Trinity College Dublin

Provost's Report to Council on the Review of the School of Linguistic, Speech & Communication Sciences at Trinity College Dublin

1. Introduction

This report presents the outcome of a review of the School of Linguistic, Speech & Communication Sciences. An external peer review visitation was undertaken from the 28th February – 2nd March 2011 by Prof. Shelagh Brumfitt, University of Sheffield; Prof. John Ohala, University of California Berkeley; Prof. Dr. Kees de Bot, University of Groningen, The Netherlands and Prof. Bencie Woll, University College London. The Internal facilitator was Prof. Robert Gilligan, School of Social Work & Social Policy, Trinity College Dublin.

The report is based on (i) feedback from the External Reviewers received on the 1st June 2011, (ii) a submission from the School of Linguistic, Speech & Communication Sciences received on the 6th June 2011 and (iii) a submission from the Pro-Dean of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences received on the 7th June 2011.

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 that areas of concern in this regard are identified and addressed. Each School in College is reviewed systematically once every seven years.

2. Overview of the School

2.1 Aims and Objectives of the School

The School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences was formed in 2005 by the merger of the School of Clinical Speech and Language Studies, the Centre for Language and Communication Studies (CLCS), and the Centre for Deaf Studies (CDS). These three disciplines within the School are unified to a common goal: the scientific investigation of language and speech. The main aim for the next five years is to continue and strengthen the process of integration across teaching and research. In teaching this entails a balancing of provision across disciplines and the development of cross-school programmes. The disciplines are planning change against the background of their different histories. For the Department of Clinical Speech and Language Studies (CSLS) with its strong undergraduate

professional programme the aim is to move into taught Masters based on individual specialisms and to establish a strong doctoral programme. The Centre for Deaf Studies (CDS), which has a track record in research and advocacy, is seeking to build on its training of sign language interpreters and teachers. The Centre for Language and Communication Studies (CLCS), which has enjoyed a very strong profile in research and postgraduate programmes, is seeking to develop its undergraduate teaching inside and outside the School. The School identifies parallel goals in research. Given the complementary and in some cases overlapping research interests the School is seeking to identify central research themes while allowing space outside them for individual researchers. The School's disciplines have a long tradition of engagement with society at large, in particular in health and education sectors and have contributed to government policy in these areas. Colleagues have research, teaching and advocacy links with the Deaf community, Irish language groups, migrant communities and many other community organisations (e.g. voluntary agencies) nationally and locally. The School plans to further develop and strengthen these links.

2.2   Programmes to which the School provides teaching

Undergraduate:
- Bachelor in Deaf Studies
- BA (Mod) in Computer Science, Linguistics and a Language
- B.Sc. in Clinical Speech and Language Studies

Postgraduate:
- M.Phil. in Applied Linguistics
- M.Phil. in English Language Teaching
- M.Phil. in Linguistics
- M.Phil. in Speech and Language Processing
- M.Sc. in Clinical Speech & Language Studies
- PG Diploma in Dysphagia

2.3   Research
The core research of the School is the scientific investigation of language, speech and communication. The School has particular strengths in the following research areas:
- Interfaces in Linguistic Theory
- Languages of Ireland I: Irish
- Languages of Ireland II: Irish English; Irish Sign Language; Migrant languages
- Psychological and Social Aspects of Language
- Voice
- Speech, Language & Communication Technology
- Corpora

2.4   Summary Statistical Profile of the School for the Academic Year 2009/10[1]

Full-time Staff FTE	Undergraduate FTE	Postgraduate FTE	School Staff: Student Ratio	Faculty Staff: Student Ratio
24	182	83	11	21

Figures from Senior Lecturer's Annual Report approved by Council at its meeting on 15th December 2010

2.5   Accommodation and Facilities (Physical Resources)

The main requirement for the strategic development of the School is to unify the three sections of the School on one site. Until recently CLCS (in the Arts Building) and CSLS (in Pearse Street) were on widely separate parts of the main campus while CDS was much further away in Drumcondra. The move to a single site in 7-9 South Leinster Street will resolve the teaching and administrative problems of such a dispersed School and foster the integration of research that is an important part of the School strategic plan. CDS and CSLS moved during the academic year 2010/11; for CLCS to make the same move it is necessary for the current non-College tenants of 7-9 South Leinster Street to leave. This will not happen before 2013.

The current space provision for the School can now be summarised as follows:

7-9 South Leinster Street:

CSLS have 9 Offices, 1 Computer Room/Student preparation room, 3 Seminar Rooms and 3 Clinical Rooms in Phoenix House.

CDS occupies 7 offices, 4 seminar rooms and 3 laboratories.

Arts Building:

CLCS occupies 7 offices on the third floor of the Arts Building, and 9 offices and 6 laboratory spaces and on the fourth floor of the Arts Building.

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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. Reviewers Recommendations

3.1   General recommendations:

    3.1.1   For future reviews, appoint one of the external Review Committee members to be Chairperson with the additional responsibility of guiding the process and reports on behalf of the Committee, and with responsibility for the final version of the report.

    3.1.2   Avoid large group meetings with students. It would be better to have small group meetings with specific groups of students, in order that all voices are heard and that the interaction is more fruitful.

3.2   Research related:

    3.2.1   There is a need to protect research time. While this is traditionally the individual's own choice, the pressure from teaching and administrative work is such that virtually no time is left to do proper research, or, as some members phrased it, 'time to sit and think'.

    3.2.2   Given the time available and the need to keep up TCD's high standing, members should reduce the quantity of their publications and enhance the quality.

    3.2.3   More cooperation both within the School and between Schools will enhance the volume of research needed for the application for larger funds.

    3.2.4   More attention should be given to research funding at the European level.

    3.2.5   Consideration should be given to the establishment of an effective research mentoring programme. For Deaf members of staff, this may be best achieved by a partnership with another university with a comparable department with Deaf staff.

3.3   Teaching and learning related:

    3.3.1   Build on existing quality assurance procedures across all departments to ensure equity of student experience.

    3.3.2   Facilitate further use of the Directors of Undergraduate and Postgraduate Teaching to enable the School to develop teaching strategy.

    3.3.3   Examine assessment across all programmes to ensure economic use of staff and appropriate student workload.

    3.3.4   Build on Trinity College's capacity to attract international students including Study Abroad programs.

    3.3.5   Consider role of broad curriculum in professional courses.

    3.3.6   Develop the educational opportunities which will emerge from the eventual inclusion of all departments in one location which should be achieved by 2013.

    3.3.7   Build on existing e-learning strategy.

3.3.8   Develop a funding strategy to preserve the Deaf Studies programme

3.4   Engagement with society and service to college:

    3.4.1   For deaf staff, non-participation in service raises issues in relation to equality under the law; for the College, there is a loss of the benefit of having full representation of staff in service to the School and College. This is an issue which needs to be addressed centrally.

    3.4.2   There is a potential for commercialisation of existing activities. These might include assessment tools developed in CSLS; sign language teaching materials developed in CDS, and some of the recent virtual reality work in CLCS. The departments would benefit from support in exploring possibilities for further development of IPR in commercial settings.

    3.4.3   The strong existing outreach activities should be expanded: for example, the extra-mural language programmes of CLCS could be amplified with courses by CDS in Deaf Awareness and Introductory ISL (which also could be offered within the College to staff and students outside the School). It should be added that the ISL evening courses are available to the public, staff and students.

3.5   Resources:

    3.5.1   A move to a more transparent funding basis would make it easier for departments to see what level of increased income from teaching and research grants would be required to support new appointments and promotions.

    3.5.2   A clear policy is needed about allocation of funding to departments where research students have supervisors from different departments/schools.

    3.5.3   More effort should be made to include budget lines for e.g. technical support in research grant proposals.

4. Provost's Recommendations to Council

In light of the Review Report and the responses from the School of Linguistics, Speech, and Communication Science and the Faculty Dean, it is recommended that:

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

(ii)   The School, in light of future retirements and contracting resources, should review its strategic direction and consider possible internal and external collaborations in cognate and emerging disciplines in the field.

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[1] See Procedures and Protocol for Quality Review of Schools 2008/09 at *http://www.tcd.ie/vp-cao/qu/qopdf/adrapp2.pdf*

5.   Review Report for School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences

Introduction

A review of the School of Linguistics, Speech and Communication Science of Trinity College, Dublin took place from 28 February to 2 March 2011. The Committee members were:

Professor Shelagh Brumfitt
Professor Kees de Bot
Professor John Ohala
Professor Bencie Woll
Internal Facilitator: Professor Robert Gilligan

The Committee members were provided with extensive materials about the School, including previous reviews, overview of research and education, facilities and structures. This material prepared them well for the visit which was most effective due to the provision of this information. The Review Committee met with many different individuals and groups including BA and MA/PhD students from different programs. The Review Committee was impressed by the openness of the interactions in which the members of staff both expressed their commitment to the School and the College and provided fair accounts of the present situation and the outlook.

In the opening meeting with the Vice-Provost and his staff, the current financial constraints of the College were discussed in detail and the Committee became aware of the extremely difficult situation the College is in and will be in for at least the next few years. It was clear that simplistic suggestions to put more money into the School to overcome existing problems would be inappropriate and that solutions were required that would allow the School to meet and maintain required standards without additional financial input. The Schools of TCD are largely financially independent and have to manage their finances rather than rely on support from the centre. In the discussions with members of staff and administrators it was clear that they were aware of this situation and that more money would only become available through School based activities.

In the view of the Committee this situation needs to be stressed here because it impacted on the visit and recommendations of the Review Committee in important ways. It should be stressed however, that financial difficulties were not discernable in the way the visit was handled and the support offered to the Committee throughout the visit.
The Template for the External Reviewers Report as provided in Appendix 6 of the TCD Information Pack on the General Procedures and Protocol for Quality Reviews of Schools has been used for this report.

1. Existing provisions

1.1 Research and scholarly activity

a. *Distribution of research interests, plans and output across School members*

The members of staff are engaged in a large range of research topics. Within the various subfields there are several very prolific researchers with excellent records. Five research topics help to link research activities of researchers in the different areas covered by the school. Collaborative work on larger themes, such as aging, which have been highlighted as priorities by the university, and which might benefit from input from all groups and offer opportunities for cross-school work, are still being discussed.

b. *Output*

While productivity in terms of numbers of publications over the years is high, the level of publications is not completely in line with TCD's standing and ambitions. Apart from some individual researchers, the impact of many is very limited if citation indexes (appropriate criteria for much of the research that is done in the School) are used. H-indexes rarely exceed 10. The members of staff are aware of this and indicated that the heavy workload caused by teaching duties and administration prevents them from investing the time needed to get articles published in high ranking journals. There is an awareness that ultimately this may lead to damage for the School and TCD. Staff should be encouraged to think strategically. One recommendation could be to reduce the number of publications and enhance the quality.

Some of the more productive staff have already retired or will do so in the next couple of years. While they are likely to continue publishing for a while, other or new members of staff will have to take over who do not have such impressive records of publications and who are still working on developing their research. In order for the School to maintain its reputation in the area of applied linguistics, it will need to hire academics with strong track records and support members of staff to develop in this direction by giving them time to work on publications and by offering mentoring to support the most effective strategies.

o Articles in refereed journals in last five years and likely in next two years

Some 80 articles have been published in refereed journals in the last five years. Only a very small proportion has been published in the top 30% of journals of the respective fields. Given the workload the situation is not likely to change significantly in the next two years. It should be stressed that for

some areas of research the primary audiences are not other academics but practitioners and policy makers. This calls for specific publication strategies. Chapters in books may be of particular value to practitioners but should not substitute for journal publication, especially in conditions of heavy workloads. Publications in conference proceedings are relatively inaccessible and should be avoided except in those fields where they take the role of journal articles (e.g. engineering). There is a further issue, in that in some departments there is too much reliance on publication in a very limited number of journals. For example, all the journal articles on interpreting from CDS appear in a single journal for sign language interpreters. It is important to ensure that appropriate articles are submitted to more highly rated international journals (e.g. in this case those for interpreters of spoken languages), in order to maximise impact.

- o Publications in other forms in last five years and likely in next two years
  A considerable number of books have been published over the last few years. Books are still considered to be an important and prestigious form of output, even for the group working in the area of language and technology. The time required for work on such larger projects is lacking, however.

c. *External funding in the last five years and likely success in the next two years*
In the period under review € 4.55m has been awarded, of which € 3.86m since 2005. Internal TCD funding was € 33,150. These amounts are considerable given the financial situation in TCD and in academia internationally. Since some of the grants were for less then €15k, it is not clear to what extent they all cover costs, or make a profit or deficit. No evaluation system of the relevance and profitability of grants appears to be available; guidance to staff would be very helpful, for example, on what costs should be included in grant applications: grants have not included costs for technical support, although such funding would make a real difference especially to those departments which do not have internal technical support.

The prospects for external funding from Irish sources in the years to come are unclear. There is an active policy to inform members of staff about various funding options. It is recommended that ERC grants be seen as an opportunity, in particular, since the chance of success for starting grants has been raised considerably recently and such funds are available for more theoretical areas of research.

d. *Research students, numbers, degrees, supervision, funding*

There are an estimated 40 research students in the School. Exact numbers were difficult to obtain, since some students have submitted their dissertations but have not yet defended them. In the last few years a new system for PhDs has been in place. Full time students are required to submit within 4 years; part time students within 6 years. The School will be penalized if students take longer, so both students and supervisors are made aware of these very strict regulations. There are some problems with strict application of these rules: 4 years may not be enough for students with special requirements. Some students may require specialist training in the early stages of their PhDs; for others, such as deaf students, this is an equality issue that needs to be formally considered. It is not clear whether students who take on teaching in the School are allowed any additional time for their research. The majority of the students are self-supporting, although a number of research students are financed with external funding. There are two School studentships and the Department of Clinical Speech & Language studies has begun an annual scheme offering 5 fee bursaries to enable practicing speech therapists to do a research degree. The School monitors student progress by means of an annual report from student and supervisor that is checked by the Director of Postgraduate Teaching and Learning.

e. *Student staff liaison*

There is no formal feedback system in place for research students (other than the joint annual report). Although the need for this seems to be limited, there should be a formal channel available for confidential feedback from students about supervisors. Members of staff are very helpful in giving feedback to students when prompted to do so. They are also helpful in supporting students to get their work published and making them aware of the need to have good publications for the next step in their academic career. Informal meetings take place more at the level of departments than at the School level. Awareness of school membership and links among research students from the different departments is low and students would benefit from strategies to create a School identity among the research students.

f. *Balance of research related activities*

The members of the School are outstanding in their ability to achieve so much, despite high teaching loads and minimal administrative and technical support. They provide very good supervision of graduate students and research students. In addition to that they manage to publish many books and articles. There is a general awareness that research and publications only get secondary attention because of all the work to be done, and that in the long run this will have

negative effects on both research and teaching. Opportunities for expanding research by creating groups of researchers working on similar topics are being explored.

g. *Activities that arise from research standing, commissions, awards, learned societies, editorships*
Members of the school are very active in research outreach activities, both in learned societies and in local and national organisations. Several members of the School serve on editorial boards of journals and book series. The School is very visible on the national level in discussion of equality issues related to deafness and the position of the Irish language.

2. Teaching and learning

2.1 **In relation to other Schools of international standing in this academic discipline, please give an assessment, commenting in particular on the following inputs of teaching and learning in both undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes:**
The panel saw strong evidence for a high quality of teaching across all departments in the School at both undergraduate and postgraduate level that is informed and invigorated by the research interests of staff. Members of the academic staff whom the Committee met were enthusiastic and highly motivated and confirmed that they broadly had the opportunity to teach in line with their specialist areas of interest. The School is to be commended for its strategic plan to unify the three departments on one site. Deaf Studies is located in the new Leinster Street building along with CSLS. The Speech Communication Lab is also located there and when CLCS moves to this site in 2013, there will be increased opportunity for shared teaching and learning.

Of particular note is the relatively recent creation of Undergraduate and Postgraduate Directors of Teaching who serve across the whole School, creating a context for strategic development of both teaching content and quality assurance. These roles make it easier to gain an overview of teaching activity with the possibility of enhancing the coherence of the existing programmes. For example, many opportunities exist within the school to create more joint teaching ventures, such as the Discourse Analysis module taught to both Speech and Language Therapy students and Deaf Studies students. Further consideration could be given to using the diverse range of teaching content within the School to streamline current activities as well as increasing variety in content.

Content/level of programme and number of students

Both 4 year courses attract a significant number of applications and recruit successfully to the programmes. The panel noted the good strategy of provision for up to five mature student entry places on the CSLS programme as this widens the recruitment population and will provide added benefits to the professional community when these students qualify. The UG intake has increased from 29-34. Students recruited to the CSLS programme are of an exceptionally high academic standard and the number of 1st class degrees awarded is impressive. The addition of the Deaf Studies programme strengthens the existing portfolio of work in the School and can bring a unique opportunity for development within the School.

CLCS provides teaching in a range of modules in Linguistics to undergraduate students in the College. This has clearly proved to be a successful strategy allowing the School to attract a strong academic standard in students. Numbers have increased since the introduction of the Broad Curriculum with 134 students being recruited via that route in 2009-2010. The overall withdrawal rate for CSLL and TSM is of concern but extrapolation of the details of the student profile was difficult to achieve from the data provided.

All of the MPhil programmes demonstrate the important specialities of the School in the national and international context. Although student numbers on each of the programmes are relative low, the programmes are closely linked to the School's research plan and form part of the overall strategy. The School should continue to build on these programmes. It was noted that Speech and Language Processing attracted small numbers and the School may want to evaluate this in the light of resourcing it in the future.

a. *Distribution of teaching across staff members*

Each department has its own method for managing workload. Good principles for managing the Workload model have been established particularly in relation to CSLS. The panel noted that the workload model would be evaluated in 2010-2011 and possible further applications made across the School. In recognition of the increasing demands on staff time, this will be an important development in the future management of the school. It may be important in future to consider developing a standard model to record activities of staff across all departments. In meetings with staff from all departments, it was noted that the high levels of teaching were of concern along with increased requirements to produce high level research. Because of the current situation in Ireland it was also difficult to get guarantees of continuation of employment for temporary staff which made strategic development in the different programmes difficult. Some examples of

concern related to the need to maintain a receptionist in the new clinical facilities in CSLS and the need to employ a member of staff to cover reception in the Language Laboratories.

The panel was also able to meet with administrative and support staff during the visit and was impressed with their commitment to the School. It was also noted that technical support was a matter of concern for all departments. Language learning has no technical support, and there is no dedicated technical support in CSLS. Responsibility falls to lecturers for maintaining software which is an inappropriate use of academic time. Although the panel recognised this was a funding matter, it should be noted that in comparable universities technical support would be seen as a core requirement.

b. *Constructive alignment of curriculum, teaching methods and assessment methods, and rationale for teaching methodologies used.*
   The School demonstrates a wide range of teaching and assessment methods driven particularly by the subject specialisation and the learning requirements of the students. All teaching active staff at all levels provide teaching to students. The use of Enquiry-based teaching in CSLS is a current approach in the UK and very relevant for the learning needs of professional students who will have to be independent learners in their professional practice. There are some clearly well developed strategies to laboratory based teaching in language learning which are directly related to the needs of the students. The development of a Problem-based learning approach for the Deaf Studies students takes account of their learning styles. There is some variation across departments in terms of the use of WebCT with CSLS being the Department which had moved this method on to the most complete level. Based on comments from the student meetings there were some lecturers who did not use this method all the time in other departments, and students reported that they would prefer increased use of teaching support by WebCT. The School needs to build on its existing e-learning strategy.

   The Introduction of the Broad Curriculum has been beneficial to the educational strategy of the College although some student groups reported that the workload took time away from their core courses. This was specifically noted by Year 2 CSLS where there were some logistical difficulties with returning from clinical placements to attend early evening classes. Although the logistical difficulties may be too complex to change and is probably not typical, the matter of whether professional students should take courses from the broad curriculum may need to be considered further. However, the Broad Curriculum clearly creates opportunities for other departments in the School, such as CLCS where

an increasing range of students across the College may be able to take advantage of the teaching in this Department.

Communication about assessment methods from Department to students appears to be well established and students all reported that the assessment details were clearly provided to them with very good information handbooks. There were some examples of students reporting a heavy schedule for hand-in dates at one particular time point in the year which could easily be resolved.

The creation of the School offers opportunities to examine assessment approaches across all departments, particularly in the light of comments from some external examiners about over assessment in certain parts of the school. This may be an opportunity for the School, led by the Directors of Teaching and Learning, to take a strategic lead in examining its assessment design and schedules across all departments. This may have benefits for both students and staff in terms of workload and provide an enhanced coherence to the School's activities.

d. *Adequacy of staff-student liaison in the school (formal and informal) in relation to teaching and learning*
The School had introduced a range of quality assurance procedures and these included student feedback processes and staff student liaison committees. During the visit, at both teaching staff meetings and student meetings, comments were positive, particularly about the interaction between students and staff and the way staff responded to student concerns. All year groups have student representatives who meet regularly in programme liaison meetings or attend staff meetings to discuss student matters.

e. *Arrangements for curriculum review and revision*
The School has satisfactory procedures in place to review the curricula; which include annual curricula review meetings and department level meetings. Structural organisation is reviewed along with actions required as the result of student feedback. Students are represented at the Departmental meetings. Ad hoc meetings may also take place during the year, if a specific matter of concern arises. In addition, there is 5-yearly monitoring of the Clinical Speech and Language Studies programme by the Irish Association of Speech and Language Therapists.

f. Methods used to evaluate teaching and learning in the School, and actions taken in response to student feedback

The school has clearly worked towards creating a robust system for obtaining student feedback and it is to be commended for using a variety of approaches; such as through CAPSL-led or course lecturer led evaluations. There was some evidence that the feedback 'loop' was completed by some parts of the school and that students obtained information on actions arising from their feedback, but that this was not completely in place for all staff or programmes. It is important for the School to develop a system to ensure that students obtain feedback on the results of questionnaire surveys and particularly of action taken in response to issues raised. Different methods for achieving this can include: informing the Staff-Student Committee of the results and action taken and making a report available on the student notice-board or appropriate web pages. Also, to make sure students understood that this information was available, the School could make e-mail announcements.

g. Professional standing

The last professional accreditation visit by the IASLT occurred in March 2009 when the Department of CSLS was highly commended for many of its activities and achievements. The report commended the Department for its recognition and status gained within the School and the support it has obtained from being part of the School. Clearly, many of the panel's concerns in the report have been addressed, particularly the building of the new department on Leinster Street. The facilities are of an extremely high standard, offering clinical teaching facilities which are of higher quality than in many UK universities. This can now provide a very high level educational experience to students. The very strong academic and professional CVs of the staff in this department were also noted in the report. It is noticeable that the longstanding recommendation to fill the vacant chair position has still not been fulfilled.

h. Opportunities for study abroad, student exchanges, relevant outside experience

There is evidence of good international links creating educational opportunities for students in all the departments. The Centre for Deaf Study students will have an opportunity to study abroad in year 3 of their degree programme with Erasmus arrangements with universities in Finland, the Netherlands and Belgium. TSM students taking CLCS modules take a year abroad as part of their language experience. The Department of CSLS has strong links with a range of European partners and the established Speech-Language Pathology network gives students a chance to participate in a 2 week intensive programme of study outside of the academic year. CSLS attracts international students wanting to study dysphagia and is one of the few universities offering this speciality. A particularly innovative

development is in the area of Fluency Disorders where the European Clinical Specialisation on Fluency Disorders (ECSF) has been set up as a partnership arrangement with 10 universities in Europe and provides taught post graduate teaching from qualified speech and language therapists.

There is strong evidence that the School attracts non Irish students to study on a range of programmes and the School is clearly committed to continuing this. It will be important to build on the internationalisation of the programmes for future development in the School and staff should seek to increase their awareness of how opportunities can be developed.

i. *In relation to other Schools of international standing in this academic discipline, please give an assessment, commenting in particular on the following outcomes of teaching and learning in both undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes:*
  o Student exam results and completion rates; Overall these are good with some evidence for exceptional achievement where almost a third of the students in 2009-2010 on the CSLS programme achieved a first class degree. There are also very strong results in other aspects of the teaching; such as in the broad curriculum language modules and in the CLCS modules taken by visiting students. Attrition is relatively low across both 4 year programmes apart from 2004-2005 for the CSLS where 6 students withdrew from the course. Across the period (2004-2009) reported in the School document there is evidence for consistent rates of performance in the years below the final year of the degrees.
  o Progression paths of students following graduation; at present there are no first destination figures for students on the Deaf Studies programme but in the other courses there is good evidence for future employment rates. In CSLS there are very strong employment figures for 2007-2008. There are also some good figures of employment for the students who took CSLL, although the numbers are small. Taking into account the current financial situation it will be very important to track first destinations of graduates from the programmes and continue to monitor the impact of cuts in the Health Service, for example.
  o External contributions to teaching and learning in the discipline.
    There is evidence that staff are active in making a range of contributions in teaching and learning and these include: external examining at national and international levels, membership of professional accreditation and review panels, international service on a range of committees and groups relating to research speciality and professional focus. Overall the amount and level of

contribution external to the university is impressive and reflects the high standing of the staff in the School.

3.   Engagement with society and service to college

3.1   In relation to other Schools of international standing in this academic discipline, please give an assessment, commenting in particular on the following service activities:

a. *Service to College (e.g. contributions to governance of the College in terms of membership of College committees and the holding of positions of responsibility.);*
Service in relation to the College via membership of departmental, school and college committees and college governance is an important part of individual staff profiles and of the School as a whole. For individuals it comprises part of their profile for consideration during promotion procedures. There is very broad service activity, but it is notable that CDS contributes less to College activity than the other two departments of the School, in contrast to an impressive role of CDS in contributing to public debate and public policy. This may be the result of limitations on the ability of deaf staff to have full access to involvement because of inadequate provision for communication support.

b. *Contributions to public debate and formation of public policy;*
The School has a strong commitment to, and makes an impressive contribution to public debate and the formation of public policy. This is of enhanced value in the context of constraints on public expenditure and the need to make the case for the School's and College's role.

c. *Use of research results to make a difference to people's lives;*
The School's research is inherently translational and directly impacts on the community. The work of CSLS in particular, provides a crucial evidence base for clinical practice with children and adults who have communication impairments.

d. *Local outreach activities of the school and external relations with the wider community;*
All 3 departments of the school have strong outreach activities, although these could be expanded: for example, the extra-mural language programmes of CLCS could be amplified with courses by CDS in Deaf Awareness (which also could be offered within the College to staff and students outside the School). There is also an impressively strong commitment to knowledge exchange and public engagement in all three component departments of the School.

e. *Activities to commercialise intellectual property;*
   The leading group in the School is the Speech Communication group in CLCS. Other research groupings in the School could explore commercialisation of activities. These might include assessment tools developed in CSLS; sign language teaching materials developed in CDS, and some of the recent virtual reality work in CLCS. The departments would benefit from support in exploring possibilities for further development of IPR in commercial settings.

f. *Other service activities.*
   Many staff are engaged in high profile service activities and support and encouragement for these is clearly part of the School Culture.

4. Resources

4.1 Give an assessment of the resources of the School for teaching and research relative to those available to other Schools of international standing in terms of staff (e.g. academic, administrative, service support staff);

a. *Current financial structures include a freeze on staff appointments and promotions.*
   In comparison to other Schools of international standing the School has limited provision in relation to technical and other support staff. For example, research students feel they have to rely on post-docs to provide technical support.

   The freeze will have an increasingly negative effect on School activities over time and result in increasing pressures on existing staff across all grades. A move to a more transparent funding basis would make it easier for departments to see what level of increased income from teaching and research grants would be required to support new appointments and promotions. Higher level academics are increasingly taking on technical and secretarial roles because of the hiring freeze, which takes away time from teaching and research. More effort should be made to include budget lines for e.g. technical support in research grant proposals.

b. *Physical infrastructure for teaching, research, and staff (e.g. laboratories, lecture/seminar rooms, equipment, office spaces, social spaces).*
   The School's physical infrastructure has improved markedly with the move to 7-9 South Leinster Street and the College is to be congratulated for the commitment at such a time of financial stringency to the development of this site and the relocation of CDS and CSLS to that building. Teaching rooms, and office and social

spaces in this building are first-class. However there has been disruption to students (and staff) because of the relocation, with full facilities (e.g. wi-fi) not yet available.

Students reported some resource difficulties: obtaining software for specialist purposes, shortage of materials to support sign language learning. Research students also felt they would benefit from hot-desking workspace within their departments or in other parts of the School. A clear policy is needed about allocation of funding to departments where research students have supervisors from different departments/schools.

5.   Organizational structures and planning

5.1   Management Structures and school committees within the School

Despite several meetings with administrators and Heads, the Committee found it extremely difficult to get a clear picture of tasks and responsibilities. The School is still emerging as a unit and some of the old structures and ways of management are still in place.

One of the strengths of the School is its interdisciplinary composition: incorporating linguistics, applied linguistics, Deaf studies, etc. It has been demonstrated many times that such cross-fertilization spawns the growth of robust innovations in theory, methods, and applications. Although the existing administrative organization is functioning well, with time one can look forward to even greater integration of administrative functioning and responsibility as the previously autonomous departments become more familiar with each other. This should lead to less duplication of course content, more shared teaching, greater flexibility to allow students to have individualized programs, and promoting cross-disciplinary research, thus exploiting the advantages of the multi-disciplinary character of the merged departments For example, with greater integration there should come a solution to the need for technical assistance with computers and networks. On the international scene there is increased interaction between studies of spoken and signed language; the School is poised to be a leader in this movement.

A strengthened, more centralized, administration could also give some attention to certain new initiatives such as marketing some of the promising research results, public relations, tracking the career progress of its graduates, and more aggressive recruitment of foreign students, all of which would help to alleviate or at least moderate some of the fiscal difficulties.

a. *School budget allocation and planning and decision-making related to budget*
Again, the Committee did its best to understand how budgets are allocated on the basis of formal regulations, but the rather informal style from the past still seems to hold sway in the present situation.

b. *Communication between School and staff, students, Faculty and College*
As mentioned under (i) communication between various groups is very adequate. The idea of a School does not seem to have established itself strongly in the minds of some senior staff, and there is some resistance to tendencies of centralization, but there are clear signs that this will get better in the near future.

Because the concept of a School - as opposed to independent departments- is new, management and communication lines are as yet not centralised, and the value of such centralisation has not been fully recognised. Communication between various groups is less good than it might be. There are clear signs, however, that this will change over the next few years.

c. *Support for School activities by central College services.*
There was considerable praise for the library services, while the support from ISS was less obvious. Facilities in the new building were not yet fully functional at the time of the Review.

6.   Overall view and recommendations
The overall view is that the School is working hard to maintain standards of research and education in an extremely adverse financial climate. The commitment and loyalty of staff on all levels and students in different programmes is remarkable. But in the present situation the investment of many is out of proportion and if there is not light at the end of the tunnel many will simply not be able to re-energize themselves and undertake the additional responsibilities needed to keep things going. Another major threat is the retirement of several key individuals in the School. If the present freeze on employment continues, this will simply mean the end of several programs and respected lines of research.

6.1   General recommendations:
a. For future reviews, appoint one of the external Review Committee members to be Chairperson with the additional responsibility of guiding the process and reports on behalf of the Committee, and with responsibility for the final version of the report.
b. Avoid large group meetings with students. It would be better to have small group meetings with specific groups of students, in order that all voices are heard and that the interaction is more fruitful.

6.2 Research related:

a. There is a need to protect research time. While this is traditionally the individual's own choice, the pressure from teaching and administrative work is such that virtually no time is left to do proper research, or, as some members phrased it, 'time to sit and think'.

b. Given the time available and the need to keep up TCD's high standing, members should reduce the quantity of their publications and enhance the quality.

c. More cooperation both within the School and between Schools will enhance the volume of research needed for the application for larger funds.

d. More attention should be given to research funding at the European level.

e. Consideration should be given to the establishment of an effective research mentoring programme. For Deaf members of staff, this may be best achieved by a partnership with another university with a comparable department with Deaf staff.

6.3 Teaching and learning related

a. Build on existing quality assurance procedures across all departments to ensure equity of student experience

b. Facilitate further use of the Directors of Undergraduate and Post graduate Teaching to enable the School to develop teaching strategy

c. Examine assessment across all programmes to ensure economic use of staff and appropriate student workload

d. Build on Trinity College's capacity to attract international students including Study Abroad programs.

e. Consider role of broad curriculum in professional courses.

f. Develop the educational opportunities which will emerge from the eventual inclusion of all departments in one location which should be achieved by 2013

g. Build on existing e-learning strategy

h. Develop a funding strategy to preserve the Deaf Studies programme

6.4 Engagement with society and service to college

a. For deaf staff, non-participation in service raises issues in relation to equality under the law; for the College, there is a loss of the benefit of having full representation of staff in service to the School and College. This is an issue which needs to be addressed centrally.

b. There is a potential for commercialisation of existing activities. These might include assessment tools developed in CSLS; sign language teaching materials developed in CDS, and some of the recent virtual reality work in CLCS. The departments would benefit from support in exploring possibilities for further development of IPR in commercial settings.

c. The strong existing outreach activities should be expanded: for example, the extra-mural language programmes of CLCS could be amplified with courses by CDS in Deaf Awareness and Introductory ISL (which also could be offered within the College to staff and students outside the School). It should be added that the ISL evening courses are available to the public, staff and students.

6.5 Resources

a. A move to a more transparent funding basis would make it easier for departments to see what level of increased income from teaching and research grants would be required to support new appointments and promotions.
b. A clear policy is needed about allocation of funding to departments where research students have supervisors from different departments/schools.
c. More effort should be made to include budget lines for e.g. technical support in research grant proposals.

6.6 Strategic direction

At the moment it is unclear whether Trinity College's international reputation will be strong enough to continue to attract the best students and staff in the present financial situation. Parts of the teaching and research programs are in danger due to lack of staff and retirements. The School might have to consider a more narrow focus and accept that the breadth it has traditionally had cannot be maintained. In this respect it may be useful to see what alliances within the college could play a role in this process. Good candidates for this approach would include Neuropsychology and artificial intelligence.

The previous concept of self-sufficient departments cannot and should not be maintained. Services such as technical support need to be provided across departmental boundaries to increase efficiency and save costs.

The issue of staff review (appraisal) is one which is likely to be strongly resisted in the context of Trinity's culture. However, there is a need to institute a mentoring system in order to assist staff to strengthen the quality of their work, help them deal in practical terms with the difficulties imposed by the financial situation, and explore strategies for change.

6.   School's response to the Review Report for Linguistic, Speech & Communication Sciences

1.   Introduction

The School extends its thanks to the reviewers for their care, professionalism and collegiality during the review process. The process has been of great value to the School in facilitating a critical evaluation of the first five years of its existence and in supporting its strategic planning.

2.   Teaching and learning

We are gratified by the positive evaluation of the School's teaching programmes at both undergraduate and postgraduate level. The reviewers were able to gain a comprehensive view of the student experience within in the School and made valuable suggestions in a number of areas, for example to extend the systems of student evaluation more comprehensively to research students, building on their development at undergraduate and taught Masters levels.

At taught Masters level, the reviewers suggest that the low numbers in the M.Phil in Speech and Language Processing (SLP) might have resourcing implications. There are two issues here. The first is that the M.Phil in SLP is crucial to our research in speech science, and to the School's strategic research plan. We note that this research area has over the years attracted many highly funded research projects. Crucial here is research on voice modelling and on Irish speech technology: since these are areas where there are very few (if any) centres doing comparable work, finding suitably trained researchers is a major problem. The Masters degree in SLP enables this research by providing researchers with a background in the required specialisms: a steady stream of M.Phil (SLP) graduates has moved into research. The second point is that the M.Phil programmes are highly modularised and integrated, so that students on other M.Phils take SLP courses, as do visiting students, while SLP students take courses from other M.Phils. The combined effect means that in simply resource terms discontinuing SLP would save little.

We are surprised that their discussion of the taught Masters programme omitted mention of the taught M.Sc suite in Clinical Speech and Language Studies and the related postgraduate diploma. These programmes are under development and support the strategic aim of increasing postgraduate numbers in this discipline.

At undergraduate level the reviewers recognized both the value of broad curriculum courses and the difficulty of introducing them into the professional degree in CSLS. However in line with College policy, CSLS is committed to providing a BC option for SF students. We acknowledge the logistical challenge created partly by the need to outsource clinical placements, sometimes outside of Dublin, but these difficulties are not insurmountable.

The reviewers highlight the lack of technical support for CSLS and CDS. This is partly a resources issue. However there is a senior technician within CLCs and there is a possibility that a change in working practices might provide some support to the other areas. CDS has invested heavily in the creation of digital data to support blended learning; and indeed simply to support learning given the relative lack of materials available in or about Irish Sign Language and Deaf Studies in Ireland. At a higher College level we perhaps should be looking seriously at video streaming and to move away from the idea that digital data is either research related or teaching related. For areas within the School it is both, and there is a need for a framework to support this. Outsourcing IS services for video data at departmental or School level is likely to be financially prohibitive.

The reviewers suggest that while each department has its own workload assignment model, based on sound principles, the School might move towards a single integrated model. The School has adopted a single set of principles which governs workload assignment in each area but the structural differences between the teaching programmes in each department make a single centrally operated workload model difficult to design and manage. A move to a more fully modular curriculum across College would facilitate this.

3.   Research and scholarly activity

The School welcomes the reviewers' recognition that the scholarly output of the School is high, including publishing a large number of monographs, and that its research income is "considerable" by international standards for these disciplines, amounting to around 4.5 million euro in the period of the review. We are also happy that they recognise the high profile of the School both nationally and internationally. We are less happy with their suggestions for narrowing both the types of output and the range of research topics pursued. Under the first point, their suggestion is for a greater concentration on high impact journals. While articles in leading journals remain an important target output, a total concentration on these would actually serve to limit our scholarly impact in several areas of the School's activities. In some of our important research areas, notably speech science, natural language processing and experimental phonetics, participation in major international conferences and publication in their proceedings are a vital part of our research dissemination, and contribute to an international presence. In other areas, such as linguistics and applied linguistics, books with leading academic publishers are an important way of reaching an international audience. The reviewers also omit discussion of a wide range of scholarly outputs that have contributed to the relevant disciplines' scholarly profiles and disseminated new knowledge. These include commissioned reports, which have had major impact in Ireland and internationally, particularly in areas of language policy and planning; diagnostic tools, which in clinical settings are of major import; digital corpora, such as the ICE-Ireland (English language in Ireland) corpus or the Signs of Ireland (Irish Sign

Language) corpus, which are important and internationally recognised research contributions; and software based text-to-speech synthesis systems for Irish, which are widely used internationally.

The reviewers identify the relative immaturity of the research profile in Deaf Studies. There are a number of factors in play here. The first is that this is a relatively new field internationally and absolutely so in Ireland. The School is developing both the discipline and the relevant staff: most of the academics in CDS are still completing their own academic training or have just done so. This naturally impacts on the capacity to complete research and publish on a par with more experienced colleagues in more established disciplines. In this regard the reviewers' suggestion that research mentoring be strengthened is a valuable one.

There is a suggestion in the report that small scale research funding (grants less than €15k) may not be worth pursuing because of dubious profitability to the School. The School's strategic plan endorses the aim of supporting both collaborative, integrative research projects and the research of individual scholars. Most of these small grants are to individuals and do not carry infrastructural or overhead implications for the School.

The reviewers correctly, in our view, identify the threat to research and scholarship posed by the retirement of experienced and eminent colleagues. Even where by College's efforts some recruitment is possible, the junior level and small numbers of such new staff pose a risk to maintaining the reputation of the School.

4.   Engagement with society and service to college
The reviewers raise the important point of the restrictions on Deaf colleagues' ability to contribute to College caused by the lack of interpretation services. We would endorse this and note that discussions are being held with Staff Office on this problem.

5.   Resources
The reviewers congratulate the School and College on the high standard of the new accommodation in 7-9 South Leinster Street. They note however the logistical and service problems that dogged the move and continue to impact on the delivery of academic programmes. We agree with their conclusion that the full integration of the School depends on the relocation of CLCS from the Arts Building to the new site in 2013/14. We also agree with their conclusion that the major resource risk to the School is the uncertainty of the continuing funding for the Centre for Deaf studies, which the HEA has supported to date as a strategic and vulnerable subject. At present there is no indication of funding beyond the current academic year.

At several points the reviewers comment on the danger to the international reputation of the School posed by shrinking state funding, and the failure to recruit administrative and

support staff caused by the Government's employment control policies. The School has lost one executive officer from what is by international standards a very small pool. Any further reductions would have serious effects on the teaching programmes. Some of their other comments about pressure on academic staff reflect a more subtle threat that has emerged from restructuring. The delegation of administrative functions to schools and the creation of roles such as directors of research and of teaching and learning has the advantage of moving management closer to the deliverers of programmes but it also means that much more administration falls on precisely those senior academics whose scholarly output supports most the profile and reputation of the School. This is exacerbated by the poor standard of information systems these officers must use to manage the School. There are a number of associated risks. A more general one is to the traditional balance between research, teaching and administration and its role in promotion, etc. A more practical problem is convincing colleagues to undertake these roles.

6.   Organisational structures and planning

Although the reviewers concede that the School is new and still undergoing a process of integration, they seem rather perplexed by the current stage of development. We acknowledge that the result of College's restructuring might seem rather opaque to external academic scrutiny. In particular they seem to conclude that the disciplines still seem to have too much prominence in the organisation of the School. Our response is that the School is functioning successfully within the context of multi-disciplinary schools in College. The governance structure in the School, including the duties and roles of School directors, heads of discipline and head of School, follows that established by College. College's guidelines on governance issues have been approved by Board but "will be subject to review at the end of the transition period taking into account experience in their implementation". Given this, colleagues in the School consider that we have been following College's prescription quite closely in relation to management structures and operational practices.

It must also be borne in mind that the Schools all came into being around the same time through a process of free consultation and negotiation between existing departments. During a period of such wholesale change right across College, it was surely adaptive – and in everyone's interest - that Departments would not abandon all existing processes and practices at once.

It was clear at the School's last 'away day' last September that staff in all disciplines within the School are keen to promote collaboration and integration and eliminate duplication in teaching and at an organisational level. There was considerable interest, as well as some proposals for promoting greater engagement at every level. One example of a development which arose directly from the foundation of the School is the Research Ethics process. There is now a RE Committee, with representatives from all disciplines, which replaces fragmented and unsuitable previous arrangements. The fact that people from different disciplines come

together on this committee to review research proposals from across the School creates the kind of direct engagement which leads to collaboration and integration.
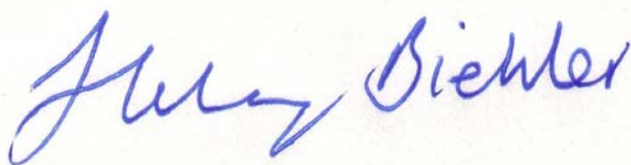
Prof John Saeed
Head of School

7.   Pro-Dean's response to the Review Report for Linguistic, Speech & Communication Sciences

The School of Linguistic, Speech & Communication Sciences is to be congratulated on this external review of its activities. The reviewers commended the School for the high quality of its teaching in all departments at undergraduate and postgraduate level which they described as 'informed and invigorated by the research interests of its staff'.

At the outset the external reviewers acknowledged that recommendations which would require additional financial input might be inappropriate in the current financial climate and that solutions which would allow the School to maintain and enhance its standards without such additional resources should be explored. However, many of their comments and recommendations drew attention to the difficulties which the School will face in seeking to maintain and develop its high standards in research and teaching without such resources. While the reviewers describe the commitment and loyalty of the staff and students in the School as 'remarkable', they refer to the challenges which the School will have to confront if it is not in a position to hire new and additional staff with strong track records in teaching and research. This reality underlies all such external reviews carried out in the current financial climate and is an issue which should not be underestimated by College.

The School is commended for the high level of research income it has succeeded in securing and the reviewers make reference to fact that there are a number of very prolific researchers with excellent records in the School. They also note that the School's physical infrastructure has improved markedly as a result of some of its departments moving to 7-9 South Leinster Street and the full integration of activities on that site should be a priority. Both the external reviewers and the School in its response to their report draw attention to the logistical and service problems which affected the move to the new premises and continue to impact on the delivery of the School's programmes and it is to be hoped that any outstanding issues in this regard can be resolved as soon as possible.

Finally, a general recommendation made by the external reviewers to the effect that one of them should be formally appointed as chairperson with overall responsibility for the final version of the report is one that College should consider.

Professor Hilary Biehler
Pro-Dean
Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences   7 June 2011