Trinity College Dublin
The University of Dublin

Minutes of the People and Culture Committee

Monday, 8th June, 14:00-16:00

Online Meeting via Zoom

Present: Professor Darryl Jones (Chairperson), Mr Séamus McManus (Committee Secretary), Director of Human Resources), Professor Rachel Moss (College Staff Member), Professor Eoin O'Sullivan (Senior Dean), Mr Noel Gorman (Chief Operating Officer), Mr Andrew Duffin (Group of Unions Rep), Ms Sylvia Draper (Dean of STEM), Mr Lucky Khambule (External Member), Ms Paula Hicks (College Staff Member), Professor Lorraine Leeson (Vice-President for EEDI)

Apologies: Ms Kathryn Whyte (External Member)

In attendance: Ms Michelle Hogan, Ms Lara McKeown, Ms Megan Josling, Ms Lydia Brazil, Dr Richie Porter, Mr Martin McAndrew, Ms Michele Ryan and Ms Ewa Adach

Section A – Standing Items

Section A.2 Declaration of Conflict of Interest

PCC/25-26/66 *No conflicts of interest were declared.*

Section A.3. Minutes & Matters Arising

PCC/25-26/67 The Chair noted a correction was required to item 61.01. It was agreed that the wording would be amended from "Subject to Board approval, phase 3 would commence", to "After Board notes the approval, phase 3 would commence."

To note the online circulated dated 26 May 2026 for the Committee and:

- **The inclusion of Reasonable Accommodations segment in the new Probation Policy**

An updated Probations Policy and probation form, including a section on Reasonable Accommodations, had been circulated to the Committee for noting. No concerns were raised by the Committee

- **The wording amendment in the Report on the Senior Academic Promotions Review as recommended in the 14 May 2026 People and Culture Committee Meeting (PCC/25-26/61)**

The document circulated by the VP/CAO included the wording amendment as per Minute PCC/25-26/61. The wording relating to proposed amendments to academic titles (page 11) had been revised to avoid ambiguity. It was confirmed that the report recommended that progression to Senior Associate Professor would occur through

promotion and would be linked to the relevant pay grade, while the title of Associate Professor (only) would be conferred upon successful completion of the Tenure Track or Merit Bar.

67.01 The Committee approved the minutes of 14 May 2026.

PCC/25-26/68 Outstanding Actions

The Chair of the Committee noted that clarifications were sought from previous People and Culture Committee meetings on whether staff outside of teaching time had been included in the data. It was noted that some staff returned in June, while certain teaching fellows were employed from September to May. Queries were also raised by the EDI Sub-Committee regarding whether the data related specifically to hourly pay, including craft roles and associated allowances. It was agreed that the requested information would be provided to the Committee by email circulation.

PCC/25-26/69 Matters Arising from the Minutes

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

PCC/25-26/70 To receive a verbal update from Committee Secretary & HR Director, Mr. Séamus McManus.

The Committee received a verbal update from the Secretary to the Committee in relation to pay awards under the Public Service Pay Agreement. It was noted that the 1% pay increase applicable from 1 June 2026 had been sanctioned by the Minister for Further and Higher Education. HR was in the process of implementing this increase; however, due to the late confirmation, it would not be applied in the June payroll but would be included in the July payroll. It was confirmed that a communication would issue to staff and that the increase would be backdated to June. It was further noted that discussions in relation to the 1% provision applicable from 1 September 2025 had reached an impasse at sectoral level. While some progress had been made, negotiations have been slow. As the current agreement was due to expire at the end of June, it was hoped that a resolution could be reached by then. The matter was now at sectoral government level and outside the control of the College. Finally, it was noted that discussions on the next Public Service Pay Agreement were expected to commence shortly.

PCC/25-26/71 To receive a verbal update from the People Projects Manager, Ms. Michelle Hogan, on the People Projects

The People Projects Manager updated the Committee on progress across the People Projects workstreams. She advised that the next meeting of the People Projects Management Group was due to take place on 16 June 2026, at which each of the four workstreams under the Good Employer Programme would present proposals for quick-win initiatives to be delivered across the College.

- The Career Development workstream intended to bring forward a proposal for a staff mobility pilot programme.
- The Wellbeing workstream planned to put forward initiatives including the provision of flu vaccinations and a staff wellbeing event, together with a staff community network fund.
- The Pensions and Benefits Manager, Mr David Hurcombe, and the Healthy Campus Manager, Ms Martina Mullin, had also briefed the workstream on Healthy Trinity on recent developments in their areas.
- The Reward workstream was examining a Community Contribution Leave scheme, under which staff engaged in volunteering would receive additional paid leave, alongside a service recognition scheme.
- The Recognition workstream was considering a range of models for Trinity staff awards, drawing on the format of the previously held Provost Professional Staff Awards.

  The People Projects Manager noted that a Committee member had previously raised the question of how the work of the programmes would be communicated across the wider College. She confirmed that communications planning was underway and that an update would be presented to the People and Culture Committee in the new academic year.

  The Committee also received an update on the Employment Contracts and Working Patterns programme.
- The Teaching Fellows workstream had held its inaugural meeting, at which the Registrar mapped the recommendations arising from the Academic Titles Review. The workstream was satisfied that its work was aligned with the review.
- Arrangements were being made to schedule the first meeting of the Adjuncts workstream.
- The Occasional Staff workstream's work was progressing, with a meeting scheduled at which the HR Operations Manager, Ms Joanne O'Hanlon, would present to the workstream and set out the outstanding items.
- Finally, the Research Staff workstream was focusing on the review of recommendations and prioritisation lists.

PCC/25-26/72 To receive a verbal update from Chair of EDI Sub-Committee & Vice-President for EEDI, Prof Lorraine Leeson.

The VP EEDI began her update by noting that EDI engagement was ongoing with the Oireachtas following a request to higher education institutions to outline how they were responding to sexual violence and harassment, and in particular to image based sexual violence. This work aligned with existing initiatives across the DR&C service and HR. EDI was continuing work on an updated Equality Policy, which it will bring to this Committee in academic year 2026/7.

The Committee was informed that a conference had been held in Trinity for the HEA-funded project, "Higher Education Institutions as Places for People", with a particular focus on Universal Design. The VP EEDI noted that this aligns to the work in the College Strategy where both People and Place are pillars. A key issue emerging from the conference was the risk that work on Universal Design could become siloed across Estates and Facilities on the one hand and Teaching and Learning (with regard to Universal Design for Teaching and Learning) on the other, highlighting the need for a more collective approach to create a joint-up architecture.

An update was provided from the LERU EDI policy group meeting in early June. The VP EEDI, noting that this is Pride month, reported that in some of our LERU partner institutions it was noted that LGBT+ colleagues continue to feel like they can't bring their same-sex partners to work-related events. Finally, it was noted that a conference organised by the Coimbra Group EDI Working Group was scheduled to take place the following week and Head of EDI, Dr Siobán O'Brien Green would be representing Trinity, as she is the Chair of the Coimbra Group's EDI Working Group.

The Dean of Students, Dr. Richie Porter and Postgraduate Student Support Officer, Mr Martin McAndrew joined the meeting at this point.

Section B – Items for Noting / Approval

PCC/25-26/73 Student Alcohol Policy for consideration and approval from the Dean of Students, Dr. Richie Porter and Postgraduate Student Support Officer, Mr Martin McAndrew

The Chair welcomed the Dean of Students and the Postgraduate Student Officer to the meeting.

The Dean of Students provided the Committee with a short introduction to the Student Alcohol Policy. Trinity has had an alcohol policy since 2005, with its most recent revision having taken place in 2013. The policy had always been informed by latest health information and colleague expertise in addiction studies. Key aims of the revised policy included strengthening student belonging and supporting Healthy Trinity, while reviewing regulations on availability, promotion and sponsorship of alcohol to ensure they remained fit for purpose and aligned with institutional values. It was noted that the policy had undergone College-wide stakeholder consultation. The policy had also been considered by the Executive Officers Group in May and had been endorsed by the Capitation Committee.

The Postgraduate Student Officer noted that the People and Culture Committee was the last stop before the policy would be brought forward to Board. It was noted that the changing landscape around inclusion and belonging presented challenges in relation to alcohol use, particularly given the cultural significance of alcohol in Ireland and its prevalence among the usual college-age population. As a University that promotes health, Trinity has a duty of care to support student wellbeing. The revised policy seeks to find balance between student life and social engagement with a harm reduction approach.

The Committee noted that the policy aligns with Thrive Commitment 3 "*Enhancing student belonging and connection in an engaged and healthy University*". A student

partnership model informed the review, with engagement from the Ents officer, the Sport Union and the Welfare Officer. While the previous policy had focused primarily on the regulation of alcohol, the revised policy takes a broader community-wide approach, incorporating individualised interventions.

It was noted that the regulation of the policy had not changed. Student-led bodies would remain prohibited from using alcohol to promote an event and alcohol sponsorship would not be permitted except in venues where alcohol is normally served. The two-drink limit and restriction on serving spirits at events would remain in place also. It was noted that this policy would not regulate students while in their private accommodation, and was directed towards student unions, clubs and societies.

The Committee noted that the policy aimed to enhance belonging and freedom for students from the pressures to consume alcohol. It was anticipated that this approach would improve health and wellbeing for students, with the help of College Health and Counselling Services. Subject to approval, the policy would proceed to the Student Life Committee in the next semester before being brought to Board. It was further noted that any event taking place from the next semester going forward would be required to comply with the policy. A Committee member noted that the policy was closely aligned with Dublin City Council's rejuvenation work aimed at supporting and promoting non-alcohol-centred events in the city. The Secretary to the Committee welcomed the policy's recognition of the role of staff, particularly in relation to the training for staff in the responsible serving of alcohol and in supporting students who may be experiencing difficulties related to alcohol use.

73.01. The Committee approved the Student Alcohol Policy.

The Dean of Students, Dr. Richie Porter and Postgraduate Student Support Officer, Mr Martin McAndrew left the meeting at this point.

PCC/25-26/74 To note the Rates of Pay for Occasional Staff item which HR brought forward to Finance Committee on 28th May for approval, by the Deputy Director of HR and Head of HR Operations, Ms. Lydia Brazil

The Deputy Director of HR presented an update on the Casual Pay Programme. Members were advised that an Internal Audit review conducted in 2023 identified several recommendations relating to the governance and administration of occasional staff engagement and payment processes. The work of this workstream filtered into four interrelated workstreams.

The Committee noted that the Casual Payroll Policy, introduced in June 2021, established the University's approach to engaging and paying occasional staff. The current processes were paper-based and very resource-heavy, creating significant administrative burdens. This exposes the College to higher risks of GDPR non-

compliance, fraud, and process inefficiencies. It was noted that CSD had allocated a budget of €350,000 to support the programme.

The Deputy Director shared data detailing the scale of casual payroll activity during 2025, including:

- €11 million spent on casual pay
- More than 19,000 paper claims forms processed manually
- 3,737 engagement forms processed manually.

The Committee was advised that these figures are expected to increase further in 2026.

An overview of the programme's four workstreams was provided next:

1. **Online Timesheets and Claim Forms**: The introduction of an online system with additional controls and an extra sign-off required. A pilot in the Sports Centre had recently been successfully completed;
2. **Occasional Staff Engagement Form**: Replacing the current paper engagement form with an online form through the Core portal. The new process will ensure that engagements are approved before being submitted to HR and that staff receive the appropriate terms and conditions;
3. **Rates of Pay Review**: Reviewing and updating rates of pay for occasional staff. Standard rates will be introduced for different types of roles, with additional approval will be required where a higher rate is requested;
4. **Policy Review**: Once the above work is complete, the Occasional Payroll Policy will be updated to reflect the new processes and provide clearer guidance on engagement procedures, required documentation and recruitment requirements.

The Committee noted that the programme and proposed rates of pay were expected to deliver a range of benefits including the removal of paper-based processes, increased transparency, stronger internal controls, improved processing times and greater audit readiness. Approval of exceptional rates outside defined parameters would require additional management authorisation. Consultation with representative groups would continue to determine appropriate rates for academic roles and other relevant groups, including within Trinity Business School. The Director of Human Resources is the Project Sponsor and Chairs the Steering Committee overseeing the programme. Members also noted that the necessary technology had been provided through EduCampus without any additional cost.

During the discussion, a Committee member queried whether the proposed arrangements were outside of Trinity's job-sizing framework. It was confirmed that formal job-sizing was not being applied to casual engagements following the benchmarking of data from other Universities as this would significantly delay recruitment processes. It was also confirmed that the Group of Unions had been consulted prior to the proposal being submitted to the Finance Committee.

The Secretary outlined the methodology used to develop the proposed rates, noting that rates had been calculated based on the equivalent hourly value of existing University grades. Standard and enhanced rates had been created to accommodate differing levels of expertise within grades. Guidance would be given to support managers in selecting the appropriate rate, and any exceptional rates would require senior management approval. Members were advised that the approach aligns with

existing grading structures while providing a consistent framework for occasional staff payments.

A member expressed concern regarding two of the proposed lower rates for occasional Research Assistants and sought assurance that these would align appropriately with relevant IUA scales. The Deputy Director agreed to review this. Several members raised operational questions regarding implementation. One member noted concerns that increased digitalisation could add bureaucracy to the process and subsequently delay it. The Deputy Director explained that claim forms could be completed by the individual undertaking the work or school administrators, or by cost-centre, providing flexibility while maintaining control requirements.

A member highlighted that there are a significant number of PhD students engaged in casual work within STEM disciplines and sought clarification on how they would be accommodated and how progression between rates 1-2 would operate. The same member also queried whether approvals should remain locally managed. The Deputy Director explained that eligibility would be looked at as part of the revised policy and noted that the approaches adopted by UCD who went through the process were considered, including considerations about the duration of engagement.

In relation to approvals, it was noted that Internal Audit had originally recommended that the Head of School should approve engagements. Following further discussion, they agreed that local approvals could be used for flexibility. In response to a query, it was confirmed that once-off lectures would be updated and included on the proposed rates of pay and made available on the University's website. The Committee further discussed the engagement of patient participants involved in research projects. It was suggested that individuals working with the College on a recurring basis could potentially be engaged through the casual staff framework.

The Committee also sought clarification regarding the arrangements of salaried staff receiving additional casual payments. It was noted in response that the existing procedure would remain the same: full-time employees cannot also receive casual payments and would need to reduce their contractual FTE if they wished to take on casual work. This reflects the public-sector principle of one person one salary.

Lastly, a Committee member raised a question regarding leave for casual staff. It was confirmed that annual leave would continue to be provided through an 8% holiday pay entitlement and it would remain that casual staff would be entitled to sick pay after 13 weeks of employment. Further clarification regarding maternity leave would be sought and incorporated into the revised policy, with links to relevant policies and guidance. The Deputy Director noted that further work remains on the academic side of things and indicated that an update would be brought back to the Committee in the Autumn.

The Head of Culture and Organisational Development, Ms. Michele Ryan and Project Officer (Workplace Values) Ms. Ewa Adach, joined the meeting at this point.

PCC/25-26/75 To receive an update on the Strategic Outcome 4.2 A workplace where values are always lived by Head of Culture and Organisational Development, Ms. Michele Ryan and Project Officer (Workplace Values) Ms. Ewa Adach

The Chair apologised for the delay in getting to this item and welcomed the Head of Culture and Organisational Development and the Project Officer.

The Committee received an update on the development and implementation of the Values. It was noted that the Values were closely aligned with the Thrive Strategic Plan, particularly the Purpose and People pillars. Developing the Values was a key element of the Commitment “A workplace where values are always lived”. The Values intend to support positive workplace culture, provide clarity on what is expected of staff, and create a sense of belonging by connecting us all to one Purpose. The Committee noted that extensive consultation and engagement across had taken place across the College since development commenced in 2018. The Values were designed to reflect Trinity’s strategic ambitions and focused on behavioural values that shape culture. It was noted that belonging was the cultural north star of the Values.

The five Values were presented as:

1. Respecting and Caring
2. Being Nature Positive
3. Achieving Together
4. Always Imagining
5. Taking Responsibility

It was noted that the inspiration behind the Values graphic were themes of belonging and togetherness, emphasising the interconnectedness between all five values.

It was noted that the current stage was implementation, with the focus awareness initially and ensuring that the values would be woven into everyday University life and decision-making processes. Leadership awareness had been identified as a critical enabler, with the values subsequently being incorporated into leadership development programmes and reflected in communications from senior leaders such as the Provost. The values framework had also been adopted by a number of leadership groups like the Leadership Alignment Group, and the Strategic Plan Management Group where it was being shown at the beginning of meetings for grounding before engaging in decision-making activities.

The Committee noted that an open invitation had been extended to the College to participate in the co-creation of the values implementation process, helping to build awareness and engagement. Communications had included features in the College Weekly Wrap-Up and were also issued by the Secretary's Office. A values workshop for the college community had recently explored how the values could be embedded across the nine stages of the moments that matter in the employee life cycle. Staff who were unable to attend due to such high levels of interest in the workshop were being contacted, and a number of those who did attend had since reached out to ask for support in bringing values to life within their own teams.

The Committee noted the next steps in the implementation of the Values. A dedicated values website and culture mailbox was being developed, and the values

would be made more visible across the campus through displays and graphics in shared spaces. Further support would be provided to teams to help them bring values to life in their areas. It was also noted that the values were starting to be incorporated into recruitment processes, including job advertisements and interview questions. The findings of the recent Dignity, Respect and Consent review would also inform future implementation. The Committee welcomed the progress made to date and commended those involved for their work. The Committee encouraged the continued implementation of the Values across the College.

The Head of Culture and Organisational Development, Ms. Michele Ryan and Project Officer (Workplace Values) Ms. Ewa Adach, leftthe meeting at this point.

PCC/25-26/76 2026/2027 Committee preparations

The Committee considered preparations for the 2026/2027 academic year.

76.1 To approve the Draft Revised Terms of Reference to move forward to Board for approval

The Committee discussed the proposed amendments made to the Terms of Reference. It was noted that the current quorum was set at 50% +1 of members. Following discussion with the Registrar, it was confirmed that we can determine the procedures that suit our own quorum.

The Committee agreed to remove the requirement for at least one external member to be present for a meeting to be quorate to provide greater flexibility in conducting meetings.

The Committee discussed the proposal to reduce the quorum requirement to 40% +1. Following discussion, it was agreed that the quorum would be 50% of the Committee membership, and where this is not a whole number, rounded down to the nearest whole number.

76.01 The revised Terms of Reference were approved and could move forward to Board, subject to the agreed amendment to the quorum provisions.

76.2 To agree the 2026/2027 Committee meeting dates

The Chair presented the proposed meeting schedule for the 2026/2027 academic year. The following dates were agreed:

- Thursday 10 September 2026
- Thursday 5 November 2026
- Thursday 11 February 2027
- Thursday 8 April 2027
- Thursday 20 May 2027

76.3 Committee Membership

The Chair noted that a number of membership terms were due to end and thanked all members for their contribution to the work for the Committee throughout the year.

Particular thanks were extended to Mr Andrew Duffin, who would be standing down from the Committee. The Chair also thanked Ms Paula Hicks and Ms Rachel Moss for agreeing to continue their membership. It was noted that two Committee members had yet to be contacted regarding their future membership arrangements.

Section C – Items for Discussion

PCC/25-26/77 2025/2026 Year in review

The Committee received a summary of decisions made and items noted throughout the 2025/2026 academic year, including matters recorded in the minutes and items considered under:

- Section B – Items for noting/approval
- Section C – Items for Discussion
- Section D – Circulation for noting

It was noted that this overview would inform the Committee's next Annual Report. The Chair highlighted the important role of the Committee in supporting the governance of the College.

PCC/25-26/78 Any Other Business

Committee member, Mr. Andrew Duffin, thanked the Committee for its support during his term. A query was raised regarding the use of the e-Leave system, including whether its current use should be considered by Board. The Secretary advised the Committee that e-Leave is the HR system used to record annual leave, sick leave and other types of leave, and that work is ongoing to extend its use to areas of the University not currently using the system. It was noted that there are benefits and risks associated with existing practices, and that e-Leave and related matters would be brought to a future Committee meeting in the Autumn. The Secretary also noted his willingness to engage further with Mr. Duffin and Group of Unions colleagues regarding any questions on the system.

Signed: ……

Date: ……