TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN

PROVOST'S REPORT TO COUNCIL ON THE REVIEW OF THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

1. INTRODUCTION

This report presents the outcome of a review of the School of Education. An external peer review visitation was undertaken on the 7th & 8th April 2008 by Professor Gary Thomas, University of Birmingham, Professor Pamela Munn, University of Edinburgh and Professor Marilyn Osborn, University of Bristol. The internal member of the review team was Professor Ciaran Brady, School of Histories & Humanities, Trinity College Dublin.

The report is based on (i) feedback from the external Reviewers received on the 14th July 2008, (ii) a submission from the School of Education received on the 6th November 2008 and (iii) a submission from the Dean of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences received on the 4th December 2008.

The main purpose of the School review is (a) to provide a structured opportunity for the School to reflect on its activities and plans for development, while benefiting from a constructive commentary by senior colleagues external to College; (b) to ensure that quality and standards in teaching, research and administration are being maintained and enhanced; and (c) to ensure that areas of concern in this regard are identified and addressed within an eighteen month timescale. This review process ensures that each School in College is reviewed systematically once every seven years. The School of Education was last reviewed on the 13th & 14th April 2000.

2. OVERVIEW OF THE SCHOOL

2.1 Aims and Objectives of the School

The general aims and objectives of the School of Education and its values and overall vision in relation to the four core areas of teaching, learning, research & contribution to community, are articulated in its mission statement as follows:

- to contribute to the advancement of education in Ireland and beyond through excellence in research and teaching;
- to combine a concern for high academic standards with a high degree of personal care for its students;
- to meet the growing demand for access to higher education through the development of new models of participation and new modes of teaching and learning;
- to explore the impact of new technologies and globalisation in the national and international environment through collaborative and constructive critique with students, educators and external stakeholders;
- to secure additional sources of funding for research and to disseminate the results of innovative projects to a national and international audience.

2.2 Programmes to which the School provides teaching

Undergraduate
- Bachelor in Education (B.Ed.) (ordinary)
- Bachelor in Education (B.Ed.) (honors)
- Bachelor in Music Education (B.Mus.Ed.)

Postgraduate
- Higher Diploma in Education (H.Dip.Ed.) (Primary)
- Postgraduate Diploma in Education (P.Grad.Dip.)

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- o Master of Studies (M.St.)
- o Master in Technology & Learning (M.Sc.) (jointly delivered with the Faculty of EMS)
- o Master in Education (M.Ed.)
- o Professional Doctorate in Education (D.Ed.)

Continuing Professional Development (In-Service Courses)
- o Postgraduate Diploma in Educational Studies (P.Grad.Dip.)
- o Postgraduate Diploma in Educational Leadership and Management (P.Grad.Dip.)

2.3 Research

High quality research is an activity which is intrinsic to the identity and purpose of the School. In light of College restructuring and as part of the School's strategic plan 2005-08, the School has engaged in an on-going process of reviewing its research strategy, and the has identified a number of research aims as follows:

- o to inform, challenge and contribute to the relationship between policy and practice at all levels (classroom, school, governmental) through high quality research;
- o develop existing research centres and establish new research centres as required;
- o develop new and innovative methodologies for research in education;
- o promote inclusive and collaborative forms of research activity;
- o to nurture and support new researchers at every level (undergraduate, masters, doctoral etc.) and in a variety of professional contexts;
- o to be at the forefront of continuing professional development in Ireland and Europe;
- o to disseminate research findings as widely as possible both within and outside of academia.

2.4 Summary Statistical Profile of the School for the Academic Year 2006/07[1]

Full-time Staff FTE	Undergraduate FTE	Postgraduate FTE	School Staff: Student Ratio	Faculty Staff: Student Ratio
21	410	395	39	23

Figures from Senior Lecturer's Annual Report approved by Council at its meeting on 5th December 2007.

2.5 Accommodation and Facilities (Physical Resources)

The School of Education has 22 offices on the third floor and four offices on the fourth floor of the Arts Building, and three offices in Foster Place. The School controls three teaching spaces in the Arts Building - rooms 3105, 3098, 4035 - and shares room 1.03 in Foster Place with the Centre for Academic Practice and Student Learning.

Room 3104 is a designated space for part-time staff but this room is often used as a teaching space for small groups due to the shortage of appropriate teaching spaces. Room 3125 is used as a small resource library for students and staff, especially students taking Continuing Professional Development (CPD) courses who do not have access to main library. The Anti-Bullying Centre is located in Rooms 4048 and 4089 in the Arts Building. Room 4044 has been allocated for Postgraduate Research students.

The School has been partially successful in adapting room 3104 to function as a base for some part-time staff, however, this room is in constant demand for small group teaching/tutorial work. The School uses room 4044 in the Arts Building for postgraduate students though facilities are limited (three desks, a computer point, and a phone). The Master in Education course has a dedicated room, 4035, however, this room is frequently used by other courses for teaching. The plan to convert room 3105 to the Learning Resource Centre has been halted and the Learning Resource Centre has also been downsized.

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[1] *The staff FTEs include all Professors, Associate Professors, Senior Lecturers and Lecturers funded from the core HEA grant, or from self-financing courses, and all part-time and occasional staff and demonstrators, converted to an FTE, who are funded from core grant or from self-financing courses.*

3. EXTERNAL PEER REVIEW REPORT

SUMMARY OF REPORT

3.1   RESEARCH

The Reviewers state that "*staff are interested and enthusiastic about the development of research and there has been considerable progress in the last few years in research activity and in the output of staff publications.*" In terms of indicators of international esteem, the Reviewers note that "*individuals and teams have received invitations to deliver keynote addresses and guest lectures, and a number serve on national and international advisory committees of international peer-reviewed journals.*" The Reviewers feel, however, that there is still much "*unexploited potential*" as the research record of the School is "*not-outstanding*" and in terms of international comparison, the School would "*not rank highly or even average at the present time.*" While some individual members of staff have an excellent record of publication and success in obtaining funding, this is not universal. A specific area of weakness identified by the Reviewers is the absence of "*publication of research results in peer-reviewed journals and publications.*" The Reviewers feel that "*the lack of strength in internationally recognised publications was related to the need for the development of a strong research infrastructure and a culture which supports, encourages and rewards academic research,*" and is not just a factor of the heavy workload and the high staff-student ratio. They recognise, however, that "*serious attempts have been made within the School in the last few years to create such a research culture*" with the organisation of research seminars and support for research applications. Some of these initiatives subsequently ceased when the Research Development Officer left and the post was not re-filled.

The Reviewers note that the Director of Research co-ordinates two successful and demanding teaching programmes, in addition to a full teaching and supervision load, and is therefore unlikely to have time to develop a research culture or a stronger research infrastructure. There is no Research Office within the School and the post of Research Development Officer is currently vacant. They believe that "*there is a need for clearer definitions of the role and responsibilities of the Director of Research and a suitable allocation of time within the workload of the individual occupying this position to allow him/her to carry out these responsibilities.*" They also suggest that "*a re-instatement of supporting posts such as Research Development Officer or Research Administrator….would assist in the development of a stronger research culture.*" They note that "*the creation of a strong research culture also involves the strengthening of the relationship between research and teaching,*" and report that while in some areas this appears to be strong, there is potential for further development in other areas. They note that for a small School with a relatively small number of staff, the research interests of staff are very wide and diverse. The Reviewers suggest that the "*School's research would benefit by a sharper focus on a small number of research themes which are manageable and coherent and involve all staff in a collaborative research effort.*" While some staff in the School are doing research which has links to the University-wide research themes, the Reviewers feel that the university's "*current thematic priorities may lack resonance for social scientists working within education.*"

The Reviewers met the Directors and staff of the School's two research centres and note that the Anti-Bullying Centre (ABC) is "*nationally and internationally known for the quality of its research and contribution to the community.*" The ABC has held at least five major EU collaborative research projects in addition to hosting international conferences and conducting research at School, national and international levels. They feel, however, that the ABC is "*stretched to capacity*" and state that "*work is being turned down because of a lack of staff capacity.*" With the Director and two part-time staff members also holding other roles in the School, the Reviewers recommend the appointment of a research fellow to release the Director to undertake further research and "*enable more strategic planning to take place.*"

The Reviewers commend the Centre for Research in Information Technology in Education (CRITE) for its "*excellence in cross-faculty collaboration and in developing a strong relationship between teaching and research in Information Technology in Education.*" They note that while the Centre has been successful in obtaining EU and other Research funding, has a good publication record and has hosted international conferences, "*there is further potential for the development of associated PhD and postdoctoral fellowships attached to the Centre.*" They remark that a revision of the School's unsuccessful proposal for a Centre for Values in Education (CAVE) to widen the scope of the Centre might attract more external research funding. Although the School's strategic plan identifies the development of a third research centre, the Reviewers found little evidence of this in the self-assessment documents or in their discussions with staff. They recommend that

this proposal be progressed as soon as possible as it could be used *"to facilitate greater coherence in the School's research themes and the integration of staff into collaborative research activity."*

The Reviewers remark that there *"is little or no collaborative research between staff in the associated Colleges and those in Trinity."* They feel that opportunities for staff in the Associated Colleges to conduct research are limited by their reduced access to TCD libraries, the limited information exchange between them and the College and the lack of research seminars in the Associated Colleges. There is, they believe, *"clearly unexploited potential for collaboration in research and joint-Masters' courses between the colleges and the School."*

The Reviewers feel that there would be considerable advantages to staff and student workloads, and perhaps to recruitment, if the thesis requirement for D.Ed. students was shortened. They report that some students on the D.Ed. programme had concerns that they receive *"very little on-going verbal or written feedback on assignments and thus did not have a clear idea of how they were doing or how to improve."* The Reviewers believe that the practice of assigning supervisors to students at the beginning of the taught units is *"an excellent practice"* as it ensures that students have guidance throughout the taught course modules and are only accepted onto the programme if there is a suitable advisor available. They report that the Ph.D. students interviewed were *"generally very happy with the quality of supervision they receive,"* but there is little integration of these students into the academic community and this leads to a feeling of isolation. The Reviewers report that the students would like *"regular research seminars, or workshops or perhaps a research student conference."* This sentiment was also echoed by D.Ed. students who would welcome the opportunity to attend organised activities by the School in the last year of dissertation writing.

The Reviewers remark on the poor quality of accommodation for research students and state that it reflects *"the general limited space provided for the School in general."* They believe that possibilities exist to expand both the Ph.D. and D.Ed. programmes, and, in particular, the intake of national and international students, but that expansion is limited by high staff teaching workloads. They suggest that the School should consider *"a sharper focus on post-graduate training and research in line with Trinity College's published research mission."*

3.2   TEACHING & LEARNING

With regard to the B.Mus.Ed., the Reviewers gained an impression of *"a well-organised and well-structured degree where students were busy and intellectually challenged but well supported."* This view is also reflected in the external examiners' reports which are very positive. Demand for the course is high, and the Reviewers report good relations between Trinity College and the Dublin Institute of Technology Conservatory of Music and the Royal Irish Academy of Music. Students speak warmly of staff commitment to them, and are confident about their career options and progression. The Reviewers report that students would appreciate a calendar of assessments from the beginning of the programme; synchronisation of holiday/reading week arrangements amongst the three institutions; and a different sequencing of the psychology and sociology units.

The B.Ed. (Primary) differs from the B.Mus.Ed. in that its focus is on primary rather than secondary education, the numbers of students are higher, and, the Reviewers believe, the curriculum expertise of the collaborating institutions is not so clearly defined. The Reviewers report that in addition to providing overall leadership in the development of the degree programme, Trinity teaches the foundation principles of philosophy, sociology, psychology and history of education, disciplines that are no longer taught in undergraduate teacher training programmes in the UK. The Reviewers recognise the challenge of overcoming the 'theory-practice' divide in initial teacher training and report that *"modern ITE programmes employ a variety of teaching strategies in an attempt to encourage student teachers to make connections between the curriculum experienced in university-based education and the reality of classroom practice."* These strategies include problem-based learning and the use of virtual learning environments. The Reviewers note that *"while few Schools of Education in the UK would claim to be entirely successful in bridging the theory-practice divide,"* they were nonetheless *"taken aback by the lack of support from students and staff in the associated Colleges about the curriculum and models of pedagogy on offer from Trinity,"* particularly as the School reports that efforts to improve relations since the last review have borne fruit. The B.Ed. (Primary) curriculum was seen by students and staff in the Associated College as *"in need of radical overhaul both in terms of content and teaching methods."*

The Reviewers feel that the "*expressed commitment to be at the forefront of teacher education internationally might benefit from a mix of home and overseas external examiners.*" They report that mechanisms for communication and collaboration by staff from Trinity and the Associated Colleges seem limited, with no staff-student liaison committee, little sharing of examination papers, no shared programme materials and no informal meetings of staff on a regular basis. At a more strategic level, the Reviewers report that "*senior members of staff in the School felt excluded from discussions about long-term relationships between Trinity and its associated Colleges.*" Attempts by Trinity staff to provide a more collaborative relationship with the Associated Colleges do not seem to have been successful. The Reviewers believe that there is no doubt about the commitment of staff to students on the programme, and they believe that the low level of resources available to the School of Education needs to "*...be addressed in any review of provision.*"

In general, the Reviewers feel that the B.Ed. honors year which is wholly the responsibility of Trinity, is well regarded by students on the programme who recognise the support that they receive from staff members. There is up to 180 students registered on the honors degree year and the Reviewers feel that such a high number may pose problems for thesis supervision. One possible way of addressing this, they suggest, would be to align groups of students around the School's main research themes thereby "*creating an opportunity for students to work collaboratively on a common topic and for the best to co-author work with their supervisors for publication.*" The Reviewers report that while students "*welcomed small group teaching and the ability to study in greater detail*" they were "*generally disappointed at the lack of connection between the year and the realities of their classrooms.*" Students report that they would have welcomed greater input on matters such as special educational needs and a research methods programme more attuned to their needs. In addition, the Reviewers report that "*students were disappointed at the scarcity of staff teaching on the year who had primary education experience.*"

3.3   POSTGRADUATE EDUCATION

The Reviewers state that external examiners' reports confirm the Higher Diploma in Primary Education and the Postgraduate Diploma in Education as being of appropriate standards and posing "*reasonable intellectual and practice orientated standards for students.*" They also feel that the issues surrounding ways of bridging the theory-practice divide raised in respect of the undergraduate programmes also apply here as does the need to devise a mechanism for students to raise issues about their programme. They acknowledge the difficulty for the School of Education to establish meaningful relationships with placement schools and remark that this is a national issue requiring concerted action. The suite of Masters programmes run by the School provides an opportunity to link staff research interests directly with teaching. The Reviewers report that some progress has been made towards the modularisation suggested by the previous review. The students interviewed reported that they would like "*faster feedback on their work without having to wait for confirmation from the external examiner.*"

Space is also an issue, and the Reviewers suggest that the College and the School should consider ways in which it can provide a social space for part-time students. In an effort to include them in academic life, masters and doctoral students should also be encouraged to co-author papers and attend student conferences attached to major national and international conferences.

3.4   SERVICE TO COLLEGE AND SOCIETY

The Reviewers commend staff involvement on College committees, and the involvement by individuals in the School with the voluntary and charitable sectors. They draw particular attention to the work of the Anti-Bullying Centre in tackling bullying in the workplace and schools, and the "*imaginative range of Continuing Professional Development opportunities available to teachers in Ireland*".

3.5   RESOURCES

With reference to the high staff:student ratio (SSR) in the School, the Reviewers recommend that a "*transparent analysis needs to be undertaken by College of this situation.*" The unacceptably high SSR was raised at the last review and the Reviewers report that little seems to have changed since then. Access to administrative and support staff is appropriate for staff on-campus but appears to be lacking for academic staff in the Associated Colleges, in particular in relation to accessing online library facilities. The Reviewers report

that "*of the five staffing objectives emerging from the 2005-2008 strategic plan, three have been met: the two contract posts; the lecturer in leadership and management, and the school administrator. However, the five new junior members of staff and the distance learning expert have not been secured.*" They note that the recommendation in 2000 to appoint a professor has only been implemented in 2008.

The Reviewers note that existing staff are "*thoughtful and dedicated*" and that there are examples of real excellence in the work undertaken by them. They recommend, however, that a system of workload management be introduced which would facilitate effective strategic planning and enable the "*shifting of resources from less viable to more viable areas, or from teaching to research or visa versa.*" The Reviewers report that the quality of the teaching spaces and the social spaces is poor and that where equipment is necessary, e.g. for the B.Mus.Ed., it is lacking. It was noted that "*there was a clear case of lack of infrastructure inhibiting the development of improved teaching*" as the lack of breakout rooms for B.Ed. students affected choice of pedagogy. The Reviewers are unclear as to how funding for improved infrastructure should be divided between the School and the College, but they feel that infrastructure improvement costs should be borne centrally. Students are generally happy with library and IT services, although both students and staff in the Associated Colleges did report occasional problems with access to IT.

3.6   ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURES AND PLANNING

The Reviewers report that management structures within the School comprise monthly staff meetings, a School Executive Committee, course co-ordinating committees and the B.Ed/H.Dip. review committee, together with meetings between the Head of School, Directors and Course co-ordinators. They express their concern that the School Executive Committee has not yet convened and recommend that the Committee meets "*sooner rather than later, and more often rather than less often*" in order for the management and determination of strategic direction to be successful. While the programme management teams "*appear to be appropriately constituted,*" the Reviewers note that "*the B.Ed./H.Dip. strands operated with tensions with which the management and review structures had not yet come to terms.*" For example, they believe that "*managing the B.Ed. programme involved considerable administrative demands and this was exacerbated by the tendency of the Associated Colleges to raise student intake without reference to the School.*"

The Reviewers believe that the "*conjoining*" of the work of Trinity and the Associated Colleges is an ongoing problem, and there is a need for improved communication and relationship between the Colleges and the School of Education. The Reviewers express some confusion about how budgets and SSR are calculated, and query why student numbers on the B.Ed. are allowed to rise when there is obvious demand for the continuing professional development and doctoral programmes. They reported inability to expand in these areas due to lack of funding is, the Reviewers feel, a testament to the "*lack of appropriate planning mechanisms wherein investment can be appropriately directed to areas of growing demand.*"

The Reviewers note some good examples of communication with students, in particular on the B.Mus.Ed. course, and they note the School's close links with other Schools in the Faculty. From their discussions with students, the Reviewers identified a number of areas in which communication could be improved including the need for more feedback following marking at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. They comment on "*the lack of a wider discourse community;*" and "*no conference or online community*" at doctoral level. Students from the Associated Colleges felt "*a lack of feedback on their work and a lack of mechanism for feedback on issues such as organization of lecture timing; they were not known by staff at Trinity, felt "outsiders" and email communication on matters of organization was reported to be of variable quality.*" The Reviewers note, however, that students have a responsibility to check their Trinity College email accounts and acknowledge that some do not do this.

The Reviewers express concern that the School's strategic plan contains "*statements of achievement and aspiration*" rather than explicit goals, targets, actions/resources needed, and performance indicators. The aims that are articulated are concerned primarily with increasing postgraduate research numbers, extending 'planning and co-ordination of research activity' and gaining an increase in research activity and income. They feel that the inability of the School to respond to demand for doctoral and continuing professional development programmes is a resource management issue.

3.7 RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion, the Reviewers offer the following recommendations:

3.7.1 Teaching

Undergraduate Education

i) *Sustain the highly successful B.Ed.Mus and seek to improve accommodation for the programme;*

ii) *Establish a working party to review Trinity's continuing commitment to the B.Ed Primary. This working party should consider a number of options including:*
- *Withdrawal from the programme;*
- *Resource allocation;*
- *Governance mechanisms at programme and strategic levels if the programme continues;*
- *The match between the espoused aims of the programme and the reality of the curriculum content and teaching methods;*
- *Assessment patterns and forms;*
- *Ways of developing more authentic partnerships between Trinity and the Associated Colleges;*
- *Staffing so that staff with experience of and a passion for primary education are recruited to the Trinity components of the programme;*

iii) *Explore the possibility of aligning student theses in the honor year with staff research interests and the accompanying feasibility of small group supervision;*

iv) *Review research methods course;*

v) *Explore ways of bridging theory-practice divide in the curriculum;*

vi) *Appoint more external examiners from overseas;*

Postgraduate Education and Continuing Professional Development

vii) *Continue to explore innovative ways of bridging the theory-practice divide in initial teacher education programmes;*

viii) *Support and encourage a review of the role of partnership schools in ITE;*

ix) *Speed up progress of modularisation in Masters programmes;*

x) *Explore the provision of social space for masters and doctoral students to encourage a sense of group cohesion and joint endeavour;*

xi) *Build in conference attendance and co-authorship as part of doctoral and masters programmes as appropriate;*

3.7.2 Research

xii) Develop a strong and sustainable research infrastructure which includes clearer definitions of roles for the Research Director with allocated time in the workload and a research support post or office;

xiii) Create and foster a research culture. This might include the following:
- Regular research seminars and research days;
- Study leave entitlement for all academic staff together with clear expectations for publications and funded research applications which will be achieved during this period;
- An academic travel fund to support the presentations of papers at conferences;
- The creation of collaborative research networks within the School to which every member of academic staff is expected to belong and contribute;

xiv) Support the centres of excellence that exist, particularly the Anti-Bullying Centre, with a funded research fellowship so that they can expand and develop appropriately, attracting more research funds and research students;

xv) Move towards the development of a further research centre;

xvi) Develop a smaller number of coherent and manageable research themes which integrate the work of all academic staff and are in line with the College's research mission;

xvii) Develop a stronger focus on post-graduate teaching and research rather than on under-graduate teaching;

xviii) Take steps to integrate research students into the academic community by involvement of students in the research seminars, research days, networks and centres as outlined above;

3.7.3 Resources

xix) Implement a workload planning system prior to a review of current staff needs in relation to demand;

xx) Appoint a professor who is able take on the Head of School role (if not already achieved in the recent interviews);

xxi) Refurbish existing infrastructure immediately;

xxii) Upgrade amount and quality of teaching space;

3.7.4 Organisational structures and planning

xxiii) Institute a programme of weekly or fortnightly meetings of the Executive Committee of the School;

xxiv) Implement a coordinated approach at College level to the issue of intake numbers to the B.Ed. and its consequences on the ARAM, and in turn on the workload management systems of the School. (Currently there is no transparency concerning the articulation of these various strata of management and budget allocation);

xxv) Review all communications with students and mechanisms by which student comments are heard and acted upon;

xxvi) Subsequent strategic planning must be geared less to description of what is currently done, and more to an appraisal of the current and projected international, national and local environments, and the means for responding to changes in these.

4. RESPONSES FROM THE SCHOOL & THE DEAN OF ARTS, HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES

The School welcomes this report as "a contribution to the development of our strategic planning process and an evaluation of our current input into education within and outside College." They also recognise the Reviewers' acknowledgement that the School has made substantial progress since the last review despite "no discernible improvement in the staff/student ratio that remains unacceptably high at 39:1." The School accepts the need for progress in the area of research and reports that "prior to the review we had taken some initial steps in developing an infrastructure to further support research." It feels that the Reviewers have correctly identified research and the relationship with the associated Colleges as areas that can be usefully addressed. The Dean of the Faculty also welcomes the report and is "delighted that the reviewers acknowledge many strengths of the School, including the high quality of teaching, its significant contribution to College life and the existence of areas of proven research quality."

The School feels that the Reviewers failed to acknowledge that "the School of Education is a three way relationship involving Trinity College, the Associated Colleges and the School in the administration and teaching of the B.Ed. undergraduate programme." As a result, they feel that the School has been unfairly criticised over some issues that directly concern the relationship between Trinity College and the Associated Colleges rather than the School itself. The School feels that the Reviewers "barely acknowledge the negative impact of the highly unfavourable staff:student ratio and did not appear to link this with the difficulties in attaining a high research profile."

The School welcomes the recognition that many individuals within the School have strong research profiles and are engaged in national and international partnerships. With regard to the Reviewers' comment that the School's research record is not outstanding, the School accepts that there is "room for improvement in our research record" but feels that they have made substantial progress since the last review in 2000 without the recommended improvement in staffing. The School reports that the "unacceptably high staff:student ratio, administrative and teaching workloads has a direct impact on our capacity as a School to ensure that the research conducted by academic staff is published in the top peer-reviewed journals." As part of the School's on-going strategic planning and in response to the review report, the School has initiated a number of activities in order to develop a research culture that supports and encourages academic research. With regard to the Reviewers' comment that there was little or no collaborative research between staff in the Associated Colleges and staff in the School of Education, the School makes the point that there has "never been any formal discussion around facilitating research or organizing research seminars." The School feels that it could be argued that staff of the Associated Colleges should be "engaged with their management to provide appropriate staff development opportunities in research and not depend on TCD." The Dean of the Faculty welcomes the recommendations on the need to foster a stronger, more ambitious and more integrated research culture in the

School, and is pleased that a start has been made in this respect. He would like to see a proper workload planning system in all Schools.

The School and the Dean welcome the Reviewers' call for a review of the relationship between the School and the Associated Colleges in the teaching and administration of the B.Ed. programme. The Dean, however, emphasises that such a review must include the School as well as Associated Colleges and other stakeholders. The School suggests that such a review would focus on the structures, responsibilities, relationships and resources in the context of the three-way relationship involved in the B.Ed. programme as well as issues concerning the allocation of student numbers, the option that the B.Ed. be accredited by the University of Dublin, and inclusion of the School in talks about the long-term relationships between Trinity College and the Associated Colleges.

The School believes that the review failed to acknowledge that the School does not have any control over the numbers admitted to the B.Ed. programme and that the increase in the numbers of students on the programme has not been matched by an improvement in the School's staffing. The numbers of students in the Associated Colleges is relatively small, and they feel that there are fewer constraints on the Associated Colleges in acquiring new staff. Overall, it may be that the Reviewers have failed to appreciate the extent to which the B.Ed. constitutes only one important part of the service-offering of the School of Education, whereas for the Associated Colleges, the B.Ed. is by far the largest focus of their work. The Dean of the Faculty shares the Reviewers' and School's concerns about unplanned increases in undergraduate numbers.

The School wishes to emphasise the fact that it has made strenuous efforts to promote a more collaborative relationship with the Colleges of Education through improved administrative procedures and the organization of meetings between School staff and staff and students from the associated Colleges. These meetings were, however, "*so poorly attended by the College presidents on a regular basis that the meetings were discontinued.*" The School disagrees with the Reviewers' comment that the B.Ed. Review Committee "*did not seem to be action orientated*" and cites a number of actions that have been completed through the work of the Committee.

With regard to the Reviewers' recommendation that the School should "*appoint more examiners from overseas*" the School makes the point that "*for the past decade there has always been at least one out of 3 externs from abroad*" and that "*given the wealth of experience of teacher educators based in Ireland and the particular curricular demands in the Irish education system…. the balance between domestic and externs from abroad is appropriate.*" The Faculty Dean supports a stronger overseas representation among external examiners while also recognising the importance of examiners who are familiar with the Irish system.

The School feels that the case advanced by the Reviewers that Trinity "*abandon the approach to teacher education agreed and operated universally in the Republic of Ireland*" in favour of the model adopted in some UK Universities "*does not stand up*" and points out that "*many teacher education models across Europe share the view taken in Ireland.*"

They School concurs with the Reviewers' observation that there has been no discernable improvement in the high staff-student ratio since the last review in 2000. With regard to the Reviewers' concerns over lack of clarity around how the B.Ed. SSR is calculated, the School finds this surprising as the basis for FTSE calculations is transparent. The Faculty Dean is very keen to see that School takes advantage of the appointment of its new professor to carry out a "*comprehensive review of what it does in terms of what it wants to do.*" He feels that the very high SSR is "*not sustainable and is in any case undesirable and a review must consider the best ways to address that issue in the context of limited resources.*" With regard to resources, the Dean of the Faculty hopes that measures now in train to improve space available in the Faculty will mean that some of the School's space problems can be addressed.

At the time of the review, the School had yet to commence meetings of the School Executive, but "*a full schedule of meetings has been planned for 2008/09.*" A Strategy Review Committee has also been set up to "*consider critical issues relating to research and teaching & learning, and this committee will report to the School Executive and to the monthly staff meetings.*"

In conclusion, the School states that "*the School Review offers an opportunity to build on our strengths and address the areas that require consideration. In the intervening period since the last review the School of Education has made considerable progress in creating a cohesive team that engages in collaborative work in*

teaching and research. The School is aware of the need to build on this foundation particularly in the area of research and...believe that the School is well positioned to develop the appropriate structures to further enhance ...contribution to education within College and within Irish society."

5. RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL AND BOARD

In light of the review report and the responses from the School of Education and the Faculty Dean it is recommended that:

1. The School of Education working closely with the Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Science, and other relevant Academic Officers, should consider the detailed recommendations of the Review Report and draw up an implementation plan[2] for Council approval;

2. As part of this exercise (Recommendation 1), a Working Group should be established by Council, chaired by the Vice Provost (or designate), to establish a clear policy on the strategic relevance and operating principles of the partnership between Trinity College and the Associated Colleges of Education. This Group should include representatives of the various stakeholders and one external member, but its size should not exceed ten. It should report by the end of the academic year 2008-09.

Provost
6th January 2009

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[2] See *Procedures and Protocol for Quality Review of Schools 2008/09* at *http://www.tcd.ie/vp-cao/qu/qopdf/adrpack2.pdf*