



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

Quality Review of Human Resources

24- 26th April 2019

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Quality Review of Human Resources Trinity College, Dublin

Final Report

May 2019

1. Introduction

This report is the outcome of the external review of the Human Resources Function in Trinity College, Dublin.

The findings in this report were informed by the extensive information provided about all aspects of the HR function and the detailed self-assessment document provided in advance of the review visit. Additional evidence was gathered during the meetings with key stakeholders during the two-day visit.

The Terms of Reference for the quality review highlighted 5 main categories for the Review Team to consider. This report will provide an assessment of each of the 5 categories, outlining for each:

- what we understood from the various sources of evidence;
- what we observed during the review (including examples of good practice);
- recommendations for improvement.

2. General Comments

Although the main focus of this report will be the categories outlined in the Terms of Reference, there were some broad themes that emerged from the review which either provide relevant context for the findings in each category or are additional issues the Review Team felt it important to highlight:

2.1. The External Context

The Review Team noted the significant restrictions placed upon the Trinity HR Team in recent years due to the challenging external environment and government policy in relation to austerity. Although many restrictions have been lifted as the economy has improved some continue to apply, such as the principles of the Employment Control Framework. This has presented additional challenges for the public sector when competing with other employers when there is now almost full employment in Ireland. It should be recognised that a number of the HR challenges identified in this report have been created or compounded by government policy.

2.2. The Institution

Trinity College is a very successful University with clear academic ambitions in relation to research and education. However, the ambition and vision for the professional service departments was less evident – particularly so for the HR function which has struggled due to lack of investment and high staff turnover. Despite the difficulties over recent years it was clear that many participants in the various stakeholder groups were very proud to work for Trinity College. The loyalty to the institution was evidenced by the long service of many of the participants. It was interesting that although many expressed a desire and a need for change, there were also many who seemed accepting of the status quo and of the traditional way of “doing things at Trinity”. This was particularly evident in the decision

making processes which were lengthy and cumbersome. The members of the Review Team were all used to much more streamlined decision-making processes in their own institutions with far fewer steps than is the case at Trinity. The Review Team was also accustomed to the full involvement and respect for the professional expertise of the HR Director when making people related policy decisions.

Many people expressed support for the concept of “One Trinity” with parity of esteem for all staff groups. For this to be a realistic aim this would need to be exemplified by the senior leaders of the Institution.

2.3. The HR Team

Despite some frustrations many participants expressed sympathy with the challenges faced by the HR Team and a real willingness to work with them to achieve change. There was also an appreciation and acknowledgement that things had already begun to improve and move in the right direction under the leadership of the current HR Director.

The Review Team was impressed with the honesty and awareness of the challenges included in the self-assessment document. It was encouraging to see many similarities with the issues raised by the stakeholder groups. The Review Team was also impressed by the energy and determination of the HR Director and the majority of the wider HR Team to continue to make progress.

It was clear that members of the HR Team were working incredibly hard (including in some cases very long hours). Many expressed a desire to change and to continue the shift to a more strategic function (which had been a recommendation of the 2012 quality review).

2.4. Space and Accommodation

The Review Team were given a tour of House 4. The current facilities are not fit for purpose and were amongst the worst office accommodation members of the Review Team had seen. We would strongly support the need for more adequate facilities for the whole HR team to be based together in one location. This proposal is consistent with the aims contained in the University’s Estates Strategy. HR is one of the public faces of an institution and as such the facilities should be consistent with the reputation and standing of Trinity College.

In terms of recruitment facilities, we believe it should be up to departments to identify suitable rooms for recruitment interviews. This would include allocating rooms and organising interviews.

2.5. Strategic Recommendations

The following is an executive summary of the key strategic recommendations, with further detail set out in each section of the report:

- Consider streamlining of decision-making processes for people-related policy decisions, with fewer steps and ensuring full involvement and respect for the professional expertise of the HR Director.
- Recommend that people are recognised as a strategic imperative supported by investment in HR priorities.
- Recommend that the line management arrangements for HR Partners are reviewed to reflect their position as a central part of the HR function to deliver business needs.

- Consider effective planning, prioritisation, resourcing and delivery of all learning and development provision in a strategic way under the leadership of the HR Director to best support the academic endeavour.
- Support a simplification of policies to be principles-based to allow flexibility to meet business needs. Accountability for key people issues and policy development would sit with the HR Director
- There is a requirement for recruitment transformation with respect to systems, processes and responsibilities of HR and local areas.

The organisational structure in Trinity places HR one step removed from the University's senior leadership table. The university's staff is its largest asset and consideration could be given to reviewing the position of the HR function within the University's hierarchy to reflect the significance of HR's role in people management.

3. Strategy

To review the Human Resources strategy in terms of its fitness-for-purpose to respond to the College strategies, the internal and external environment, emergent risks and opportunities nationally and internationally.

3.1. What we understood:

- 3.1.1. The HR department has an important role to play in the delivery of Trinity's University Strategic Plan by ensuring the University attracts, develops and retains the best talent in a very competitive market. Trinity went through a period of austerity, where budgets and staff numbers were cut, new low entry points to salary scales were introduced and permanent roles were severely curtailed. This has had an impact on the University both in terms of its operation and in terms of staff morale. While the economy is now much improved, and pay cuts are being restored, the lack of investment over the period in people and systems has had an impact. Now, with almost full employment in Ireland, recruitment to some roles in the public sector can be difficult both in terms of public sector recruitment rules and competing with private sector salaries.
- 3.1.2. The HR strategy over the past number of years has been to move from being a reactive personnel service to be a more strategic partner with every part of the University. This journey has been severely challenged on a number of fronts: the constant change in HR leadership, lack of investment in systems and processes, the devolved nature of decision making, and a high turnover rate in the HR team. There is no doubt the leadership changes served to create a sense of uncertainty, fear and instability among the team as a whole. This churn of staff at operational and leadership level has resulted in the loss of institutional and process knowledge in key areas, teams within HR working independently of each other and a fragmented and sometimes inconsistent delivery of HR service.
- 3.1.3. Recognising the instability of the last few years, the approach of the HR leadership has been to bring the team together more regularly to keep them informed on the progress against objectives and install a sense of pride in the work people do. Clients see HR as one unit and while there are a number of specialist areas within HR, the delivery to clients' needs to be seamless. HR is in the early stages of building a cohesive team, and while they recognise there is more to be done in this area, the new HR Senior Management Team (SMT) is

working to ensure information is cascaded down to their teams and role modelling a one-team approach.

- 3.1.4. On the journey to become a more strategic partner, HR recognises the need to build credibility with key stakeholders in terms of delivering an efficient and consistent administrative service for key HR activities. During 2018 Trinity College upgraded the HR system which now, not only provides a stable platform for pay, but also has the capability to support the automation of processes such as time and attendance, performance management and user self-service. The key administrative processes are a priority for HR and will step change basic administration, giving line of sight and ownership to the local areas and to the individuals. During 2018 the SMT was strengthened, and this team is in process of delivering some of the key building blocks required for HR to move from being a purely administrative function to becoming a more strategic partner. HR is in the process of introducing a holistic approach to talent management and career development with a career framework project and this, in turn, will be supported and underpinned by the introduction of leadership and management development programmes.
- 3.1.5. The HR strategy 2014-2019 is nearing the end of its cycle and will be revisited later in 2019 to review and set the next HR strategic plan to mirror the University's strategic plan 2019-2024.

3.2. What we observed:

- 3.2.1. In various sessions with a number of stakeholder groups, we recognized a great number of insights as described above were consistent with the HR team's self-assessment. The assessment and interviews showed a number of consistent inputs from which the review team was able to move forward.
- 3.2.2. One remark which was made on a number of occasions was that Trinity is a very old and reputable institution. At the same time, it was mentioned that Trinity has lost some of its collegiality, has issues with its silo's and is losing ground from a professional perspective in comparison with other institutions who use their resources better. Internal stakeholders perceive Trinity as a risk averse organisation, an organisation of two worlds building areas of excellence but infrastructure and leadership is not where it should be despite the competitive environment. There's no common and shared narrative that change can be good to protect the future. It was stated that Trinity is years behind and will even lose more years if no significant investment is made. It is only at academic level allowed to build up reserves. When it comes to the organisation of two worlds we noted that 'academics are pushing control' and 'trust has to be built'. One of the challenges seems to be that the Board is 90% academic and that they reserve the right how the university is run. At the same it is noted that a world class university deserves world class professionals.
- 3.2.3. Also the regulatory framework does not support a policy of continuous improvement and a mind-set of continuous review, rather there is a culture of blame and criticism. The National Pay policy for instance is having a great deal of impact on what can be done within Trinity and other institutions.

- 3.2.4. On the silo's it was noted that members of staff generally have loyalty to their own area first, and second to the university. Given Heads of Departments have to revert to their own area after three years; there is a reluctance to tackle problems. There's for instance a "light touch" from the Head of (24) schools in compliance with policies although they're technically supposed to report in to the Deans. The multi-layered processes in terms of the many steps and the length of time, which takes a lot from the people involved. A lot of energy is wasted throughout the system also due to the lack of integral plans. In order to get a sense of fulfilment, people are afraid to get it wrong. They don't want to put themselves in the firing line and go where it's safe which indicates there's some lack of recognition.
- 3.2.5. Nevertheless, a number of stakeholders indicated that HR shouldn't be afraid to step forward and make a decision if and when required. A number of functions and departments within the HR Team were perceived as valuable.
- 3.2.6. It was mentioned that Trinity used to be an organisation that got things done by calling someone but now it moves towards processes and systems, which places the organisation somewhat in the middle running the risk of institutionalising churn. There were a large number of remarks and experiences with the recruitment processes and department which will be highlighted somewhere else in this review report. Finally, it was noted that Trinity could benefit from a regular and professional people survey which would give voice to the staff and would provide regular feedback on a number of HR and people matters and issues.

3.3. What we recommend:

- 3.3.1. We recognise the external context and the significant restrictions placed on the college by government policy and austerity. We questioned the value Trinity College places on people as we identified people did not always feel listened to or involved in decision-making.
- 3.3.2. We would recommend that people are recognised as a strategic imperative supported by investment in HR priorities.
- 3.3.3. We would encourage benchmarking with other institutions, sharing of best practice and consideration of external accreditations such as the HR Excellence in Research Award.
- 3.3.4. We would encourage Trinity College to conduct regular people surveys.
- 3.3.5. We would urge a simplification of policies to encourage agility and clarity of ownership and accountability for key people issues which in our experience would sit with the HR Director.

4. The HR Business Partner Team and Core Functions of HR

The effectiveness of the devolved HR Business Partner structure and core functions of HR in delivering a cohesive professional service to key stakeholders (divisions and faculties).

4.1. What we understood:

- 4.1.1. The 5 HR Business Partners provide a dedicated on-site resource to designated areas of the institution. They are not based in House 4; rather they are spread across the campus with a dual reporting line to the Head of HR Business Partnering and to the Faculty Deans or the COO or Vice-Provost.
- 4.1.2. The remainder of the HR function is based in House 4 and is made up of multiple teams across multiple floors. The tendency to adopt a silo way of working by some members of the HR Team was identified in the last review in 2012, and despite some encouraging progress (such as the strengthening of the senior HR Team including the appointment of the Head of HR Business Partnering), this tendency to work in silos was still evident (as shown in the employee engagement survey within HR).

4.2. What we observed:

- 4.2.1. It was clear from the feedback from the stakeholder groups that the work of the HR Business partner Team was greatly appreciated by senior staff and other “customers” across the institution. The provision of a named and trusted individual to support Heads of Departments was valued. Where problems with HR service were identified (such as delays in the recruitment process) these were almost always seen as problems with the central HR team, and not the responsibility of the Business Partner to resolve. The Review Team contrasted this with practice in their own institutions where the Business Partner would take an active role in resolving any difficulties.
- 4.2.2. It was also clear that the role and purpose of the HR Business Partners varied significantly. Although all were working hard, some were undertaking more general administrative duties that would normally be undertaken by a more junior member of staff. The joint reporting arrangements result in lack of clarity as to who was ultimately responsible for allocating work and determining priorities.
- 4.2.3. The Review Team was surprised that the HR Business Partner did not take lead role on the full range of HR issues, including employee relations issues such as discipline, performance and grievances cases. The current structure means these issues are handled by the central employee relations team. This does not represent usual practice for HR Business Partners and can result in duplication of effort and second guessing of decisions made by the central team.
- 4.2.4. The Review team would expect the HR Business Partner role to be the key conduit for effective two-way communication between HR and business units and to play a key role in delivering strategic HR initiatives. Despite recent development interventions the Review Team did not see evidence that there was a shared understanding of the role of the HR Business Partner.

4.3. What we recommend:

- 4.3.1. We would agree with the summary in the self-assessment that the current structure creates ambiguity about roles and responsibilities. In our institutions the HR partners are part of the HR discipline and take ownership for the full range of HR activities in their areas. They also act as a key conduit for central HR. We would recommend that the purpose of this role is clarified and strengthened to align with the role of a strategic HR professional.
- 4.3.2. We would recommend that the line management arrangements and role description and competencies and skills for this role are reviewed (and clarified) and benchmarked against best practice.
- 4.3.3. We would support the introduction of key metrics and management information to assist the HR Business partners in driving the HR agenda. Working in close collaboration with their local management teams.
- 4.3.4. We would support the introduction of cross functional project teams to deliver key HR strategic projects.
- 4.3.5. We would support an on-going programme of development for the HR Team, possibly with visits to other institutions to benchmark practice.
- 4.3.6. We would recommend that the whole of the HR Team be based together in one location, ideally an open plan modern office environment to break down the silos.

5. Learning and Development

Fit for purpose of the Learning and Organisational Development (L&OD) Programmes to drive high performance and build capability and succession plans across the University.

5.1. What we understood and observed:

Current Learning and Organisational Development Provision

- 5.1.1. In evaluating how effectively the University's Learning and Organisational Development (L&OD) Programmes support the University's strategic goal to 'Activate Staff Talents', as articulated in the current Strategic Plan, the Review Team found that the HR Division had developed a sound range of building blocks in its HR Strategy to support the University's Vision and Mission. These included: development of a Competency Framework, newly designed leadership development programmes, and a Career Framework, ready for roll out in 2019. However, whilst progress has been made in developing these projects, there exist a variety of factors that appeared to the Review Team to be impeding their successful implementation. The Review Team also considered that these same factors were inhibiting the opportunity to deliver further important initiatives to foster a high-performance culture for the future through improved performance management and effective succession planning processes. These factors are discussed in detail below.

Lack of a Strategic Approach

- 5.1.2. The University does not have a Learning and Organisation Development Strategy. There is no overall strategic approach to the design, planning and delivery of current provision. Instead, provision is delivered in the form of one-off interventions introduced in response to specific demands. Two such examples are the Leadership Development Programme for Heads of School and the USSHER Assistant Professors tailored programme. Both were warmly praised during our interviews with staff. It was clear to the Review Team, that the quality of programmes were generally considered to be high, but that such provision did not form part of a strategic narrative that was clearly aligned to fulfilling the University's 'Talent Acquisition and Development' goal within its Strategic Plan.

Leadership Development Programmes

- 5.1.3. In our discussions we learned of the need to address the 'leadership deficit' across the institution and some key stakeholders commented that this had to be a strategic priority for Trinity. It is therefore essential to build leadership and management capability at all levels across the University.
- 5.1.4. We also learnt about award-winning initiatives, such as the Mentoring Scheme, which were subsequently discontinued. Initiatives such as these represent excellent practice, contribute to both building and embedding leadership capability across the institution and, as such, represent positive ways of delivering value for money.
- 5.1.5. Aligned to the delivery of new programmes for those in existing leadership roles, is the need to also develop programmes for future leaders. This will ensure a fair, transparent, systematic and informed approach of identifying leaders for the future in a way that is entirely consistent with the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion. This long-term strategic approach will help to build a leadership community within Trinity.

Underinvestment and future budgetary provision

- 5.1.6. The Review Team found that there has been a prolonged period of underinvestment for L&OD programmes throughout the duration of the current Strategic Plan (2012-2018). The Review Team learned that the budget allocated to Human Resources (HR) for its L&OD programmes is between €120,000 – €150,000 per annum. This level of budget falls well below the public service guideline of 3% of revenue as an appropriate scale of investment in Learning and Development. However, it also came to light that Schools spend approximately €3.2million on locally funded programmes.
- 5.1.7. The Review Team considered that the existing arrangements for expenditure did not offer transparency or clarity about the extent to which funds spent at local level were contributing to the achievement of institutional priorities; or provide information about the quality of provision; its impact; or return on investment (ROI).

Governance

- 5.1.8. In our discussion with stakeholders, the question of ‘Who owns training at Trinity?’ was raised and, as a Review Team, we did not hear a clear response to this question.
- 5.1.9. The Review Team explored the idea of introducing clear governance structures with oversight across the full range of institutional training and development provision, including researcher development and academic development. It was considered that this would carry the benefit of promoting genuine collaboration across the University, thereby contributing visibly to the ‘One Trinity’ concept and offering a more enriched experience for staff founded on the shared expertise of colleagues responsible for the delivery of different parts of this agenda.

One Trinity

- 5.1.10. The achievement of the concept of ‘One Trinity’ would be greatly supported through a well-developed and resourced Learning and Organisation Development Strategy delivering a wide range of programmes to realise this vision.
- 5.1.11. There was concern expressed about creeping managerialism. However, subsidiarity is a common model in most Russell Group institutions demonstrating that it is possible to combine central and local responsibilities for the change and OD agenda without compromising the principle of local leadership and undermining the culture of collegiality that Trinity has enjoyed.

Fostering a high-performance culture

- 5.1.12. In order for the L&OD programmes to be aligned to the new Strategic Plan for Trinity, the College will first need to articulate what is meant by “*a high-performance culture*”, and how this will be measured, for example by research income; quality of research and education; international reputation and league table standing. It is clearly for Trinity to set its own performance measures of institutional success. At our own respective institutions, we have published Key Performance Indicators and Targets that have been approved by our governing bodies and which they monitor through the governance structures. Individual members of the leadership team have personal responsibility for the successful delivery of these targets. This model provides clarity of ownership for the institution’s strategic priorities and embeds a high-performance culture by linking individual and organisational priorities to the successful delivery of the Strategic Plan.

Performance Management

- 5.1.13. An effective, transparent and fair Probation process is a pre-requisite for sound performance management. The Review Team learned of one case where it had taken nearly two years for the outcome of a Probation review to be communicated to an academic member of staff. This was a high performing individual who was subsequently recognised through accelerated promotion, not someone over whom there had been serious performance concerns that may have contributed to some element of delay.

The reason for the delay was attributed to the operation of the current Committee structures and not due to any failure of process within the HR Division. The Review Team learnt that the current Probation form runs to sixteen pages, which does not reflect contemporary good practice. The description of current processes appeared to be ineffective, opaque and unfair in their operation. Furthermore, in its current form, it risks contributing to the loss of excellent early career academics. There is a strong imperative to streamline processes, systems and forms to improve the staff experience. Most research-intensive universities have probation policies with clear, transparent decision-making processes and related timelines.

- 5.1.14. The achievement of a high-performance culture also requires effective processes for other aspects of performance management. However, the Review Team found that there is no annual appraisal system and that only some staff have individual objectives, so it is difficult for staff and managers to be clear about what is expected of them. Furthermore, the Review Team were advised that Heads of School were not generally supportive of setting staff individual objectives, with performance management relying on the relationship that staff had with their Head of School contrary to good practice and principles of equality, diversity and inclusion. An integrated model linking induction, probation and appraisal could transform performance management at Trinity.

Communications and Systems Enhancements

- 5.1.15. One of the most consistent observations made by stakeholders was a lack of accessible information with respect to the range of current L&OD provision. The development of an intranet would address their concerns effectively. Similarly, the implementation of a Learning Management System, would furnish both the institution and staff with invaluable information relating to their academic and professional development records.

Professional Services Staff

- 5.1.16. The need to invest in the development of Professional Services (PS) is essential in a modern University. The loss of PS staff, for example, the exceptionally high turnover in HR, is in part attributable to a lack of career opportunities and a deep sense of not being valued by the institution. The Review Team strongly endorses the recruitment and retention plans that the Director of Human Resources has prepared in response to this on-going institutional risk.

5.2. What we Recommend:

Lack of a Strategic Approach

- 5.2.1 The Review Team were pleased to learn that the Director of Human Resources is leading one of the strategic themes for the new Strategic Plan, which offers an excellent opportunity to shape the institutional people agenda as well as advance a highly integrated HR Strategy which in future will fully support the University's ambitious goals.

Leadership Development Programmes

- 5.2.2 The Review Team found there to be a real appetite for an on-going suite of programmes to address this strategic challenge and, to this end, the Review Team strongly endorses plans by the HR Director to introduce new leadership development programmes for roll out across the University beginning this year.

It is recommended that the Executive Officers Group lead by example and engage in an executive development programme, ideally with external facilitation and input. This is to ensure that the facilitator has the experience and confidence to work with executive teams. It is extremely difficult for officers within the University to be able to offer appropriate challenge to the most senior members of the University's leadership team. The engagement of external expertise also offers the opportunity to draw on excellent practice and models from other higher education and cognate sectors, including international models of good practice. This is particularly relevant given Trinity's global standing and is an approach adopted by many peer institutions such as those in the Russell Group in the UK.

To this extent, support for such initiatives should not be a one-off event, but on-going as part of an integrated offer of leadership and management development. This point links to the recommendation in paragraph 5.2.3 below for additional on-going investment in order for the University to derive true benefit from such initiatives.

Underinvestment and future budgetary provision

- 5.2.3 It is therefore recommended that the funds supporting current L&OD provision be centralised under the Director of Human Resources. This approach enables the effective planning, prioritisation, resourcing and delivery of all learning and development provision in a strategic way to best support the academic endeavour.

We would also recommend that synergies with other training providers within the University be explored, for example, the academic development unit. This could include the possibility of a joint training facility providing a quality environment for all staff to experience as an accepted feature of institutional investment into their academic, professional and leadership development.

Governance

- 5.2.4 By introducing clear governance structures, it will enable the University to shape, inform and oversee the delivery of a Learning and Organisation Development Strategy. In our discussions with the stakeholders in this area, this proposal of a strategic approach under a new model of governance with full representation across all training providers was warmly welcomed and recognised as offering significant benefits for the institution for the reasons given above.

One Trinity

- 5.2.5. The explicit sponsorship of the Provost and the Executive Officers Group for work that supports the One Trinity vision will be essential. It is recommended that responsibility for leadership and implementation of this strategy should be located with the Director of Human Resources. In our own institutions responsibility for the change agenda sits within the remit of the Director of Human Resources.

It is possible to adopt this approval and still perceive the principle of subsidiarity through appropriately designed governance structures similar to those introduced in other institutions of global standing.

Performance Management

- 5.2.6 The Review Team recommends the urgent review of current Probation processes to better reflect good practice consistent with peer institutions.

The upgraded HR system now has the capability to support a proper appraisal system and it is recommended that further consideration be given to embedding a full performance management process underpinned by the HR system.

5.2.1. Communications and Systems Enhancements

These systems enhancements could be funded through the redirection of some of the €3.2m resources expended locally to explicitly contribute to strategic priorities.

6. HR Policy

To review the effectiveness how HR policy is made and implemented throughout college, and the role HR play in driving policy and process.

6.1. What we understood:

- 6.1.1. HR policies provide written guidance for employees and managers on how to handle a range of employment issues. They play an important role in practically and effectively implementing the University's HR strategy. They also provide consistency and transparency for employees and managers, helping to enhance the employee's experience in work and creating a positive organisational culture. HR policies are available to view on the A-Z section of the HR website. Policies are reviewed on a cyclical base to a review timetable. Policies can be generally categorized into three stands: legislative-based (such as annual and sick leave) employee benefits (such as wellbeing policies) and organisational control (such as recruitment and promotions policies).
- 6.1.2. In Trinity College, all matters related to employees are considered by the Human Resources Committee, which is a principal committee of the University Board. The HR Committee may investigate and make recommendations to the University Council and the Board on any aspect of policy affecting staff in the College regarding the areas of recruitment and selection, pay and conditions of employment, staff relations and staff development. Policies that are based on

Irish legislation such as parental leave, maternity leave, garda vetting are also subject to Board approval. In most cases, the legislative changes to policy are adopted by the Board as instructed. However, this is not always the case which places HR in an ambiguous position regarding compliance in the period between legislation being enacted and the Board of Trinity adopting the policy change.

- 6.1.3. The HR team devises and develops new processes, procedures or policies such as the building blocks (competency framework, development programmes, career framework and performance management). However, the HR department doesn't have the autonomy to implement these without gaining the approval of the University Board. There is a multi-layered governance process in place which consists of at least 9 steps. Projects with significant budgetary requirements (50.000 Euro Capital or greater) also require the approval of the Capital Review Group (CRG).

6.2. What we observed:

- 6.2.1. In various sessions with a number of stakeholder groups, we came across a large number of insights as described above which were included in the self-assessment of the HR Team, and highlighted in a number of interviews. The assessment and interviews showed consistent inputs from which the Review Team could move forward.
- 6.2.2. It became obvious during our review that Trinity has a lengthy process in place when it comes to drafting, agreeing, implementing, sharing and communicating policies. From drafting till agreeing of policies it can take up from 9-11 steps involving a number of stakeholders.
- 6.2.3. One of the last steps before agreeing is a consultation with the HR Committee, chaired by an academic with a term of three years. This committee makes a political assessment of the proposed policies and performs a check on completeness before taking a "defensible position" vis-a-vis the Board. It was noted that a number of stakeholders were critical of the HR Committee questioning that it has been dysfunctional and that not much impact was made in the last two years. The proposals which were reviewed were hardly changed and by nature imposed by legislation which limited in the terms of possible amendments. Also the Committee has not come together on a regular basis. A number of stakeholders (schools, unions), though raised the issue that they were no (longer) part of this Committee.
- 6.2.4. In every step of the policy making process, there can be amendments. It's not a given that these amendments are put forward for consultation with the HR Director. It can be complex and cumbersome when it comes to stakeholders involvement during the policy making process. Although Trinity works with focus groups, it doesn't mean that the amended policy proposals are shared again in these or other stakeholders groups. This is partly due to some negative experiences where someone has tried to block or slow down further steps in the policy making process. Nevertheless, it gives the impression that HR may seek inputs but seems not always open for feedback.

- 6.2.5. Once a policy proposal has made it till the end, it's also cumbersome to communicate the outcome and impact to a wider audience, partly due to a lack of an intranet solution, the lack of focus on internal communications by the communications department and a strict policy by the College secretariat's Office on what can be communicated keeping in mind a certain "balance". HR is not allowed to send out "all staff" e-mails. If and when approved by the secretariat, it goes into a schedule. As an alternative HR has now started themselves with The Weekly Wrap-up.
- 6.2.6. The HR leadership team has now drafted a number of more impactful building block proposals and other initiatives which are or will go into the decision-making process. Some remarks were made that Trinity can be great in policy making but doesn't perform that well in implementing these policies. There are also questions and concerns to what extent Trinity incentivises the execution of its policies.
- 6.2.7. The recruitment process has been described as very complex with many steps involving paper heavy systems. Many people are caught up in the process in trying to follow up the various steps. Quite a number of stakeholders have shared the desire to revamp this recruitment process which would impact and simplify the policies and increase its flexible use for the various units and functions. Strategic hiring could be different from non-strategic hiring. Also, recruitment for academics and non-academics could differ and finally what should be done at central and local level may differ as well as more clarity between what HR should do and what line-management should do. In the next section of this review report, we will highlight some more findings on recruitment.
- 6.2.8. Finally, we noted that there is not always a regular and structured approach on setting meetings with stakeholders (e.g. unions, heads of schools) including management of follow-up.

6.3. What we recommend:

- 6.3.1. There is a lack of clarity around the locus of decision-making and the current governance is hindering consultation with key stakeholders on important policy changes.
- 6.3.2. We would question the effectiveness of the HR committee in its current form. We were surprised by the lack of attendance by committee members and the tendency to discuss operational detail rather than strategic issues. In our experience in peer institutions the HR Director would be a full member of such a key committee. This is essential to shape and drive the HR agenda, in consultation with the chair, and to advocate the importance of people management.
- 6.3.3. We support the efforts to draft clear policies outlining principles. We would urge that new policies allow for flexibilities to meet business needs and that new policies should supersede previous documents and practices. In every step the HR Director should be the owner of the process and be consulted if and when changes are proposed.

- 6.3.4. We were unclear how trade unions are consulted on key policies and would recommend regular trade union meetings chaired by the HR Director. If and when appropriate HR policies should be part of these trade union meetings.
- 6.3.5. How policies are developed and communicated is cumbersome. Once HR policies are agreed a clear communication process should begin including Q and A and easily accessible to all staff. We were encouraged to hear of the plans to introduce an intranet by the end of the year. We would recommend HR work in partnership with the communications department to develop a communications and a people engagement strategy. Trinity should have a strong focus on clear, consistent and enduring internal communication.

7. Systems and Processes

The effectiveness of our HR operational systems and processes, for efficiency, effectiveness and future proofing.

7.1. What we understood and observed:

Recruitment

- 7.1.1. In our meetings, Recruitment was identified as the main area in which HR policies, processes, systems and service quality was failing to meet the needs and expectations of Schools and Professional Services. Our meetings discovered that a complex range of factors were contributing to a lack of an efficient and effective service. Having said this, many stakeholders commented on the fact that they found the HR Recruitment Team were having to cope with significant workloads and were severely stretched in aiming to deliver the service. This was seen as a major reason for the high staff turnover in this team coupled with a sense of these staff feeling demoralised and under-valued by the University. The staff themselves commented that they felt their professional expertise in recruitment was not being utilised and instead they found themselves constantly firefighting. The high staff turnover in the team was a risk factor for the University and the Review Team felt that swift action to address the shortcomings of the present processes and systems would be key to delivering both institutional benefits and retaining a young highly mobile group of staff.
- 7.1.2. Stakeholders, and staff in HR, all described similar weaknesses with present recruitment processes. The drawbacks described reflected a concern that was expressed about HR processes in general, as being overly complex, for example, the recruitment process was said to involve 209 steps leading to serious delays in the appointment of staff. The feedback from stakeholders indicated a lack of clarity about who was responsible for the overall process. Similarly, decision-making and approval processes were also unclear, resulting in a loss of valuable time when seeking to make appointments; the complexity of the current system contributed to a significant error rate by the Recruitment Team; and there was a general lack of understanding across the University about how the process was intended to operate. The high staff turnover in the Recruitment Team was identified as a major contributory factor to the inefficient operation of this function.

- 7.1.3. The Review Team were encouraged to learn about the recruitment transformation project, which the Recruitment Team hoped would introduce improved processes across all aspects of recruitment. The first stage of this project is to introduce an updated Recruitment Policy, which is due to be launched in the near future, followed by essential work to map streamlined processes.
- 7.1.4. HR staff and stakeholders alike, each expressed an appetite for change and modernisation, but saw the other as being change averse. Given the interests and commitment expressed by all stakeholders, including HR staff, the recruitment transformation project offers an excellent opportunity to capitalise on this openness to change and could be used as a pilot to progress other policy and process modernisation projects.
- 7.1.5. Feedback from stakeholders indicated the need to pilot new systems and processes, ahead of rolling them out fully. This to ensure that systems enhancements are customer-driven and not process-led. Some stakeholders expressed the view that they were not consulted by HR on matters of service and process design, reporting that in focus groups, they felt that they were being asked to validate decisions that had already been taken by HR. It is essential for HR to actively engage with key stakeholders across the University in the design of new processes and, an effective way of doing so, is by using established methodologies such as LEAN.
- 7.1.6. The Review Team learned of some recruitment processes that operated swiftly and smoothly, a good example of which was the hiring process for Assistant Professors, demonstrating that it was possible to act quickly in some areas of activity. The effectiveness of this process was commended by senior academics and may offer a useful model as a basis for the design of other HR processes.

Underinvestment in IT systems and future-proofing

- 7.1.7. The Review Team found that there had been an underinvestment in IT systems enhancements in HR, this was due to the financial constraints faced by Trinity during the period of austerity. The impact of this situation on HR is twofold. There is a strong recognition that for HR to contribute fully in supporting the University to realise its strategic ambitions, it is essential for HR to operate as a strategic partner. However, in order to earn this recognition, HR must first implement significant process and systems improvements, which is work that it has not been able to advance, as other areas of institutional activity have been prioritised as more important for the purposes of IT investment.
- 7.1.8. The Review Team had a very helpful meeting with the Director of IT and learned that Trinity is moving to Cloud based technology, which will contribute to future-proofing new processes and systems as they are developed to support the University's new Strategy.
- 7.1.9. On-going strategic investment in the new CORE HR system, building on the recent technical upgrade, would address many of the current issues identified by stakeholders, such as, the inefficiencies associated with running multiple systems

to support the same activity (e.g. annual leave); significant duplication of effort across the University; and a dependency on unreliable paper-driven processes.

- 7.1.10. A major benefit of extending CORE functionality to introduce both Employee Self Service and Manager Self Service, would equip both employees and managers to undertake activities themselves to align with local needs and objectives, reflecting practice in many other peer institutions. Similarly, the automation of performance management, annual leave and sickness processes, are three examples of how the time of managers and staff, both locally and in the HR Division, could be used to far greater effect on more value-added activities.
- 7.1.11. The meeting with the IT Director identified strong synergies between the strategic priorities of HR and IT, in that implementing systems enhancements successfully is not a purely transactional activity, but also one requiring culture change. There is a cultural challenge to raise the level of digital literacy and fluency of staff across the institution to equip them to apply the new digital tools. The combination of IT and HR expertise could provide a useful collaboration to help embed changes more effectively.
- 7.1.12. The Review Team also explored approaches to staff planning and budgeting and suggested how this could be enhanced by introducing strategic workforce planning. The Review Team shared experience from their own institutions on how the use of detailed workforce analysis has proved to be a valuable tool in enhancing workforce planning through more informed decision-making. For example, this could facilitate an annual cycle of hiring agreed a year in advance, which was seen as a real benefit by senior academics Faculties and Divisions.

7.2. What we recommend:

Recruitment

- 7.2.1. The Review Team were encouraged that the HR Director had prioritised the importance of improving and simplifying the recruitment process as a key objective for the HR function to deliver. Successful implementation of the recruitment transformation project is clearly a priority for the University and the likelihood of its expeditious passage through the current governance and decision-making structures will be greatly enhanced by senior institutional sponsorship.
- 7.2.2. The redesign of processes and systems should be customer-led and not process-driven, prioritising business need and service levels over process. In order for such process redesign to be carried successfully and with the full engagement of stakeholders, it is recommended that the University consider the use of methodologies such as LEAN or similar models. It is recommended that the University should initially engage an external facilitator in the use of LEAN, with a view to training staff in HR and other Professional Services teams in the future, allowing expertise to be embedded across the University over time. This would deliver benefits beyond the HR function and contribute to process enhancements across other areas of activity.

- 7.2.3. In the interests of good practice, quality control and consistency, it is recommended that when new policies are introduced, they clearly state these supersede all previous relevant policies.

Underinvestment in IT systems and future-proofing

- 7.2.4. The recent technical upgrade of the CORE HR system represents important progress following a period of underinvestment. The Review Team recommend further investment to realise the benefits that a fully functional system will bring. It is suggested, based on advice from the IT Director that upfront investment now will deliver significant improvements in efficiencies, cost effectiveness and future proofing as these process changes become embedded in institutional practice.
- 7.2.5. There should be a strong partnership between HR and IT to deliver streamlined Employee and Manager Self-Service.

Clarity of responsibilities between HR and Line Management

- 7.2.6. Throughout our meetings, the Review Team learned that there is a lack of clarity of responsibilities between HR and local line managers. It is essential that in designing and improving institutional processes and systems, there is absolute clarity between those responsibilities that fall to HR and those in the domain of local areas and line managers.
- 7.2.7. To this extent the review team consider it important that the professional role of HR is recognised in terms of providing advice, guidance, and solutions, but that they are not engaged to act as note takers at interviews. Where HR do attend interviews, it should be as equal members and decision makers of the Selection Committee.

8.1 Quick wins

Some quick wins were identified that are non-specific and can be applied across all areas of HR activity:

- The need to review the format of the most commonly used HR forms, for example avoiding PDFs, making the forms easy to complete and online where possible;
- A protocol for email response times, this should include a holding response where there may be a delay (this was one of the most commonly cited frustrations);
- Flowcharts for the most commonly used HR policies;
- Regular meetings with key stakeholder groups to improve communication and feedback.

Response from Human Resources

Introduction

On behalf of the Senior Management Team in Human Resources, I welcome the report from the independent team of reviewers from the University of Amsterdam, Durham University and the University of Sussex. I believe the reviewers have accurately captured the context in which the HR Department in Trinity College operates, and have identified a number of key issues, which if acted upon, could have a very positive impact in the University. They have taken an outside in look at Trinity and compared our situation and strategy with others in the University sector and their recommendations are based on this.

Context

In terms of overall strategy and the context in which the HR Department operates in Trinity, the reviewers observed that in the University Strategy 'ambition and vision for the professional services was less evident', than the clear ambition articulated for the academic areas. They acknowledge the lack of investment in the past number of years, and the detrimental effect that has had on the infrastructure and leadership development in the University.

We/I would agree with the reviewers that a world-class university like Trinity deserves world-class professional services. In order to have world class professional services the University needs to examine a number of its current norms:-

The governance structure; the reviewers commented that the decision-making process in Trinity was lengthy and cumbersome, compared to other universities. The number of steps required to make a decision or change a HR-related policy is not agile and does not reflect confidence in the professionals in the HR Team. We agree with their recommendation of simplification of policies, ensuring principles are agreed at a corporate level, and ownership and accountability for key people issues sit with the HR Director.

Two Worlds – One Trinity; The reviewers refer to Trinity as an 'organisation of two worlds' where excellence in the academic field is not matched with investment in excellence in the professional services area. We agree that in order to support the academic mission of the University, we need to invest in the professionalisation of staff within the professional and support functions. This requires an investment in the development of staff at middle management and senior management levels.

Trinity Tradition; While some of the service users of HR interviewed in the review acknowledged the need for change in how we do our business, there was also a sense of acceptance of the status quo and the traditional way of doing things in Trinity. According to the Reviewers there didn't seem to be an understanding that change can be good to protect the future. While we often call on the legacy of our traditions in Trinity, it is important to acknowledge that in order to remain a top-level University, we need to fundamentally change how we operate.

Fostering a High-Performance Culture; The Reviewers raise the question of what is a high-performance culture in Trinity. They propose that Trinity needs to articulate what it means by this and how it will be measured, for example is it by research income, quality of research and education, international reputation and league table standing. They go on to suggest that key performance indicators should be owned by individuals on the University's Senior Leadership Team, and this personal responsibility helps drive delivery of these targets and embeds a high-performance culture by linking individual and organisational priorities to the successful deliver of the University's strategy.

People Centred; Feedback the reviewers received from those they interviewed was that people did not always feel listened to. They recommended that people be seen as a strategic imperative supported by investment in HR priorities. They also recommended that the University conduct regular people surveys. Many Universities currently do this, and it helps develop the sense of collegiality, and allows the University address issues of concern in a coherent proactive way.

HR Policy

We fully support the concept of a principles approach to HR Policy. The current process can be too rigid and cumbersome. Taking a principles approach at a strategic level means the operationalisation of the policy can be applied in the most appropriate way by the professional team.

The Reviewers are very clear, that HR policy should be within the remit of the HR Director. While consultation is essential and recommended, HR need to own and drive the people agenda.

The suggestion of meeting with the Unions to keep them informed on key HR policies is one which we accept and are happy to engage with. We have met with the University's trade union representatives during the Summer and have taken them through the HR Strategy and have committed to continue this dialogue with them.

We agree and take on board the suggestions in relation to how new or amended policies are communicated to staff and the general University community.

Learning and Organisation Development

The Reviewers observed that the University does not have a Learning and Organisation Development Strategy but delivers programmes and interventions on 'once off' basis. They also point to the fact that this is an area of considerable under investment for a prolonged period of time. There is acknowledgement that there is investment at a local level, but this is neither efficient nor transparent and it is hard to see if the University is getting a return on its investment.

Leadership and Strategic Direction; We agree with this finding - the university has not had a fully resourced L&OD Team nor has it had a comprehensive University wide L&OD strategy. This is a critically important part of the HR function and one that has the capacity to drive change, efficiency and build capability right across the University. This area lacked senior leadership for some time but in September 2018 we appointed a new L&OD Manager and since then have been working to put together a comprehensive L&OD strategy for the whole organisation, ensuring we are building capability and capacity around the Trinity leadership competencies.

Completed	In Progress/to do
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership Competency Framework • Developed 360 feedback tool for Trinity Competencies • Developed Transition Programme to support New Heads of School & Assistant Professors • Developed New Leader Intervention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership Development Programme • Management Development for School Administration Managers • Coaching Panel • Mentoring for Professional Services staff

Capability to Deliver; We have over 800 Researchers in the University and we recognise that we need to support them through developing a comprehensive suite of programmes to support them manage and develop their careers. While Trinity has made a commitment under the Research Charter and Strategy to 'foster and grow research talent and leadership', we currently provide

limited support to researchers. We believe that with dedicated resources, we would provide a comprehensive approach to supporting researchers. This would be in line with our colleagues in other LERU Universities.

Current Supports in Place	Potential Supports
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to Vitae 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career Planning & Coaching e.g. Developing a CV, Interview Technique • Transferable skills training e.g. Presentation Skills, Dealing with Change • Mentoring

Resources to Deliver; In order for this team to deliver the programmes required (Leadership development, Management development, Researcher development, Head of School Programme, to name but a few), funding will have to be allocated to this area

Performance Management; An urgent review of the current Probation Process to better reflect good practice consistent with peer institutions was recommended, along with a full performance management process underpinned by the HR System. We fully endorse this recommendation and we believe setting clear goals along with regular reviews on performance help drive clarity, and delivery of objectives. If the introduction of a performance management process is to be successful, visible and continued support of the University’s senior management team will be essential to embedding performance management as a way of working in Trinity College.

HR Business Partner Team and Core HR Structure

The Reviewers acknowledge that some progress that has been made in this area but go on to say that the purpose of the role needs to be strengthened and the reporting lines clarified, if it is to be effective as a strategic HR partner located in the business. As this is a professional specialist role, we believe the role should report into the HR Department directly, with a secondary reporting line to the Faculty /Divisional manager. This would drive a consistency of approach and across the University. This was a recommendation from the START Programme but seems to have been lost along the way. We also support the recommendation from the START Programme that rotation of HR Partners is a very effective way to build capability across the team.

We also agree with the introduction of key metrics and management information as a means of driving a consistent HR message throughout the University. Automation and transformation within the Recruitment Team will afford us the opportunity to put administrative support in place for all HR Partners, freeing them up to focus on strategic priorities, and ensuring the Faculty/Division gets an efficient service.

Internal Communications

Internal communication on all people related matters is an area for improvement which was called out by the Reviewers, and we agree with this recommendation. The Reviewers were encouraged to hear that HR were working with the PAC team to develop a University wide Intranet. They also recommended that we work with PAC to develop and implement a people engagement strategy. We agree that Trinity should have a strong focus on clear, consistent and enduring internal communications. It will drive change, support engagement, and build a one Trinity approach.

Systems and Processes

The Reviewers acknowledge that the recent upgrade of the Core HR System was an important step forward, following a period of underinvestment. It presents HR with a solid platform on which to drive

efficiencies in terms of automation of a number of key processes, i.e. Revised Probation form and process, Performance Management etc.

Much of the current HR processes are completely manual, involving a lot of pieces of paper. In the interest of efficiency and sustainability the new system gives us an opportunity to adopt more to digital solutions for these activities. Moving to digital solutions rather than manual, will not only save time and increase efficiency, but will free people up to do more value-add work. We fully agree with the Reviewers that further investment in this area will really realise great benefits.

Recruitment; This area is key not only to the HR Department but also to the University. It is often the first point of contact and the first impression that a potential candidate gets of the University. The Reviewers refer to the process, the system and the turnover of staff in the Recruitment area as a significant risk for the University. These are all issues which the Management Team had identified and were in the process of addressing. Efficient and effective talent acquisition is key for the University and the adoption of new LEAN processes to deliver this will be key to the success of the Recruitment Team.

Our current recruitment process is lengthy and cumbersome, overly complex and lacks clarity on lines of responsibility. We are currently working through a transformation of the whole area, including, as recommended, the introduction of a principles-based policy, streamlined process, revised team structure and responsibilities, introducing standard operating procedures, and on-going training of staff.

Completed	In Progress
Principles based policy Team Training	Revising and streamlining process Restructuring team Team Training (Ongoing) Standard Operating Procedures New Guidelines

While we are transforming and streamlining recruitment across the University, we now have an opportunity to address the issue of recruitment of Researchers. We believe it's time to review the current nomination process and support Pl's in the recruitment and on-boarding of Researchers.

Space and Accommodation

The Reviewers refer to the facilities in House 4 as not fit for purpose and were among the worst office accommodation members of the Review Team had seen. They strongly support the need for adequate facilities for the whole team based in one area. This is a recommendation that we fully agree with. Due to problems with seriously bad odours in House 4 during the summer, half of the HR Team have had to relocate to Aras an Phiarsaigh. To affect some of the changes mentioned in the Quality Review will require changes in how we do things in HR, these changes will be greatly assisted if the whole team can be located in one open plan collaborative area, where teams can support each other.

Concluding remarks

In summary, we endorse the report of the Independent Reviewers and see this as a great opportunity to reset the dial on HR and the people agenda in Trinity. There is an opportunity, with the drafting of the new strategic plan, to put people at the centre of what we do and recognise them as the strategic imperative that they are. We agree that the University's staff is its greatest asset and that consideration be given to reviewing the position of the HR function within the University's hierarchy to reflect best practice and the significance of its role in enhancing the staff and student experience.

As outlined in the report, we are limited by the organisational environment and governance structures in which we operate. In order to deliver a full range of world class HR services, fundamental change is needed to enable the HR function to support the university's mission. By world class services we mean strategic planning, HR led organisational design, learning and development initiatives, employee related policies and processes, talent management and succession planning, building staff engagement and motivation.

Driving and supporting continuous improvement in all of these areas, will benefit the University through increased employee engagement, facilitate creativity and improved productivity, and ensure discretionary effort is brought to bear in day-to-day activities increasing motivation and a sense of belonging and collegiality.

We need to be fully resourced and positioned correctly within the University to drive change at an organisational level, enabling the University and our staff to be the best they can be and realise our full potential.

To conclude the key enablers for change are;

- Fit for purpose work environment
- Taking a best practice approach to HR's position within the University structure
- Recognition of the different rhythm and needs of academia and professional services, shifting from a 'one-size fits all' approach to governance and decision making to appropriate delegated authority
- Resources; to build capacity and capability and financial investment

Chief Operating Officer's response to the HR quality review

Introduction

I would like to thank the review team for their time, commitment and effort in carrying out this review and also acknowledge the input from the HR team and stakeholders whose participation informed the review process. I welcome the insightful and helpful recommendations from the expert external reviewers, which provide a valuable framework to enable the development and delivery of a professional HR model of excellence within the University.

The review highlights the important role HR has as an enabler to attract, develop and retain people with the skills and capability required for the continued and successful development of the University.

It is worth noting that while some progress has been made since the last quality review, we still have a substantial way to go to achieve an international standard of best practice to compete with other top tier universities with global ambitions.

While the external environment has had a major impact on the University in terms of funding and competitiveness, this has also created major demands on HR. The operational environment for HR has become more challenging and complex and will continue to be so.

While we do not have control over our external environment, we do have the power to make decisions that can have a significant impact to improve our internal environment. In doing so, we are showing the leadership's support for a professional HR team and providing the resources, environment and strategic positioning which ensures we are best placed to compete with our global competitors with the level of professional HR expertise needed to enable the university's pursuit of research, academic and professional service excellence.

General Comments

The issues highlighted in the review continue some of the themes that were raised in 2013, particularly in relation to learning and organisational development, the evolving role of the HR partner and the skills gap present in relation to people management across the University. There has been a substantial increase in the volume, mix and level of demand for professional HR expertise across a range of key activities. There is a growing need to equip people with the skills to perform competently and be resourceful and resilient in carrying out their roles responsibly. This is against a backdrop of an increasingly demanding and competitive external environment where the University is competing to

attract students and retain faculty and staff to perform at the highest levels to maintain rankings, with decreased Government funding and investment.

While we have made some progress in the intervening six years, the lack of significant and focused investment in people and systems and the high level of staff turnover within HR as highlighted in the review, have been barriers to progress.

If we are to respond openly and positively to achieve continuous and incremental improvement based on international peer review recommendations, then we must act accordingly. While the HR team has made some progress under the leadership of the current human resources director, there must be a sustained commitment and investment to continue to reach the goals that are necessary to drive change both institutional and behavioral that are necessary to support the current and future ambitions of the University. HR are building a solid foundation, however, the work must continue and the University leadership must acknowledge and embrace the urgency and very necessary measures and recommendations contained in this review if we are to make progress to achieve what is needed.

Conclusion

We encourage and promote a research and teaching environment that explores options, challenges thinking, builds on solid foundations and aspires for achievements and outputs at the highest levels of academic excellence. We also need to develop and promote the achievement of professional services at the same level and we must deliver a level of professional HR service to support the realisation of these ambitions.

The current HR Director and the expanded HR senior management team are committed to the development and implementation of a suitable suite of HR initiatives to empower a resilient, resourceful and responsible workforce able to respond to and meet the demands of improving the capability and global reputation of the University.

There is a well-thought-out and evolving HR framework for the ongoing development and delivery of a professional HR strategy to support the University's strategic goals. It is important that we act now to support that strategy so that we embed a range of strategic HR initiatives that will develop our people and continue to improve our professional services. I fully endorse the recommendations contained in this report and would ask for the full support of the College Board in implementing these.

Geraldine Ruane, Chief Operating Officer