Trinity College Dublin

Provost's Report to Board on the
Review of Human Resources

February 2013

Table of contents: **Page**

1. Introduction

This report presents the outcome of a quality review of Human Resources at Trinity College Dublin. An external peer review visitation was undertaken on the 30th & 31st October 2012 by Ms Margaret Ayers, University of Kent; Professor Tobias Johannes de Coning, University of Stellenbosch, SA and Mr Adrian Grey, Musgrave Group PLC, Cork. The internal facilitator was Mr John Murphy, Trinity College Dublin.

This report is based on (i) feedback from the External Reviewers received on the 28th January 2013, (ii) a submission from the Director of Human Resources received on the 1st February 2013 and (iii) a submission from the Chief Operating Officer (COO) received on the 6th February 2013.

The main purpose of the review is (a) to provide a structured opportunity for the area to reflect on its activities and plans for development, while benefiting from a constructive commentary by senior colleagues external to College; and (b) to ensure that quality and standards in administration, management and service provision are being maintained and enhanced and that areas of concern in this regard are identified and addressed.

2. Overview of the Area

2.1 Structure & Function

The Human Resources function has overall responsibility for the strategic management of all staff in College. This executive responsibility is delivered through advice and support to managers in all aspects of recruiting, developing and managing people, through the provision of HR processes and procedures, and through the administration of HR transactional services such as pensions and payroll administration. The function is led by the Director of Human Resources, who reports to the Chief Operating Officer and is a member of the Provost's Executive Officer Group. The activities of HR are overseen by the HR Committee which is a principal Committee of Board and Council. HR also works with a number of sub Committees, principally in relation to staff review processes.

The Director of Human Resources has four senior direct reports. These four manager positions are based on functional responsibilities as follows:

- Deputy Director, with responsibility for Recruitment;
- Staff Establishment and Planning Manager;
- Staff Relations Manager;
- Staff Development Manager.

The *Recruitment Section* is responsible for planning and delivering recruitment, and related activities, which attract and secure the best candidates to work in Trinity College. The Recruitment section works within the framework of College approved policies and legislative obligations.

The *Staff Planning Section* is responsible for the management of employment control activity, the validation of post funding, and oversight of the post approval processes. The section also provides the

key HR management information required for both planning, and for external compliance. The section also has line management responsibility for the Payroll Unit, and close liaison with the Business Analyst.

The ***Staff Relations Section*** manages the full range of industrial relations activity in addition to the administration of College benefits and schemes, e.g. pension schemes. The section is also proactive in relation to policy development and staff welfare initiatives.

The ***Staff Development Section*** has responsibility for ensuring that practices, processes and policies are available and operational, to enable staff to develop to their full potential. In particular, the section ensures that HR development activity is underpinned by a focused needs analysis.

In addition to the discrete service areas managed by the above, there are three Faculty HR Advisors, appointed to the Faculties as well as a Business Analyst who has responsibility for the College's HR information system - CoreHR.

2.2   Staffing

The HR function employs 33.8 full time equivalent (FTE) staff, broken down as 4 Senior Administrative staff FTEs, 16.5 Administrative staff FTEs, 2.5 Senior Executive Officer FTEs and 10.8 Executive Officer FTEs.

2.3   Accommodation and Facilities (Physical Resources)

The majority of Human Resources staff are located in a single location, House 4, in Front Square. While the building was not designed for office use, the space available is adequate, and its campus location is important in connecting the central HR function with the staff of the College, and is favourable as a first point of contact with the College for potential employees. In relation to space deficiency, the building, which is a listed building, does have access issues, particularly in relation to accessibility of the staff training facility (on the third floor), while aspects of the interview facilities (noise exclusion and room temperature) are inadequate also. The HR Advisors are based in Faculty Offices. In addition to House 4, Human Resources utilise off-site storage for archive materials, mainly personnel files.

3. Reviewers' Recommendations

The Reviewers make the following key recommendations with a suggested level of priority for each:

High priority

1. *No HR Strategy*. The College needs to give the HR Director clarity of expectation as to what they expect a HR strategy to include. The HR Director should be released from ALL operational activity to enable him to focus on the HR (People) Strategy. The strategy should include some "blue sky" scenario planning to help the Provost and other senior managers begin to get to grips with possibilities after the Croke Park Agreement has ended in 2014.

2. *Support for development of a HR Strategy.* The Reviewers recommend that the HR Director should be provided with an external coach to support him as he develops the HR strategy and give the benefit of "check and challenge" through this process.

3. *Lack of communication within the HR department.* The HR strategy and plans that go with it will help to develop a sense of common purpose in the team that can also be communicated with the rest of the College – what HR is here for. A structure of meetings and communication plans needs to be developed and everyone needs to plan an active role in making it happen – not just the Human Resources Department.

4. *Role of HR Adviser needs to be more clearly understood by those in the organisation outside HR.* They can be perceived to be a "blockage" and in some respects they are dealing with individual cases which should be handled by the central HR Team. The Reviewers are not sure if this role is positioned to be senior enough – given the amount of influence etc. they are supposed to have with senior stakeholders in the organisation. Perhaps look at University HR programme for "HR Business Partners" to help with their development (http://www.uhr.ac.uk/careers-17-Career-Development-home.html).

5. *HR Advisers not part of HR Management team*. There should be a "virtuous circle" of communication from the stakeholders into HR and vice-versa that they are part of. Bring HR Advisers into HR Management Group.

6. The College needs to prioritise the HR system developments such as self-service to support the reductions in bureaucracy/rationalisation of timescales of processes that so many people in the College appear to be seeking HR to do. There are many IT projects due to come to fruition in a short period of time which may impact on the HR system if that is brought forward. The College should increase the resources available to this project in terms of people with experience to help implement it.

Medium priority

7. *Lack of metrics for HR/People measures for the College.* The HR Strategy should include some meaningful indicators that can be measured and then used to evaluate the performance of HR and of the College more broadly, in terms of its investment in people.

8. *There needs to be a plan for CPD of HR staff*. Development Needs Analysis should be done for every role and role-holder and appropriate plans put in place. It might be useful to look at some

department-wide development once the strategy is in place – what behaviours will need to change to deliver on this?

9. *Management Development – what type of leaders does the College need?* What development is needed to help underpin this? The College needs to develop a plan for management development that is valued by all stakeholders. This should be a key part of the HR Strategy – it might be useful to consider bringing in someone who could advise on options on this and involve senior stakeholders in the development of the programme to encourage buy-in across the college.

Low priority

10. *Trade Union involvement.* At the moment there is no "formal" Committee for consulting and negotiation with Trade Unions. A Committee should be set up (perhaps including non-union staff) representatives as well that could feed into the HR Committee. This will help develop relationships on all sides.

11. People don't understand how the process works for promoting non-academic staff. Work needs to be done to communicate this better to staff and managers.

12. There is no job evaluation scheme underpinning the jobs for "non-academic staff" which leave the College vulnerable to equal pay claims. This is a major issue to tackle in the future. We appreciate that financial constraints are holding back any work on promotion at the moment but it is hugely de-motivating for staff if there is not a clear and transparent process for establishing the relative worth of jobs within the organisation. The College should undertake a review in the future of whether a points-based jobs evaluation Scheme such as "Hay" or "HERA (Higher Education Role Analysis) could be introduced.

4. Provost's Recommendations to Board

In light of the Review Report and the responses from the Director of Human Resources and the Chief Operating Officer (COO), it is recommended that:

1. The Director of Human Resources working closely with the Chief Operating Officer and other relevant College Officers, should consider the detailed recommendations of the Review Report and draw up an implementation plan[1] for Board approval.

2. The Director of Human Resources working closely with the relevant Officers and other stakeholders publishes a College HR strategy in Hilary Term, which will be reviewed and approved as part of the START program.

3. The Director of HR should also focus on the high priority recommendations regarding communications within the HR department, roles and responsibilities of the HR advisors and HR system development (such as self service).

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[1] See Procedures and Protocol for Quality Review of Administration and Support Services 2011/12 at
http://www.tcd.ie/vpcao/quality/assets/pdf/Procedures_and_Protocol_for_Quality_Reviews_of_Administrative_and_Service_Areas
.pdf

Reviewers' Report

1.0 Executive Summary

1.1 This report has been prepared with the aim of providing Trinity College and the HR Director with a clear set of recommendations following a full review of the documentation that the College provided to us and a set of interviews with the key stakeholders who chose to participate in this review process. The Reviewers acknowledge that Trinity College is a successful university with world- leading research and ambitions to remain as one of the top universities in the world but that these ambitions are hampered by the austerity measures and national agreements that are currently in place in the public sector. It is hoped that this document will provide an opportunity for the HR team to help the College in preparing for the future beyond the Croke Park Agreement. The Reviewers recognise that there were many areas of strength in the current HR provision to the College but we have also sought to ensure that this Review document also articulates the views of those who felt there needs to be some urgent changes made.

2.0 Context

2.1 In order for Trinity College to derive significant value from the recent external development of its Human Resources (HR) function, the assessors are of the opinion that a suitable conceptual framework should be used to guide the future direction of the function in line with the College strategic intentions. The HR review group would propose the following Model developed by Nasemian and Ulrich (2012), according to which the HR function should be transformed and function in an interrelated manner across four dimensions:

- *HR administrative excellence* – referring to excellence in all HR administrative processes
- *HR as a change agent*, whereby HR should play a key facilitating and empowering transformational role in the organisation
- *HR as employee champion* whereby HR should ensure the optimal systemic wellbeing of all employees
- *HR as the business partner* of line management at the normative, strategic and operational levels of the organisation.

2.2 From a general perspective, depending on the current reality, intensity of internal and external organisational forces/demands, HR functions have to embark on a transformational journey which is far more strategic and proactive by nature, whilst maintaining high standards of administrative excellence in all aspects of HR service rendering. This should obviously be aligned with the evolving needs of the particular organisation to which the HR function renders service. From an anecdotal perspective it would appear that in many organisations there can be a 'disconnect' between the organisation and the HR function, on a normative and/or strategic and/or operational level. This phenomenon is also noticeable in Higher Education Institutions worldwide, where both the intensity and complexity of interrelated driving forces necessitate that HR should now play a far

more strategic and empowering role in the organisation; but, where the HR function finds it hard to respond to the challenge due to factors such as an inappropriate emphasis on administrative HR only. There can also be a tension in universities because very often the "added value" that can be provided by strategic HR is not something which many academic colleagues have experienced. In such cases HR functions experience varying degrees of difficulties to transform themselves to align with the organisation's needs and aspirations tending to rely on the robust nature of their traditional structure and emphasis. This inability has a less than desired effect on the rest of the organisation and it can produce negative perceptions about HR in the respective organisations. It is however clear that HR functions have little choice - in order to ensure the required value adding in their respective organisations, they must embark on the transformational journey as depicted below (see Figure 1).
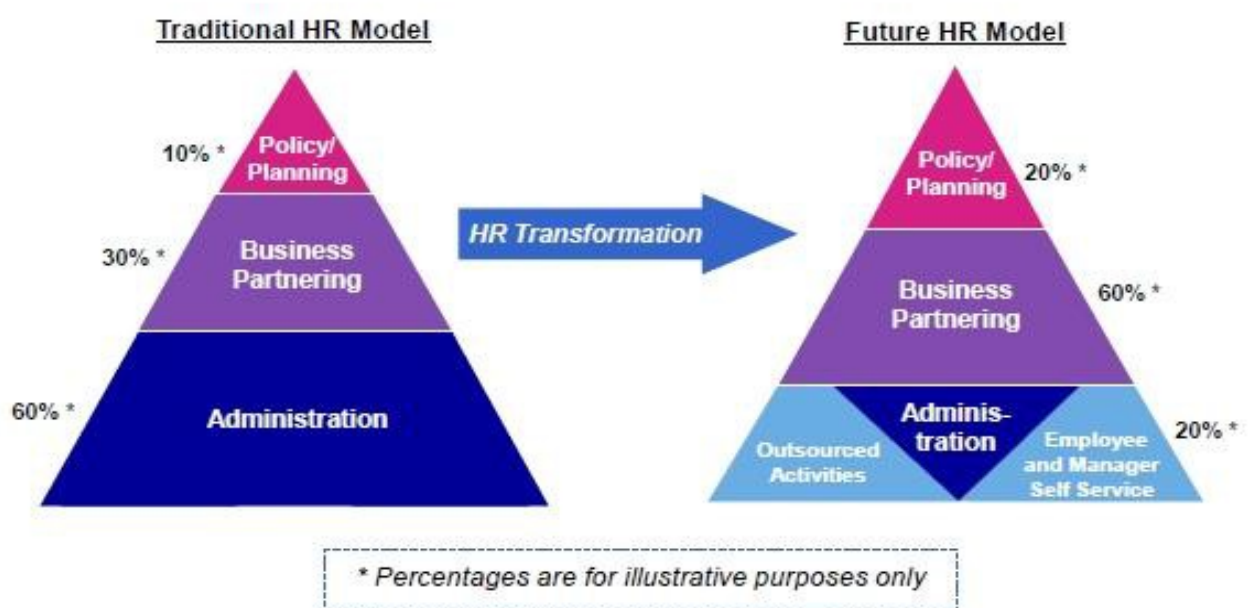

Figure 1: From a traditional to a future HR model (*Source: Nasemian and Ulrich (2012)***)**

3.3   Trinity College is subject to extraordinary stringent austerity measures, which co-produce an unprecedented emergent complexus in terms of the external environmental driving forces that the Institution has to respond to. The effects of this emergent complexus seem to be permeating substantial aspects of Trinity's internal functioning on a normative, strategic and operational level. The forces that emanate from this complex environment, calls for what Bleicher (1994) refers to as 'Integrated Management in times of transformation' (Bleicher, 1994:136) that impacts all aspect of the organisation (normative, strategic as well as operational) (refer Figure 2).

3.4   This also provided the context within which the external evaluation of Trinity's Human Resources Function was conducted and presented the evaluating team with a formidable challenge to reduce the apparent complexity to applicability with the task at hand – a balanced evaluation of the functionality of the Human Resources function as a key enabler of Trinity's current and future success; and, furthermore, to focus on those aspects over which it can logically be expected that the Human Resources function should take key responsibility and accountability for.
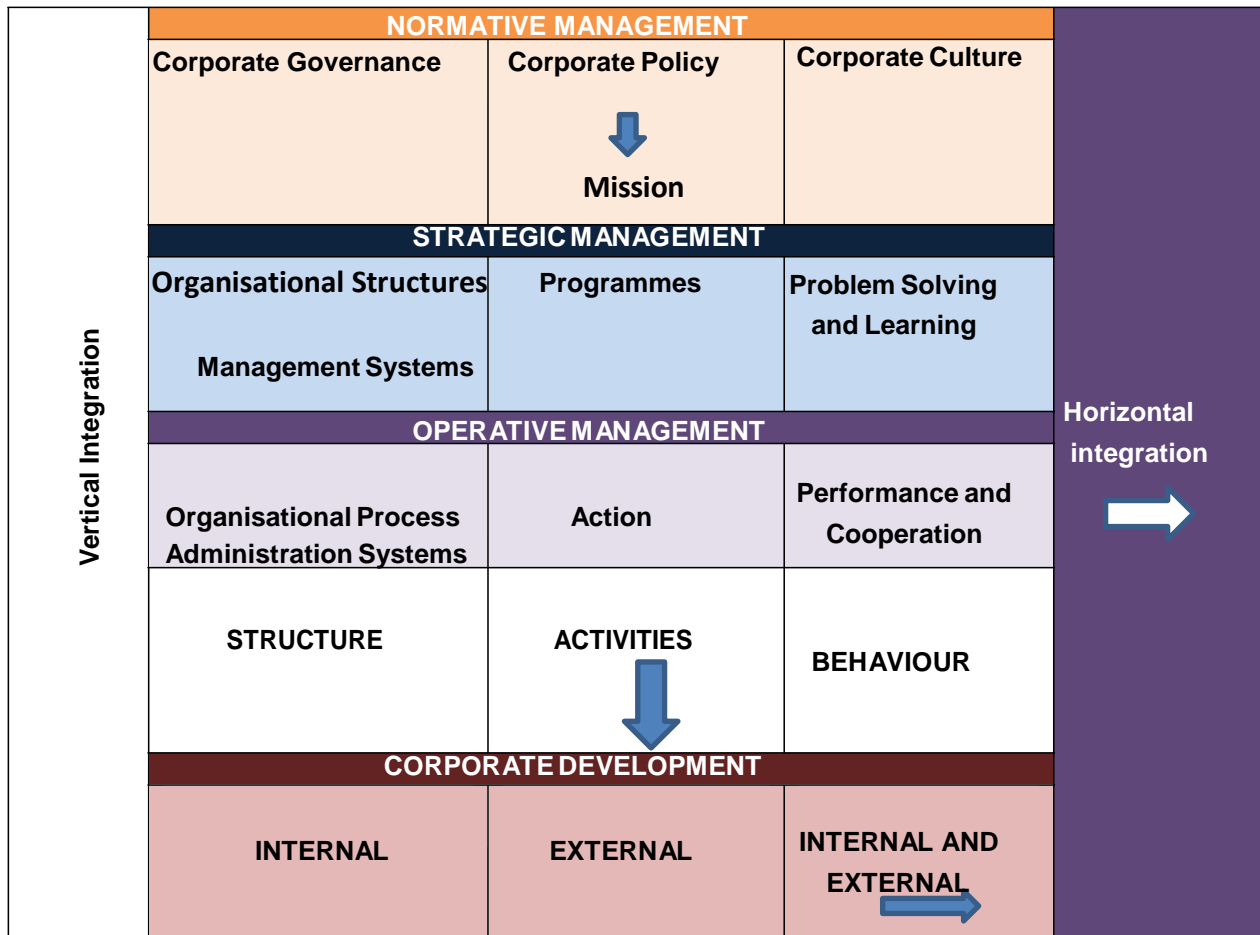
NORMATIVE MANAGEMENT		
Corporate Governance	Corporate Policy ⬇ Mission	Corporate Culture
STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT		
Organisational Structures Management Systems	Programmes	Problem Solving and Learning
OPERATIVE MANAGEMENT		
Organisational Process Administration Systems	Action	Performance and Cooperation
STRUCTURE	ACTIVITIES ⬇	BEHAVIOUR
CORPORATE DEVELOPMENT		
INTERNAL	EXTERNAL	INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL ➡

Vertical Integration

Horizontal integration ➡

Figure 2: Integrative management in times of transformation

Source: Bleicher, K. Integrative Management in a time of transformation. Long Range Planning, vol 27 (6), October 1994, pp. 136 -144

3.5   Given the intensity of the environmental driving forces as alluded to before, there are obvious (and expected) tensions that come to the fore in a Trinity organisational context:

- A pendulum swing in terms of centralisation and devolution of responsibility and accountability (where perhaps, in order to minimise risks and to ensure full compliance, authority is perceived to be centralised and line managers – especially academic line managers- are of the opinion that they have significant responsibilities without necessarily being empowered with the requisite levels of authority as well as knowledge and skills, to be able to meet the requirements of their respective jobs).
- In terms of classical systems archetypes perhaps a perception that there has been a shifting of the burden/ shifting of the blame phenomenon whereby the burden for people management is shifted fully to the Human Resources Function (line managers perhaps abdicating their key responsibility for important people management issues?)
- A primary focus by the Human Resources Function on HR administrative functions and less emphasis on the key roles of Human Resources as facilitators of change and transformation; to champion the cause of employees; and, most important of all, to be the value adding business partner of line managers at all levels in the organisation.

3.0   Positives

3.1   During the course of our review over the 2 days it was clear from the input of most people we met and interviewed that there are a lot of positives in the HR function and there was confirmation that the function is forced to operate within the constraints that are imposed on it and the College. While some people view the function primarily as an administration service there is a growing understanding that there is a need to structure the function and arm it with the right tools and skills to implement and progress the strategic priorities of the College:

- **Commitment and loyalty:** It is widely recognised that there is a deep rooted commitment across the HR team and a loyalty to Trinity College to do the 'right thing' knowing that sometimes decisions required and advice given may not be popular. The function is also viewed as having an overriding commitment and obligation to ensure that the interests of the college are protected;
- **Administration:** It is acknowledged that there are substantial administrative competencies within the function with some good processes in place to ensure things get completed in line with policy. It is also recognised that the function does perform a substantial amount of unseen work to ensure that the college and its employees are administered in line with policy and regulation. However, there is a frustration within the team that they are often constrained by the scope of College policy and external regulations and that they are often seen as the bearer of bad news and the cause of rigidity and bureaucracy;
- **Support and guidance:** There exists a clear appreciation that elements of the function are providing good support and guidance particularly in the areas of recruitment, industrial

relations, policy and regulations. There is also recognition that some elements of the HR Advisor responsibilities are working well but this is undermined by a clear frustration that there is a lot more that could be done and that significant duplication exists in how the roles are structured and resourced within the context of the overall HR function;

- **External relations:** There is an acknowledgement that the function sometimes has to operate in the difficult role as 'go-between' for the college and external agencies such as DOES and the HEA and that this presents challenges when external impositions have to be implemented within the College. It is also accepted that the function sometimes has very limited flexibility or scope for interpretation given the constraints imposed by the implementation of the Croke Park agreement;

- **Strategy:** it is clearly recognised by most groups interviewed that the function is currently operating primarily as an administration function. However College management are very clear in their requirement for the function to operate more strategically and that to do so the function must start with a clear people vision and strategy to position the function to ensure that the people elements of the College strategic plan 2009-2014 are effectively implemented;

- **Customer Service:** It was also widely recognised that within the function there is a substantial element that consistently give excellent 'one on one' interaction and service. Unfortunately it is also recognised that the ability to cut through the bureaucracy to get things done is often through these developed relationships rather than following the formal agreed procedures;

- **Efficiency:** There is an accepted understanding that the function is hampered by the amount of paper and effort that is required to complete even basic requirements such as recruitment in line with policy. However within the College (including the HR function) there is a clear recognition that things can be and need to be improved and developed. Furthermore within the HR function there exists both an acknowledgement and a willingness to commit to the changes required but a clear concern that this will only happen effectively if there is very clear direction laid down by College management to guide the necessary changes required;

- **Legislation:** there is an overriding commitment in the function to ensuring that the College is protected in terms of national legislation, policy and imposed directives and an acceptance that this sometimes comes at a price for the function;

- **Recognition:**
  - College management recognise that there is a requirement for the HR function to develop a more strategic/partner role with the Schools and academic units in order to progress the key strategic priorities for the overall College;
  - It is also recognised that the function is operating with limited resources and that this does slow up the conclusion of issues that need to be resolved quickly;
  - The HR team recognises that things have to change; that they have to become more customer focused and put the processes in place to give timely and decisive advice and support for college academic and support function management;
  - There is also recognition within HR management team that there is currently a lot of fire

fighting' going on, too much paper and bureaucracy in place. There is also an understanding that the function has to develop the ability to identify and embed the skills sets required to ensure that line managers can more effectively manage their people and their teams.

4.0   Key challenges facing the HR Function

The review team spent 2 days listening and collating the opinions, observations and comments of the extensive interviews that were conducted. These perceptions translate into a number of challenges that need to be considered and addressed by Human Resources:

- There is an apparent lack of HR support provided to line managers, this was also expressed at executive level (line managers in the academic environment were very adamant and vocal about this);
- There is a sense that there is duplication of HR services which negatively affects the turnaround time of HR service as well as resulting in conflicting advice from HR in some instances – depending on who you ask in HR. There might also be a tendency in line management to also 'shop around' to ensure that they get the advice that they want;
- A lack of credible and readily available (accessible) HR information available to line managers in the various organisational units;
- Insufficient and infrequent communication between HR and the various organisational units as well as in the HR function itself. This is apparently also the case as far as meaningful engagement with the various unions is concerned (their perspective);
- A strategic gap in the sense of the absence of an integrated long-term workforce plan with accompanying strategies and HR initiatives which not only serve Trinity best in the current context of externally imposed austerity, but also to overcome the current systemic inhibitors as far as the people component of the organisation is concerned. This requires more than a reactive or de post facto HR strategic approach, it stresses the importance of Strategic Human Resources Management which builds on a core competence to engage in triple loop learning – A transformation of the entrenched (austerity reinforced) paradigms about the context, content, processes and desired outcomes of Strategic Human Resources Management at Trinity College;
- Questions were raised by various groups and individuals about some of the current competencies of the HR function vs. the skills and competencies required to deliver on a more strategic level. This is not unusual in the wider profession as HR functions make the shift from administratively focused to being more business\customer focused. The University will have to ensure that the Function is equipped with the required future facing competencies in order to make the necessary shift a success;
- Access to the recruitment and selection HR processes, which is generally perceived to be of good quality, but it takes time to access these HR services due to resource constraints in the HR function;
- Mixed reviews on the training and development programmes facilitated by Human

Resources, with line managers from other service functions being reasonably to well satisfied by the HR offering in this regard, whilst line managers from academic functions in general were less satisfied;

- Industrial Relations issues, i.e. the handling thereof, with which especially line managers in academic environments complained re their perceptions regarding the apparent lack of required support that they expect Human Resources should offer in these issues – i.e. being proactive vs. reactive in assisting line managers to deal with issues early before they become entrenched and complex as well as proactively empowering these line managers to be able to do so themselves with policy guidance from HR;

- Some indications of potential role distortion between HR and the Treasurer's function (e.g. as pertaining to pension administration, 'who is responsible for what');

- Incomplete decentralisation of HR Advisors to the various academic departments with a lack of concurrent business process re-engineering in respect of HR policies and procedures in order to support optimal decentralised HR service rendering. Possible root cause: the position of HR Advisor pitched at perhaps a too junior level, with the potential unintended consequence that the HR Advisors perhaps do not possess the requisite HR competencies to, as far as possible, provide a sound decentralised and generalised HR service in the various Trinity environments;

- Questions about the START project, more specifically as to whether, as one would expect in a project approach characterised by concurrent design, the end users are given sufficient opportunity to articulate their specific needs and to express/explain their future desired state of the functionalities which they expect as both intermediate and final benefits which they should derive from START (in accordance with the principle of designing rather than controlling for quality);

- An apparent lack of key institutional HR indicators re absenteeism, performance indicators, head counts, etc., making it currently impossible to provide a range of HR 'dashboards' aligned with different levels of Trinity managers' people issue needs;

- A major challenge in order to prove that from a cost –benefit perspective, HR is sufficiently value- adding at the normative, strategic and operational level;

- The current conversation about the people skills within the university and the ability of the HR function to support the changes required in people management at line manager level is valid. There should be a focus on developing the skills required in the line management (including the role of the academic as a people manager). If this is not focussed on then the University will run the risk that the HR function will increasingly be expected to act as the University's people manager, which should not be the case. There is a requirement for Executive management to lay out clearly the responsibilities of the HR function and that of line management;

- The HR function is viewed as mainly a reactive administrative unit;

- The HR function through its people strategy will need to clearly articulate the roles and responsibilities of the HR function and how it will support the transition of skills in line management as outlined above. This will require the HR function identifying current best

practice in the HR profession and ensuring that its application is contextualised in a Trinity manner;

- Internal communication and knowledge transfer in HR needs to be consistent and well applied so that the centre channels advice to the line manager through the devolved business partner. This will reduce the current 'duplicated' service rendering as outlined above and also reduce the longer turnaround times in the HR processes associated with this duplication;
- That the current approach to workforce planning is insufficient to cater for the future workforce needs in a timely manner. This has a negative effect on developing the next generation of academics, career "pathing", individualised personal development plans for staff, performance management, and succession planning; and, it could also expose Trinity to unnecessary IR as well as financial risks in terms of e.g. employment contracts which are funded from various sources;
- In developing an agreed people strategy for the university, the HR Director will need to clearly articulate the requirements of the academic community in terms of the skill sets and support required to embed the necessary people practices and service offerings.

5.0   Recommendations

5.1   After deliberating on this various issues as listed above (in no particular order); we have decided to link them to a number of central recommendations and to indicate a recommended priority to each of them (see Table 1).

Table 1: Major recommendations and priorities

Issue Identified	Comments	Recommendations for Change	Priorities
1 No HR Strategy	The College need to give the HR Director clarity of expectation as to what they expect a HR strategy to include	The HR Director should be released from ALL operational activity to enable him to focus on the HR (People) Strategy The strategy should include some "blue sky" scenario planning to help the Provost and other senior managers begin to get to grips with possibilities after the Croke Park Agreement has ended in 2014	**High**
2.Support for development of a HR Strategy		We recommend that the HR Director should be provided with an external coach to support him as he develops the HR strategy and give the benefit of "check and challenge" through this process.	**High**
3.Lack of metrics for HR/People measures for the College		The HR Strategy should include some meaningful indicators that can be measured and then used to evaluate the performance of HR and of the College more broadly, in terms of its investment in people.	**Medium**
4.Lack of communication within the HR department	The HR strategy and plans that go with it will help to develop a sense of common purpose in the team that can also be communicated with the rest of the College – what HR is here for.	A structure of meetings and communication plans needs to be developed and everyone needs to plan an active role in making it happen – not just the HRD	**High**
5. Role of "HR Adviser" needs to be more clearly understood by those in the organisation outside HR. They can be perceived to be a "blockage" and in some respects they are dealing with individual cases which should be handled by the central HR Team.	We are not sure if this role is positioned to be senior enough – given the amount of influence etc. they are supposed to have with senior stakeholders in the organisation	Perhaps look at University HR programme for "HR Business Partners" to help with their development. http://www.uhr.ac.uk/careers-17-Career-Development-home.html	**High**

Issue Identified	Comments	Recommendations for Change	Priorities
6 HR Advisers not part of HR Management team	There should be a "virtuous circle" of communication from the stakeholders into HR and vice-versa that they are part of	Bring HR Advisers into HR Management Group	High
7 There needs to be a plan for CPD of HR staff		Development Needs Analysis should be done for every role and role-holder and appropriate plans put in place. IT might be useful to look at some department-wide development once the strategy is in place – what behaviours will need to change to deliver on this?	Medium
8 The College needs to prioritise the HR system developments such as self-service to support the reductions in bureaucracy/rationalisation of timescales of processes that so many people in the College appear to be seeking HR to do	There are many IT projects due to come to fruition in a short period of time which may impact on the HR system if that is brought forwards	The College should increase the resources available to this project in terms of people with experience to help implement it.	High
9 Trade Union involvement	At the moment there is no "formal" Committee for consulting and negotiation with Trade Unions	A Committee should be set up (perhaps including non-union staff) representatives as well that could feed into the HR Committee. This will help develop relationships on all sides.	Low
10 Management Development – what type of leaders does the College need? What development is needed to help underpin this?	The College needs to develop a plan for management development that is valued by all stakeholders	This should be a key part of the HR Strategy – it might be useful to consider bringing in someone who could advise on options on this and involve senior stakeholders in the development of the programme to encourage buy-in across the college.	Medium
11 People don't understand how the process works for promoting non-academic staff		Work needs to be done to communicate this better to staff and managers	Low

Issue Identified	Comments	Recommendations for Change	Priorities
12 There is no job evaluation scheme underpinning the jobs for "non-academic staff" which leave the College vulnerable to equal pay claims	This is a major issue to tackle in the future. We appreciate that financial constraints are holding back any work on promotion at the moment but it is hugely demotivating for staff if there is not a clear and transparent process for establishing the relative worth of jobs within the organisation.	The College should undertake a review in the future of whether a points-based jobs evaluation Scheme such as "Hay" or "HERA (Higher Education Role Analysis) could be introduced.	**Low**

5.2   The development of an inclusive multi-year workforce plan underpinned by appropriate HR-metrics is deemed as a pivotal component and enabler of the HR strategic plan, as recommended. This will present major challenges to the HR function, hence the strong recommendation to de-couple the HR Director for a period of time (3 to 4 months) from the operational functioning of the HR function; and, to allocate the task of developing a multi-year HR strategic plan for Trinity. Both the HR strategic plan as well as the actual process of developing it is of key importance. For the plan to be credible it would be necessary to establish and maintain dynamic interactions with a range of external and internal stakeholders. These dynamic relationships should facilitate a process whereby the various stakeholders take co-ownership in a concurrent manner of the HR plan. The responsibility for establishing and maintaining these critical dynamic relationships is the responsibility of the HR director. We deem the success of this process as well as the actual output in terms of a relevant and workable HR strategic plan, as of key importance to the future success of the HR function at Trinity. Implementation of the finally approved plan will in all probability require a resource investment in the HR function. Whilst taking full cognisance of the resource constraints currently faced by Trinity, we are of the view that optimising of Trinity's knowledge base (both of academic and support service staff) holds the key to sustain it through these times of extreme austerity and to take Trinity into a successful future. The important facilitating role that should be played by HR in this process cannot be negated. This will in our opinion require an investment in the HR function – but based on a sound strategic and implementation plan.

Thanks

The Review Team would like to record their thanks to all those who were involved in facilitating the Review process and those who took part in each of the meetings.

6. Response from the Director of Human Resources

1. <u>Introductory Comment</u>

I would like to thank the External Review Team for agreeing to participate in the Quality Review process for Trinity College HR Department and for giving of their time and expertise throughout that process. The input of HR practitioners with industry and international, as well as university expertise, is strongly welcomed.

I welcome the fact that the Reviewers, having acknowledged areas of strength, identified some contextual constraints, considered the inputs of those participants who identified a need for change, and in so doing presented options for the College in terms of future HR service positioning and delivery.

On behalf of the HR Team I am particularly pleased to note the positive commentary, primarily the recognition of a deep rooted commitment across the HR Team and their loyalty to the College.

2. <u>General Response</u>

In general terms I welcome the report as input to the consideration of HR Strategy, and as a catalyst of further debate in relation to the positioning of Human Resources in College in the context of that strategy discussion. I note in particular the observation that HR functions have to embark on a transformational journey, becoming more strategic and proactive in nature, at the same time aligning with the evolving needs of the College. The Reviewers have highlighted the challenges posed in making this transformation journey particularly for higher education, noting specifically the tension that can exist in universities in relation to added value of strategic HR. The current development of a HR Strategy for College provides the basis to shape the nature of that transformational journey in College.

I note the Reviewer's proposal of a HR model developed by Nasemian and Ulrich (2012) as a suitable conceptual framework in which to consider the future direction of HR in College. I agree with the appropriateness of this type of model as a basis to consider HR service and the supporting HR competence required.

In relation to the Reviewer's detailing of the 'Key challenges facing the HR function', I note these represent a combination of stakeholders' perspective and advice to the Reviewers, and also include some commentary by the Review Team themselves. The issues identified do highlight a difference in perspective between academic and administrative managers. While there may be an obvious explanation for this in relation to training and development programmes (given that professional academic development is delivered through CAPSL rather than HR) the underlying cause of the

divergence in respect of other common HR services will need to be explored further. It is my intention that the stakeholder engagement which will be undertaken as part of the development of the HR Strategy will address this particular issue.

Turning to the recommendations set out in Section 5 of the report, I note that the Reviewers presented recommendations on a prioritised basis. I will confine comment at this stage generally to those recommendations that are categorised as High priority by the Reviewers.

In relation to HR Strategy I note that the Reviewers were advised of the development of a HR Strategy in the context of the START Programme. I welcome their comments which will be incorporated into the development of the HR Strategy.

With regard to HR roles, structures and competencies these points will be addressed in the Implementation Plan and when delivering the finalised HR Strategy.

It is noted that the Reviewers also refer to HR system development which is the HR administrative excellence aspect of the proposed HR conceptual model, and which is also referred to by Ulrich as 'technical proficiency'. The tacit support of the Reviewers for the HR E-Strategy Work Stream and their proposal for increased resourcing and acceleration of same is broadly welcomed. However, in the context of the concurrent projects currently running, the Implementation Plan will address capacity to deliver additional project work while maintaining operational performance.

I welcome the specific additional recommendation in relation to a multi-year workforce plan and the measures required to implement it.

The recommendation to decouple the HR Director from operational functioning of HR for a number of months is not currently achievable due to the current operational workload within the HR team. The process to develop the HR Strategy will be as inclusive and engaging of stakeholders as possible.

I welcome the recommendation for investment in the HR function with the important qualification that any such investment be based on a sound strategic and implementation plan.

3.   Conclusion

In conclusion I wish to thank the Review Team for their participation in our Quality Review and for their insightful and thought provoking report. I would like to acknowledge with thanks the input of the HR Team in preparing for the HR Review and to thank all stakeholders who participated in the review for their input to the process. I will now work with the Chief Operating Officer, Provost and Executive Officers and the HR Team to prepare a detailed Implementation Plan to address the recommendations of the report following its consideration by Board.

Tony McMahon
Director of Human Resource

7. Response from the Chief Operating Officer (COO)

Introduction:
I would like to thank the Review Team for their time and effort in conducting this review. I welcome the report and the positive comments and insightful, helpful recommendations.

The reviewers commented positively on the commitment and loyalty of staff in the department, and highlighted the existence of some good processes in line with policy, good support and guidance in areas such as recruitment, industrial relations, policy/regulations and excellent "one on one" interaction and service.

The reviewers recognize the constraints imposed on the department by external regulations, the Croke Park Agreement, College policy and national legislation.

General comments:
The reviewers suggest that TCD apply a suitable HR framework so that the College can derive value from external developments regarding HR. I agree with this and suggest that the organisation should also regularly benchmark externally to understand, adopt and implement best practices.

I endorse the comments that HR must transform its focus from one of administration to one of business partnering and policy planning as per the model outlined in the report (Nasemian and Ulrich – 2012). HR is a key enabler of Trinity's current and future successes and this is also identified in the START program.

The reviewers commented on tensions they view as obvious: a) Centralisation versus devolution of accountability, b) Responsibility for people management being assumed by line managers rather than HR and c) A current primary focus on HR administration and less emphasis on the role of HR as facilitators of change and transformation, championing employees and most importantly, being the adding value business partner of line managers at all levels in the organization. It is important that there is clarity regarding roles, responsibilities and accountability/measurements to resolve these tensions. The skills gaps present in the organisation will need to be addressed and a plan for CPD within HR developed.

The HR director is currently working on a HR strategy which will be delivered in March 2013. The strategy is being developed as one of the key START recommendations and will be reviewed by START governance along with an Implementation Plan. Implementation of the strategy will enable the transition to a modern flexible and proactive HR organisation.

The key challenges outlined by the reviewers based on observations and comments from the interviews conducted are consistent with feedback from the community and the START program.

In relation to the issue of communication within the department, I accept the Reviewers' recommendation and will work with the Director of HR to ensure that the required processes and mechanisms are put in place.

The role of the HR advisors and their connection to the HR department will be addressed by the HR strategy.

The high priority recommendation regarding HR systems' developments is part of the E-Strategy program and will be monitored closely to ensure implementation and thus reduce bureaucracy and timelines.

The reviewers commented on the lack of metrics/people measures and the need for meaningful indicators to evaluate the performance of HR and of the College. This should be addressed as part of the HR strategy.

The issue of management development was also recognized as requiring improvement in the START program and, again, will be a key part of the HR strategy.

The reviewers recommend that a job evaluation scheme for non-academic staff with a clear and transparent process be put in place. There are proven schemes available to do this such as "Hay" or "HERA (Higher Education Role Analysis).

Conclusion:
I would like to thank the reviewers and the College staff who participated in this review. We plan to implement many of the recommendations in line with the START program of which the HR strategy is a key enabler.

Darina Kneafsey
Chief Operating Officer