the processes around maternity leave cover, particularly in research roles but also more broadly.

The Director of HR updated that Ms. Emma Treacy Matunga has been appointed to the post of Head of HR Partnering and Resourcing in an interim capacity, following an internal competition. This role will be advertised on an open competition basis in early course.

The post of Deputy Director, HR is also to be appointed, and a competition will be run in the coming months. The HR organisational structure will be kept under review in light of these two senior roles to be appointed and a new strategic plan for the university.

The new strategic plan will contain a set of behavioural values for the first time in the university's history. These values are intended to support the kind of behaviours the University aims to encourage, based on shared and agreed principles for the organisation.

The Director of HR presented an organisational development update, with particular emphasis on learning and development activity and positive staff engagement outcomes. Particular attention was drawn to the Aurora female leadership programme, noted as having gone from strength to strength, with an increased reach across the university.

The Committee debated the merits of holding the monthly staff central induction programme online versus in-person. While it is currently delivered online, members agreed that reviewing its effectiveness would be beneficial, given the importance of in-person connection and engagement for new staff in particular.

The Dignity, Respect, and Consent Service was discussed, including how it leverages the support of other staff members to progress cases. It was noted that the DR&C Service is planning to a review of the service now that is has been in operation for one year. It is also proposing to establish two panels of staff members, one to hold a facilitated conversation as part of an informal resolution process, and the second to conduct a formal investigation under the policy. Both panels will receive relevant training and guidance.

Kathryn Whyte took the opportunity to commend the significant progress made by all.

PCC/23-24/52 Presentation on People Programme Update

Michelle Hogan, People Projects Manager, provided an overview of her role and outlined the current initiatives underway as part of the People Programme.

Following the considerable work undertaken through Citizens Assemblies and other forums, work is now underway to scope and mobilise the next phase, involving prioritisation of proposed initiatives, and a plan for their implementation. It is proposed for a more detailed project plan to be brought to the next meeting of the Committee in September for review and approval. Nominations and expressions of interest will be sought from relevant stakeholder groups to ensure the project working groups are as representative and effective as possible.

PCC/24-25/53 Senior Academic Promotions Review Project Update

Fidelma Haffey, Head of Talent provided an update on the Senior Academic Promotions Review Project.

Questions were asked regarding the key indicators that should be incorporated into the new senior academic promotions policy. It is important that the indicators used are sufficiently reflective of what success looks like for a particular grade, both in general terms and with respect to specific disciplines. This will be a challenging balance to achieve.

It was noted that Professor Keith Gull, Professor Emeritus, University of Oxford and external member of the Senior Academic Promotions Committee and Faculty of STEM Senior Promotions Committee is an external facilitator to the project and will assist in shaping the policy. It was noted that a draft proposal is expected to be developed over the Summer.

PCC/23-24/54 Verbal Update from Prof. Leeson, Chair of EDI Sub Committee

The Associate Vice-Provost provided an update on the work of the EDI Sub-Committee. She highlighted our annual requirement to report on the percentage of staff with a disclosed disability, under the Disability Act 2005, with a legal deadline of 31 March for data submission. This return has been considerably delayed, as each year the College must wait for a data template to be issued by the HEA, which was not received until well after the 31 March deadline. Going forward, this can be raised with the HEA to request the template is provided in good time to allow TCD and other institutions sufficient time to prepare and submit their data. Data currently comes from two sources: Core HR portal data, and an EDI survey. Both sources have their advantages and limitations, with Core HR portal likely an under-report of the true figures, and the EDI survey likely higher than the true figures. The preference is to use the Core HR data, however this will require a change in staff behaviour and a significant increase in the numbers of staff disclosing their disability status on their Core HR profile.

The newly re-formed Staff Disability Working Group will be asked to analyse and look to integrate Core HR portal functionality into broader inclusion efforts. They will report back in subsequent meetings.

Childcare Access & EDI Network Development
Discussion covered the expansion of childcare support across the Greater Dublin Area, including staff and student access, transparency in STEM College uptake, and possible funding from the Wellcome Trust to develop a formal childcare division. Introduction of a childcare benefit in kind scheme was flagged for further exploration. Plans were shared to establish a central EDI network across all academic schools, with naming and structure to be confirmed and included in the upcoming Athena Swan submissions. Four schools are expected to submit by June, after in depth reviews across three faculty locations.

Race Equality Initiatives
A call for external Race Equality Officers has issued to community practitioners to inform leadership development training. A "Train the Trainer" session under the You Lead for All initiative is planned, followed by an online development programme for aspiring leaders, set for rollout later this year. Prof. Leeson reported on securing a tender for EDI governance, with strong stakeholder engagement so far, and emphasised the importance of connecting academic and professional equality efforts through equality link roles.

Ms. Mary Leahy (Head of Employee Relations) joined the meeting at this point.

PCC/24-25/55 Leave Policy Updates

Maternity Leave Policy
Mary Leahy advised on the proposed changes to the policy. These are on foot of legislative changes, which allow employees who are pregnant or who have commenced maternity leave to postpone their maternity leave due to a serious health condition.

Following a number of queries from Mr Duffin, Ms Leahy requested that he set out his queries in an email, on receipt of which she would respond to clarify.

The Committee noted and approved the revised Maternity Leave policy.

Sick Leave Policy
The Committee noted and approved the revised Sick Leave policy, which was revised to reflect the change in the Maternity Leave policy and to amend the waiting period from three days to five days for illness benefit payments for employees on sick leave in accordance with Department of Social Protection changes.

Paternity Leave Policy

Mary Leahy updated the Committee on the changes proposed to the Paternity Leave policy. The policy was revised on foot of a scheduled review. While the entitlement, eligibility and process of applying for Paternity Leave remains unchanged, the opportunity was taken to make minor changes to reflect the current practice in its application. In addition, the policy was reformatted to align with recent policy formatting.

Mr Duffin raised a number of queries, and Ms Leahy requested that he set out his queries in an email, on receipt of which she would respond to clarify. In addition, Ms Leahy advised that any employee who had individual concerns should contact Human Resources directly to have their concerns addressed.

The committee noted and approved the revised Paternity Leave policy,

Ms Mary Leahy (Head of Employee Relations) left the meeting at this point.

Ms Emma Treacy Matunga (Interim Head of HR Partnering & Resourcing) joined the meeting at this point.

PCC/23-24/56 Recruitment Policy Update

The Interim Head of HR Partnering & Resourcing updated the committee on the work undertaken to date. It was noted that the Recruitment Policy was updated regarding Research Assistants and Research Fellows following EOG feedback. Derogations were noted at the policy's end; the Committee discussed Research staff mobility and noted the commitment undertaken by the Research Committee to establish a separate working group to consider this topic.

It was confirmed that a Principal Investigator (PI) will retain primary responsibility for shortlisting, supported by a minimum two-person panel and a designated hiring lead in line with the recruitment policy. Interview format remains flexible—this can be online or in person based on circumstances.

Section 9 on pay grades needs refinement, particularly regarding the phrase "salary determination"— it was noted that clarity is sought on this. The importance of capturing independent/fellowship funded roles within the policy was highlighted. Clarity is also sought on what applies to research recruitment within the policy versus other recruitment. Advertising periods will remain at a minimum of two weeks, and it was reiterated that hiring leads are normally panellists. Explanation was given that all roles and applications will be recorded via the Core Portal, with allowance given as needed for information to be provided for data collection and reporting. Further clarity is needed in Appendix 4, particularly regarding the use of derogations. The Committee acknowledged progress to date, and following consideration of the points raised, the Committee approved the onward passage of the policy to Board for consideration and approval. Contracts will be updated accordingly once the new policy is in place.

Ms Emma Treacy Matunga (Interim Head of HR Partnering & Resourcing) left the meeting at this point.

PCC/23-24/57 Minutes, Technical Staff Committee, 27 November 2024

The Committee noted the minutes of the Technical Staff Committee meeting of 27 November 2024.

There was some discussion in relation to the need for greater clarity on progression routes for Technical Officers and it was noted that a distinction was made between role grading and progression.

PCC/24-25/58 Recommendations for Progression from the 2024 Call: Administrative 3 to Administrative 2 in accordance with LCR CD/22/131 (as of 14 October 2022)

The Committee noted the recommendations for Progression arising from the 2025 Administrative 3 to Administrative Progressions Call (Confined) – (Tabled, hard-copy was circulated during the meeting).

An explanation was provided on the process regarding progressions from AO3 to AO2 and the impact of the WRC ruling. It was agreed that this topic requires further detailed discussion at a later date. A hard copy document was distributed and later shredded as it contained confidential staff information.

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

Signed: ____________________ **Date:** ____________________