



**Trinity College Dublin**

Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath

The University of Dublin

**Report to Board on the  
Review of the College  
Chaplaincy**

**June 2015**

This report presents the outcome of a Quality Review of the College Chaplaincy which was undertaken from 10-11 March 2015 by Reverend Dr. Mark Wakelin, Epsom Methodist Church, UK; Reverend Dr. Paul Dominiak, Trinity College, Cambridge and Sr. Avril O'Regan, Manresa Jesuit Centre of Spirituality, Dublin. The internal facilitator was Prof Myra O'Regan, TCD.

The report attached includes (i) the External Reviewers' report received on the 22 May 2015, (ii) the response from the College Chaplains received on the 25 May 2015 and (iii) the response from the Secretary to the College received on the 29 May 2015.

The main purpose of the Quality review is (a) to provide a structured opportunity for the Unit 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 service and provision are being maintained and enhanced and that areas of concern in this regard are identified and addressed.

The Review Report and recommendations, along with the responses from the Chair of the Chaplains and the Secretary to the College, were discussed at the Quality Committee on the 4 June 2015. The Chair of the Chaplains attended for the discussion.

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# **Quality Review of Trinity College Dublin Chaplaincy Service**

**Final Report: 25 May 2015**

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## **1. Introduction/Executive summary**

### **'Holders of the Treasures'**

#### **Introduction**

This report is based on interviews conducted with the Chaplains, staff and students of the University together with documentation from the Chaplains and the University. The interviews took place on the 10th and 11th of March 2015, mostly in House 27. Meetings were held with Senior College Officers, other College representatives, students representing the Chaplaincy community, students representing faith development and discipleship; representatives of College Student Services Meeting; representatives of the wider College community (Security, Maintenance, Commercialisation Office, Household etc.); College/Academic staff; students representing the worship life of the College; those involved with finance and accountability structures; and the Chaplaincy Team.

The brief for the authors of the report was to form a view of the effectiveness of the Chaplaincy at the University and offer some recommendations for the future.

#### **Executive summary**

The overwhelming feedback heard by the reviewers was encouraging and positive. Students and staff all felt that the contribution made by the Ecumenical Chaplaincy Team to the College mattered. It was described as 'vital', 'important', 'essential' and seemed for many to express something of the essence of what TCD was about. The Chaplains helped provide 'a human face' to the life of the University. A story was told about the role of the Chaplains in the past, protecting valuable artefacts in the College from the English. The Chaplains were described in that historical story as, 'holders of the treasures of the chapel,' and today something of that sentiment was expressed.

#### **Main findings**

- The Chaplains work well together as an ecumenical Team and their work is much appreciated within the College.
- The lack of a Senior Chaplain is seen by some to militate against a more strategic approach.
- Their financial independence is valued by all though they are seen to be under-resourced.
- They are seen as 'fellow professionals' with others within the University but their distinctiveness is also valued.
- The use of House 27 is valued and seen as distinctive and important, however, some felt that this location was difficult and many were not aware of it.
- The Chapel was felt to be under-used though some believed that using it more would damage it physically and reduce its unique place within the community.

- The review process was not well understood by the Chaplains and the language and approach of a Quality Review did not easily capture the value and challenges of the Chaplaincy.
- The strategic direction of the University posed particular challenges and opportunities for the Chaplaincy Team including a greater diversity in the faith community, larger numbers, more pressure on space and a greater emphasis on performance and measurable outcomes.

### **Main recommendations within the report**

The report outlines something of the background to the Chaplaincy, and its present staffing, including its ecumenical composition and distinctive funding arrangements. The scope of the work undertaken is described, and while it was difficult to quantify the contribution made by the Chaplains to the life of the community an attempt is made to describe the impact they have on the lives of many.

**Funding and resources:** The report explores issues around funding and resources; the benefits of an independent funding stream and the challenges that the Chaplaincy faces on the limited resources available. Recommendations are made as to how the University might carefully enhance the contribution of the Chaplains without compromising the important independence they value, or adding unreasonably to the costs associated with their role.

**Professionalism:** The distinctive professionalism of the Chaplains is respected by others in the University and is seen as a refreshing contribution; alongside and in some ways distinctive from the other professional groups. Consideration is given as to how the Chaplaincy might engage in reviews and be helped by them.

**Presence:** The difficulty of quantifying the work of the Chaplains is noted, and yet there is an attempt to describe and notice the important impact that is made, and the ways that this could be developed and encouraged. The idea of ‘presence’ is important and how that can be understood and appreciated.

**Place and space:** The challenges experienced by the Chaplains, and by those who make use of their service with regard to premises, is also discussed. Recommendations are made to consider ways of how the space is used and a proper consideration given to the unique role of the Chapel in the life of the University.

**Strategic plan:** The University’s strategy of growth, particularly in attracting overseas students is noted in the report and how the Chaplaincy might develop in the light of such strategic changes. In particular how the University might be clearer about their future understanding of the role of Chaplains in an increasingly multi-cultural and multi-faith environment.

**Gender balance and denominational involvement:** Comments are noted in this report about the gender balance of the Chaplaincy and the complexity of engaging with denominations about the recruitment of Chaplains in the future. Consideration is given to how such matters might be addressed.

### **Conclusion**

We believe that the Chaplains offer a service of great value to the University and it would be in the interests of the University in many aspects of its strategic plan to continue and develop its partnership with the various denominations in maintaining the Chaplaincy Service. In the authors' view this process of review is beneficial to both the Chaplaincy Team and the University. It is suggested that in the future greater clarity and support might be offered to the Chaplains as they engage with the review process and strategy of the University.

## **2. Chaplaincy Structure, Governance, Management and Resources**

### **2.1 Background.**

Prior to 1970 a Church of Ireland/Anglican clergyman provided the Chaplaincy service at Trinity College with part-time assistance from Presbyterian and Methodist clergy. As a sign of the international ecumenical movement of the Twentieth Century (which especially emphasised co-operation between churches), the first Catholic Chaplain was appointed in 1970, with a second being appointed in 1973. Also in 1973, the College Chapel was formally opened to the other churches at the instigation of the Church of Ireland Archbishop of Dublin. At that stage the TCD Chaplaincy service took on its current form as an ecumenical Christian Chaplaincy, a unique arrangement in Ireland.

Trinity College enrolment data from 2013 and 2014 suggests that approximately 4% of the student body identifies as Church of Ireland or Anglican, 34% identifies as Roman Catholic, and 1% identifies as Methodist/Presbyterian. It should be noted these figures are drawn from an *optional* question asked upon student enrolment. Other groups with which students identified themselves included Agnostic, Jewish, Sikh, Buddhist, and Muslim, with the latter group exhibiting the highest numbers (just under 2% of the student population).

### **2.2 Current Chaplaincy composition.**

There are currently four Chaplains; three full-time and one part-time. The Chaplains represent four Christian bodies: two Roman Catholic Chaplains (both full-time), one Church of Ireland Chaplain (full-time), and one Methodist Chaplain (part-time).

The reviewers noted that the part time hours of the Methodist Chaplain are due to lack of denominational funds and accommodation rather than will. The Methodist Chaplain is also an Assistant Warden and thus resides on campus.



### **2.3 Ecumenical structure**

The long tradition of friendship and ecumenical co-operation among the various Chaplains is nurtured by common prayer, regular meetings, shared worship and office spaces, and the three shared ecumenical services each year. Reviewers noted from students that such ecumenical co-operation positively impacts on student awareness, education and manner of relating to those of differing denominations.

### **2.4 Selection and appointment of Chaplains**

Each Chaplain is selected, largely funded by and accountable to his or her own denominational body. We understand that they are expected to work together ecumenically by both their denominations and the University. Selection methods vary depending on the individual churches. As of yet, there is no formal input from the College to the selection process, although we understand that would be welcomed by all the churches involved.

Catholic Chaplains are nominated by the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin but report to the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference. Church of Ireland Chaplains are nominated by the Anglican Archbishop of Dublin. Methodist Chaplains are stationed by the Methodist Conference. Each Chaplain is seconded to the College for a certain number of years and presented to the Board of the College for appointment.

### **2.5 Position within the University**

The Chaplains care for the religious, spiritual and pastoral needs of members of the College community. In the organizational structure of the college the Chaplaincy is readily associated with Student Services although it has a wider remit and serves the College community as a whole.

Being included in the Student Services grouping, the Chaplaincy is seen as part of the multifaceted provision by College for the holistic welfare of the students. The exact status of the Chaplains, however, within student services remains fuzzy: they liaise with other stakeholders in Student Services not as a constitutionally mandated party but as those invited to share in the pastoral care structures of the College through goodwill. The absence of a constitutional role was generally perceived as a virtue: the Chaplains accordingly exist both within and outside the formal structures of the College, giving them an independence which enables them to be constructively critical of institutional pressures (especially financial) that are not focused on student care. Yet, there was also a sense that such independence did not necessarily translate into the Chaplains having any power or influence to bring about change, either in practice or policy. Thus, there is a dichotomy between goodwill and influence. While stakeholders regularly describe the pastoral service provided by the Chaplains as being of exceptionally high quality ('vital' and 'essential') there is scepticism around the impact they have on the wider institutional culture and policy beyond pastoral procedures and protocols.

## **2.6 Reporting**

Within the College, the Chaplains are responsible to the College Secretary. In terms of formal reporting, the Chaplains submit annual reports to their respective church authorities. There is no formal reporting process to the University. This Quality Review is the first of its kind for the Chaplaincy, and the first formal opportunity for both assessing the Chaplaincy and offering feedback to both them and the University.

## **2.7 Current expectations and responsibilities**

While the Chaplains are responsible to the College Secretary, there is no direct articulation from the College (or to the College from the denominations) of more precise or exact duties, expectations, and responsibilities. It is clear from conversations, however, with the Chaplains and with other stakeholders in the College that there are tacit and mutually acknowledged duties and responsibilities, which are broadly covered by two headings: Chapel-related activities (covering denominational and ecumenical worship, and formation activities such as reading groups and retreats for students etc.); and pastoral activities for the welfare and well-being of students, staff, and professional academics (such as the soup lunches, the bereavement group, emergency responses etc.)

Chapel-related activities are guided by the expectations and culture of the denominations, as well as by the shared commitment of the Chaplains to ecumenism. Pastoral-related activities come out of a shared commitment between the College and the denominations to offer pastoral care to all members of a collegiate community, regardless of their faith and belief, in order to ensure the well-being and flourishing of all. As such, the Chaplains offer their own direct pastoral care and enjoy a positive and reciprocal relationship with other frontline carers in the College, especially the Counselling Service. Indeed, other frontline carers regularly emphasized the critical importance of Chaplains in pastoral care of individuals but also for the community, especially at times of crisis such as the death of a member of the College community. Indeed the role of the Chaplains was universally appreciated in 'crisis' moments. The importance of providing such support in the University for these critical moments is far greater than simply the time taken for each one

The Chaplains were involved in the drafting of the Student Death Protocol that is implemented by the Senior Tutor's Office. They are included in the support team that meets with classmates when a student death occurs. One of the Chaplains has been trained as a member of the Emergency Response Team should a crisis of particular magnitude arise in the college.

## **2.8 Current internal structures**

There is no Head Chaplain. Instead, the Chaplains rotate as Chair of the Chaplaincy every year. While the current Chaplains have obvious warmth towards one another, and engaged in the review process together, some expressed a sense of frustration that, since any one

Chaplain can veto any joint strategic decision, it was very difficult to negotiate and develop shared strategy between Chaplains.

While there have been female Chaplains in the past (and the acting Chaplain for the Church of Ireland is female), concern was shown among the Chaplains, students, staff, and academic personnel that there is a gender imbalance in the composition of the Chaplaincy team which needs attention in future appointments. Similarly, all current Chaplains are ordained, representing a clerical face to a lay community. Some expressed a hope that one of the sponsoring churches might consider a lay Chaplain, although it was argued that lay Chaplains may cost more to employ in the current market.

Administration is currently completed by the Chaplains themselves. This includes: correspondence, bulk emailing, importing/inputting of data from student register to Chaplaincy databases, website updating and caring for wedding bookings which involves considerable pastoral care and paperwork.

## **2.9 Physical facilities**

### **The Chapel and House 27**

The denominations appreciate the University's provision for the Chaplains. This includes the way the University welcomes and encourages Chaplaincy, the provision of space for their activities, the various ways informal support is offered. This offers some evidence that the University can materially support the Chaplaincy without damaging their independence and 'refreshing contribution.'

The College provide and cover the maintenance and running costs of two dedicated spaces for the TCD Chaplaincy: the historic College Chapel (1798) and the Chaplaincy premises in House 27, both of which are in the heart of the historic campus. The Chapel contains a number of smaller rooms (a side chapel for private prayer, a precentors room, and an upper atrium). After an attempted arson attack, all but the private prayer chapel remain locked unless there is a service or event taking place.

In House 27, there are four offices (one of which is on loan at present to the Senior Tutor's Office) and two student common rooms. As the fourth office is on loan, the two Roman Catholic Chaplains share an office. This necessitates the finding of another space when one of the two wishes to meet a person in private.

### **2.10 Physical facilities issues.**

The general closure of the Chapel outside acts of worship and special events is seen as a significant drawback by all stakeholders in the College, including the Chaplains. Students spoke of the false impression given by the Chapel being often shut, of opportunities to

engage with the wider Dublin community being missed as well as the fear raised about overuse of a space seen as both fragile and sacred. The Commercialisation Office argued that the current practice of not allowing a wider use of the Chapel significantly reduced potential for income from a wider letting of the residential facilities.

Feelings were mixed, however, over the use of the Chapel by user groups within the College (as well as external user groups) for events such as concerts or seminars. Some welcomed the idea that the space should be flexible and open to an array of cultural and educational events. Others shared the concerns of the Chaplains that attempts to commercialise the Chapel might impinge upon the 'sacred' quality of the building, as well as posing a threat to the fabric and maintenance of a fragile heritage site. There is a lack of confidence among the Chaplains and the Chapel Committee about the way the Chapel would be used if they were to be more flexible. This is about both the use of the Chapel for income generation and the availability of the Chapel for its primary purpose.

As they stand, both the Chapel and House 27 are in good working order, although work clearly needs to be done in the Chapel (especially the floor) and in House 27 (to improve toilet facilities), as well as an urgent need to improve disability access for both sites.

It was clear from the events witnessed by the reviewers that House 27 is popular with those students who make use of it, both for dedicated, Chaplaincy-led activities and as a general hangout area. Yet, as a result, the relatively small space of the common rooms means that users far exceed a comfortable capacity at times. It was also noted that many students were not aware of the space provided.

## **2.11 Financial resources**

### **Administration of funds.**

Funds relating to the ecumenical Chaplaincy are administered jointly and by consensus. One member holds the post of treasurer by annual rotation.

### **Annual operating budgets.**

The annual operating budgets within each denomination are approximately:

Roman Catholic: € 9,500

Church of Ireland: €12,500

Methodist: € 2,000

### **Other sources of income.**

These figures do not hold the whole story since Chaplains, through the goodwill in which they are held by others in the College, receive discretionary and informal help, such as catering providing soup for the Tuesday meal at a nominal fee or housekeeping helping to make sure white goods are in good working order. Chaplains can also apply for discretionary funds from the College to support activities open to students that may enrich their student experience.

### **Infrastructural support.**

The College provide two buildings for the use of the Chaplains: the Chapel and House 27. The College provides basic services – heating, lighting, telephone and IT services, cleaning and maintenance for these buildings. The Chaplaincy provides its own supplies for worship.

The Chaplains jointly benefit from an annual dividend from the George Dawson Fund which amounts to €2,500 per annum approx. The Chaplains also receive a portion of the fee paid by couples for the use of the college chapel for weddings. The total amounts to approx. €6,600 per annum of which € 2,970 is assigned to the ecumenical Chaplaincy and the balance is apportioned denominationally. It was noted that while there were delays in the payment this year (2014/15), this problem was due to issues around the introduction of a new Financial Information System. These have now been resolved and future payments should not be subject to delays.

### **Financial pressures.**

It was commonly noted across stakeholders that the Chaplains were under-resourced and over-used in their daily activities. As such, they represent excellent value for money, although the value placed upon them far exceeds their financial resources. The capacity of the Chaplaincy to fulfil its various roles naturally expands or contracts depending upon its resourcing and the present small budgets represent a limit upon the kinds of activities they can do, even though they all respond creatively and with energy to the limit. Representatives from each of the denominations involved in the appointment process for a Chaplain noted their resolve to maintain Chaplains at TCD but that they too were under increasing financial strain, which was making it ever harder to support financially their Chaplains.

## **3. Systems and Processes that support College and Chaplaincy Service**

### **3.1 Current training and review processes.**

As university Chaplains, the TCD Chaplains belong to the organization for third level Chaplains (Chaplaincy Network at Third Level – CN3) that includes all of the colleges in the island of Ireland. The annual conference affords an opportunity to meet with their opposite numbers in the other universities and colleges. Local opportunities for in-service training are also available in college and through CN3.

The College provides training in specific skills such as communications and website management. The annual meeting of Jesuit Chaplains and Collaborators in European Universities is also attended by one of the Chaplains.

Towards the end of each academic year the Chaplains take days away to review the past year and to plan for the coming year. This meeting is customarily held in conjunction with a visit to other university Chaplaincies in order that the annual review is combined with a

benchmarking process that is both informative and challenging. Over the past number of years the Chaplains have visited Chaplaincies at Oxford, Cambridge, and the University of London. Recent Irish visits have included QUB and UCC, and one Chaplain has had the opportunity in recent years to visit two Chaplaincies in Sydney. While these resources seem adequate, opportunities for further pastoral training through the College, as well as professional development through the various churches, could be developed further to enrich the work and ministry of the Chaplains. As part of their internal review processes, the Chaplains may wish to consider visiting multi-faith Chaplaincies as the College strategically moves towards a more international and diverse student body.

## **4. Alignment to Strategy**

### **4.1 Strategic issues.**

There was a sense that the relative lack of engagement by the Chaplains in their self-assessment document with the wider strategic goals and document of TCD in the Strategic Plan (2014-2019) reflected two things. First, that the Chaplaincy had not been part of the strategic process. Second, that the strategic document of TCD had not factored in the role, competencies, and impact of the Chaplains.

### **4.2 Strategic possibilities.**

The Chaplains readily acknowledge, however, that they will have a role to play in a number of the strategic goals of the College, especially: multidisciplinary excellence; diversity and inclusivity; dialogue, civic action, and global responsibility. They certainly see the strategic goals of the College as being in line with their own hopes and contributions. In particular, in line with TCD's Strategy, the institutional intention to internationalise its student population means that the religious and community expertise of the Chaplains will prove invaluable to the College as it both adjusts to cultural and religious diversity on an unprecedented scale and also seeks to articulate its 'Irish' values and history, while maintaining pastoral excellence as a significant component in student satisfaction.

The Chaplains already enjoy a good relationship with the Global Relations Office, with whom they work collaboratively. Global Relations staff spoke of the Chaplains as 'identifiable in the University [to international students] when nothing else is'. There is also evidence from the 2013 International Insight Survey that the Chaplains are having a highly positive impact upon overseas students. International students whom the reviewers met described themselves as feeling far from home and spoke of the Chaplains as having 'made the University a very welcoming space.'

The Chaplains readily acknowledge that pastoral care will become increasingly important as the College pursues its strategic goal of international development, which will bring diversity of belief as well as heightened pressures around potential student experiences of culture

shock, dislocation, and isolation. The Chaplains also acknowledge that the College's strategic goal of increasing its international constituency will bring greater religious diversity, a possible source of enrichment to the community but also a possible source of heightened expectations that varied religious needs will be accommodated, as well as the potential for conflict.

The Chaplains and their appointing denominations would have much to offer the University's conversation about planning for future approaches that allow TCD to be enriched from the increasingly broad diversity of its students and staff.

## **5. Performance**

### **5.1 Qualitative versus quantitative measures of performance**

There was a sense from all stakeholders that the Chaplaincy is very hard to 'count' even though it is 'counted upon' by many. The pressure to demonstrate impact in a quantitative way was therefore difficult, although numbers at services, a count of student footfall in House 27, as well as some tracking of pastoral care and referrals might be desirable, alongside yearly student / graduate surveys of Chaplaincy provisions and their impact upon student retention alongside other student services. It is therefore important to develop an intention to notice rather than simply measure impact; to look for qualitative changes in the areas of concern. There are approaches to Chaplaincy benchmarks in other places (e.g. UCC Ideas of presence, counting footfall, retention rates and other measures of human flourishing) which may be helpful to consider. (See, for example, National University of Ireland, Cork Quality Improvement / Quality Assurance Report on Chaplaincy, 29 May 2008.)

### **5.2 Stakeholder expectations**

The response from the stakeholders we met was overwhelmingly positive. Compliments across the board were effusive. 'Fantastic', 'amazing', 'essential' and 'hugely supportive' were phrases heard from students, academics, service staff and university leadership.

Students reported feeling welcome to be in House 27 at any time and free to be themselves. They noted an absence of cliques in the space, student representation from across the academic disciplines of the university and a proportionately high number of international students who find in it a home away from home. It was described as 'a place where friendships are born.'

Stories of how the Chaplaincy were 'always there', never saying 'no', and available outside the normal working hours of a University were repeatedly heard from staff and students. Their roles within the overall provision of the University were considered both complimentary and also distinctively different. There were no 'waiting lists' for Chaplains; access to them was straightforward. Their availability and willingness to engage with a huge range of issues formed the basis of a good deal of the feedback. While it was constantly said that they were 'under resourced' many complimentary accounts were given that

indicated how valued their work was within the university systems and to some extent outside them.

The Chaplains are seen as offering, with others, the 'human face' of the College. The one to one and individual approach mitigates the inevitable processes of a large institution.

Chaplains are also perceived as a source of constant support. The fact of their existence, in some ways more important than particular actions that are taken, provides a sense of human support and care. Even if that support isn't always called upon, that it will be provided when necessary lies behind comments such as, 'vital', 'essential', 'couldn't do without them.'

The way that Chaplains are funded, and the culture they have developed in relating to the College, gives them a refreshing and distinctive presence. While at the heart of the life of much that goes on, they are also seen as 'outside the system'. This gives them certain freedoms of comment or action that again contributes to the 'human face' of the college.

Being 'outside the system' also reflects on their relationship to the hierarchy of College life. They relate to people independently of their status and thus able to be 'alongside' whoever they do meet.

One way of looking at much of this approach is that the Chaplains offer not only a series of duties, tasks and roles to the University but a sense of 'presence' that is in various ways, supportive, prophetic, refreshing, alternative and offers the 'human face' that is commented on and valued.

However, part of their value within this professional provision of care is the way that the Chaplains aren't exactly like other professionals. They are not quite the same. They offer a different form of care. They can be called upon out of hours. They are known to never say 'no' to a request for help. They don't have waiting lists. They are, 'differently professional', which offers a unique contribution to the care provision of the Services Team.

### **5.3 Relationships with other college areas, academic and administrative**

Relationships with Student Services were observed to be friendly, collaborative and mutually supportive. Reviewers heard evidence from the Counselling service, Health Service and Senior Tutor, of the practice of referring students in immediate need to the Chaplains. This clearly augments available support and is keenly appreciated in the light of counselling and health service waiting lists. Repeatedly we heard the Chaplaincy perceived as the place to direct students who cannot be seen elsewhere and are in need of immediate help. We heard from a self-professed atheist student who would not have thought of approaching the Chaplains without a tutor referral, of the timely advice and support received which enabled the student to remain in College.



Both academic and support staff noted that when a student is admitted to hospital, Chaplains are often the only University staff who will gain access to visit the students. This is highly valued by staff in maintaining a link with the student and supporting their continued study.

Chaplains are clearly valued in their participation in the sudden death protocol; in particular their role of quickly and accurately verifying that a death has actually occurred. Their support of affected classes and the deceased students' families was also seen as demonstrating the human, caring face of the College.

When invited to work with other academic or administrative colleagues we heard repeatedly that the Chaplains work in a collaborative manner, helping those involved engage with relevant issues. This manner of working alongside is appreciated. Particular examples such as the collaboration with the Counselling Service in provision of a Bereavement course and work with the Anatomy department in the design, organisation and hosting of an inter-faith service for the families of 'Donors' to the department were highly commended.

## **6. Communication**

### **6.1 Stakeholder communication.**

Without fail, all stakeholders valued the Chaplains highly, with strongly positive keywords emerging: vital, essential, helpful. The uniqueness of the Chaplains compared to other student services was noted across the board, especially that they were socially visible and present across all constituencies, were professional but also with more relaxed boundaries, and were always available at any time across the week. As such, the Chaplains are a highly visible commitment to pastoral care in the collegiate community.

### **6.2 Stakeholder information.**

The Chaplaincy has noticeboards at Front Arch and at the entrance to the Arts Block in addition to the noticeboards at the chapel. The Chaplaincy website is hosted on the college server, and provides links to all of the Chaplains, their current services and contact details.

While each Chaplain produces notices, term cards, and posters, and the Chaplaincy maintains its own website and produces joint emails, there was a sense (especially in the student community) that peer-to-peer communication (i.e. 'word of mouth') was proving the most effective tool.

There was a sense, especially in the student body, that too many students were not clear on the purpose of the Chaplaincy or its physical location. As a result, although those who engaged in some way with the life of the Chapel and Chaplains saw their engagement as vital to their student experience, this number represented only a small percentage of the whole TCD student population.

House 27 is experienced as difficult to find unless accompanied there by someone else. Immediately, consideration might be given to including House 27 on College tours, whilst in the medium term a review of the location, accessibility and geographic consolidation of the various support services available to students might be undertaken in the interests of strengthening community.

As of yet, there is no use as a joint ecumenical group of social media, although individual Chaplains on their own initiative run denominational expressions on various social media platforms.

### **6.3 Collegiality.**

All the Chaplains displayed genuine warmth towards each other and the TCD community. Stakeholders in the Student Services all expressed their willingness (and experience of) working with the Chaplains to deliver pastoral care, and all commented on how useful the Chaplains were in these contexts. The Chaplains regularly refer students to other Student Services and, in turn, they are called in to help with individual cases or with groups such as the bereavement counselling group or the memorial service for those who have donated their bodies to medical science.

## **7. Reviewers' recommendations**

### **7.1 Recommendation -- the Chapel space.**

The Chapel (and its annexed rooms downstairs and in the atrium) remains under-used in terms of how the Chaplains link themselves into the wider academic and cultural life of the College, as well as how the Chapel contributes to the financial and cultural common good of TCD. **A key recommendation is to review the use and utility of all the spaces open to the Chaplaincy with an eye on the common good and the prosperity of all.**

- a All Chaplains expressed frustration that, for insurance purposes, the Chapel remained locked for the majority of the time and so was not open to members of the College or to visitors. All Chaplains (and the representative from the Chapel Committee) expressed reservation over commercial and broader internal use of the Chapel, both as a perceived threat to the 'sacred' status of the building and also as a perceived threat to the fabric of a heritage building.
- b While these threats are real in certain senses, other stakeholders in the College community expressed their hopes that the Chapel might act as a venue for collegiate activities and/or commercial lets, especially for cultural events such as concerts, readings, and seminars.
- c The Chaplains ought to explore among themselves and with the College and its officers how the Chapel building might better serve the mission of both the Chaplaincy and also the wider College. Broader uses of the Chapel building will also have the benefits of keeping the building open more often, deepening the connections

between the Chaplaincy and the TCD and Dublin communities, and potentially contributing to the finances of the College to which the Chaplaincy and Chapel belong.

- d In particular, then, a strategic way forward ought to be sought for
- i. an appropriate policy for the use of the Chapel space by college groups (which will embed the Chaplaincy even deeper into the life of the College), as well as commercial use by external groups (such that the Chapel contributes to the financial well-being of the College);
  - ii. a structure of agreed accountability as to who ought to make decisions as to the use of the Chapel, which will give precedence to the role of the Chaplains and include recognition that the primary use of the space is for prayer;
  - iii. an account of how funds generated by use of the Chapel will contribute to the maintenance of the building and ministry of the Chaplains as well as the central College accounts;
  - iv. how the smaller spaces in the Chapel building could better serve the ministry of hospitality vital to the work of the Chaplaincy in the collegiate community, especially since students reported the difficulty of finding House 27 as well as the limited capacity of the common rooms there;
  - v. how signposting and disability access to the Chapel and its various rooms might be improved as part of its development and use.

## **7.2 Recommendation – internal structure.**

Given that Chaplains rotate the Chair of the group on a yearly basis, and that any one Chaplain can veto any attempted common event or strategy, the Chaplaincy lacks any developed, consistent, and clear strategy for growth and development. **It is recommended that the partner churches and College Chaplains enter into discussions about how to enable strategic planning in the Chaplaincy.**

- a There are two possible ways to address the internal structure of the Chaplains such that a clearer Chaplaincy strategy can emerge:
  - i. Appoint a Head Chaplain who has enough executive authority and leadership to craft, in consultation with other Chaplains and College officers, a coherent Chaplaincy strategy.
  - ii. Alternatively, as a minimum, extend the Chair to at least two years and give the Chair the executive authority to over-ride a single veto if all other Chaplains are in agreement.

- b In any case, now that the Chaplains have engaged with a Quality Review process, and in addition to their own internal retreats and reflections, the group ought to find a way to engage with a Mission Action Planning process in order to produce (and be accountable to) an internal strategy for the chapel infrastructure, activities, and relations with the wider College, to be revisited every two years.

### **7.3 Recommendation - feedback**

There is a lack of any formal mechanism for giving feedback to the Chaplains about the Chapel or Chaplaincy services. The Chapel Committee could take a role in receiving feedback and/or suggestions for change from the University body, at least as regards the College Chapel. Consideration could be given by the Chaplains to establishing simple methods of recording footfall through the Chaplaincy.

**It is recommended that the Chaplaincy explore ways of establishing simple systems for collecting information about the use of their services, together with mechanisms for receiving feedback about the College Chapel.**

### **7.4 Recommendation – discretionary budgetary help.**

The Chaplains receive only small funds from their denominations for their work and ministry at TCD. While the College generously provides for, and maintains, the Chapel and House 27, the Chaplains have to rely upon ad hoc goodwill gestures from departments in the college such as catering and housekeeping in order to provide certain of their services or to have appropriate equipment.

It is commonly recognised that the Chaplains provide remarkable value for money. Yet, their capacity is directly proportional to the resources they have at their disposal. As financial pressures mount upon the contributory denominations, we recommend the College explore ways it can support the Chaplains in discretionary ways at little cost to the institution but with great benefit to the pastoral work and hospitality of the Chaplains. Given the out of hours nature of the service provided, and the difficulty some denominations experience in securing accommodation, we suggest exploring the possibility of some Chaplains residing on campus.

**It is recommended that the Chaplains and College explore ways in which more formal discretionary budgetary lines across the College can be established to help the work of the Chaplains in recognition of the services they provide to the collegiate community.**

**In addition to further financial support, the University may also consider ways of helping 'in kind'. This may involve administrative help or a tacit permission to other departments of TCD to help as they may.**

## **7.5 Gender and Lay balance**

As noted in section 2, concern was shown among Chaplains, students, staff, and academic personnel about the gender and clerical face of the Chaplaincy team. A possible way forward would be to develop student scholarships for 'Chaplains' Assistants.' The assumption that posts other than ordained would always be more expensive also needs to be explored. Members of religious orders, for example, have both financial and personal support as they exercise their ministry within a University setting. Volunteers with suitable support and qualification may also be able to make a contribution within a team.

**It is recommended that the denominational parties take the gender and lay balance into account in their future selection processes. It is also recommended that the denominational parties engage the University about its needs and expectations of Chaplains.**

## **7.6 Participation**

An area that would also contribute to the development of the Chaplaincy would be to look at the participation of young people in the Chaplaincy. While Chaplaincy is not a straightforward 'Youth Project', it can gain much from a more participative model where leadership and responsibility for the pastoral care, the spiritual development and the 'presence' of Chaplaincy can be expressed by the students themselves.

**It is recommended that the Chaplains consider how they might engage greater student responsibility and participation in their experience of Chaplaincy.**

## **7.7 Inter-faith**

The Strategic Direction of the University implies a much greater diversity of the Faith Community. **It is therefore recommended that the University develop a much clearer sense of what it wants from Chaplains from any Faith Community, and embeds these values within its own policies. It is also recommended that the Chaplains, the denominations and the University consult together to plan for the future to develop an approach that allows TCD to benefit from the rich diversity of its students and staff.**

## **2. Response from the Chaplains**

### **Overview:**

We would like to express our gratitude to the reviewers for their willingness to undertake this important task and the generosity with which they gave their time and expertise. We are also appreciative of the help and guidance which we received from the TCD Quality Review Office during the preparatory period and during the review process.

The draft report which has been compiled by the reviewers, having met with a broad spectrum of the College community, has reflected back to us a sense of the impact of our presence and ministry in college. We are humbled and yet affirmed by many of the phrases used in describing how the service of the chaplains is experienced. It is particularly gratifying to note that the professionalism of the chaplains has been recognised and that our presence is especially valued among the student services. The reviewers note that ‘the exact status of the chaplains...within student services, remains fuzzy’ but that the ‘absence of a constitutional role was generally perceived as virtue’. We appreciate how the reviewers have described this as ‘a refreshing contribution; alongside, and in some ways distinctive from, the other professional groups’.

As well as our day-to-day service to students and staff, our presence to the wider College community, and especially at times of celebration or tragedy, is seen to be particularly valued. The reviewers have also noted our special – indeed unique – situation as chaplains nominated by our respective churches and yet committed to ecumenical collaboration as well as to our individual denominational ministry, and this needs to be kept in view as the discussion moves forward. The reviewers note ‘the long tradition of friendship and ecumenical co-operation among the various chaplains’ and that ‘such ecumenical co-operation positively impacts on student awareness, education and manner of relating to these different denominations’.

### **Use of Space:**

The chaplains have long lamented the closure of the Chapel apart from times of worship and other events, and have on several occasions made suggestions to College as to how this situation might be changed. They agree with the reviewers that the present situation is a significant drawback. The chaplains have no objection in principle to making the Chapel more widely available for suitable events involving the wider community provided its character as a place of worship is respected and availability for regular worship, for the Chapel Choir and the organists, and for weddings, is not compromised. The Chapel is primarily a consecrated sacred space, and should remain so. The chaplains would not agree that the Chapel simply be seen as a ‘bookable space’ in College and subject to commercial letting. It may be possible to consider a strategic alliance with the College accommodation office in relation to facilitating choral groups during the summer break. All of these

proposals would need to be discussed with the statutory Chapel Committee which administers the Chapel. The chaplains would consider that the suggestion by the reviewers (in 7.1 (d)iv) regarding the possible use of 'smaller spaces' in the chapel complex for hospitality, is not feasible.

#### **Internal Structure:**

For many years the chaplains have agreed among themselves to share the communal tasks on an annually rotating basis, with one of their number undertaking to convene and chair their regular meetings and preside at the annual College services. Even with the recurring changes in personnel it was possible to ensure that each chaplain took their turn as chair, and with an alternation of Catholic/Protestant presiders which was also applied to the choice of preachers invited to the annual College services. We realise that the details of this unique arrangement were not spelled out in our self-assessment document where we spoke of 'a more fully developed ecumenical chaplaincy within the constraints of current inter-church relations'. It seems that the reviewers may have been less than fully informed as a result of this omission. The changes which they propose in relation to governance would bring this long-standing and successful arrangement to an end. The alternatives which they have proposed involving either the designation of a 'senior chaplain' with executive authority, or the extension of the tenure of the chairperson together with the introduction of a 'casting vote', would not be acceptable to many of the chaplains. The reviewers have seen our agreed commitment to the principle of consensus as a problem and as involving a 'veto'. This would also appear to be a misunderstanding of our situation. The occasions on which the need for consensus has been invoked in the past have involved neuralgic issues between the churches where a joint witness was not possible. In situations where projects cannot be sponsored by the chaplains jointly, they may take place under the aegis of a particular chaplaincy. The reviewers have noted the difficulties which this arrangement may pose in questions relating to strategic development, but we are confident that strategic decisions can be made about future developments without dismantling our unique ecumenical partnership.

#### **Feedback and Communications:**

The chaplains are conscious of the need for more effective communications, to develop systems for receiving feedback, and to increase the profile of the chaplaincy in College. We note the recommendation to learn from what is being done by chaplaincies in other colleges, notably UCC.

#### **Discretionary Budgetary Help:**

The chaplaincy service is seen as under resourced and the reviewers are of the opinion that ways can be found for College to provide some supplementary assistance without compromising its independence. This could be by way of financial assistance, or given 'in kind'. They have also suggested that College might provide accommodation for a chaplain as the need may arise. The chaplains would welcome further discussion in these matters.

**Gender and Lay Balance:**

The advantage of having gender balance in the chaplaincy is acknowledged. The reviewers have made interesting suggestions about the possibility of having a lay chaplain, or one from a religious order. This is a matter for the respective churches to consider in making future appointments. How the College may wish to liaise with the respective churches in order to address this matter would merit further discussion.

**Participation:**

The chaplains noted with particular interest the recommendation that more student involvement in the work of the chaplaincy be encouraged. Mention is made of the involvement of students in pastoral care and spiritual development, and also the use of student scholarships for 'chaplain-assistants'. These various suggestions are seen as a positive challenge by the chaplains.

**Multi-Faith Chaplaincy:**

The increasing number in international students envisaged in the College Strategic Plan will broaden the cultural and religious mix among students. This may lead to calls for the provision, on a more formal basis, of pastoral care for people of other faiths. As Christian chaplains we will welcome this development, and we foresee a future where the chaplaincy will be re-configured to accommodate the presence of chaplains of other faiths working alongside the Christian chaplains.

**Conclusions:**

The Quality Review has been a challenging and stimulating experience so far. We anticipate engaging further with the process when the group of chaplains re-assembles at the end of the summer break.



### 3. Response from the College Secretary

#### **Introduction/overview:**

On behalf of the University, I would like to thank the reviewers for undertaking this important report and for the considerable time which was invested in this review. This review is a first for the Chaplaincy and has proven to be extremely beneficial in providing an opportunity for both Trinity and the Chaplaincy team to reflect on current practices and to develop and strengthen future strategic plans.

The report which has been compiled by the reviewers, following comprehensive consultation with the College community, is informative and welcome. In particular, it is encouraging to hear that the relationship between the University and the Chaplaincy appears to be performing well while respecting the role and independence of the Chaplains. It is even more encouraging to see how both staff and students value this service and indeed would like to see greater opportunities to engage with the Chaplaincy team.

#### **Key findings of the Report**

The key, high-level recommendations and issues arising from the Reviewers' report are addressed below:

- **Use of space**

I would agree that there is scope to consider broadening the use of the Chapel and make it more accessible to the wider community but I am conscious that the Chapel is a unique venue and is a consecrated place. There may be possibilities for the use of the Chapel to align with the activities of the Accommodation Office and Commercial Revenue Unit, but this option should be pursued with the agreement of the Chaplaincy.

- **Internal structure**

The issue regarding the rotating chair of the Chaplaincy team is noted and perhaps one year is too short a term of appointment. Lengthening this term would, from a University perspective, ensure greater consistency in dealings with the Chaplaincy and greater clarity in relation to appropriate points of contact.

The development of a Strategic Plan for the Chaplaincy is welcomed. As is noted in the report, Trinity recently launched a 5 year strategic plan which contains an objective to grow and diversify the student body. The Chaplaincy will have a key role in enhancing and supporting the student experience of the student body. It would be beneficial for the relationship between the

University and the Chaplaincy if both parties had strategic plans which were complementary and aligned.

- **Budgetary lines**

It is noted in the report that the Chaplaincy service is seen as under resourced. On behalf of the University, I would be happy to discuss this matter further with the Chaplains to identify appropriate ways in which the Trinity may further support and enhance the activities of the team. In times when finances are heavily constrained, there may be alternative ways in which support may be provided and this can be explored.

It should be noted that at present the budgetary allocation and financial accounts for the Chaplaincy rest, for administration purposes, in the Secretary's Office. I would like to suggest that this be reviewed and perhaps administrative responsibility be assigned directly to the Chaplains to enable greater visibility and ease of access for the Chaplaincy team.

- **Inter-faith**

It is acknowledged that the planned increase in international students envisaged in the Trinity Strategic Plan 2014-2019 will broaden the cultural and religious mix among students studying in the University. As part of the implementation of the Strategic Plan, the reviewers' recommendation in relation to the University outlining how it sees the Chaplaincy contributing to this objective, will be taken on board. It is acknowledged that this may require increased demand for the services of the Chaplaincy and a diversification of same, and I am happy to discuss this further with the Chaplaincy team.

- **Feedback, communication & relationships**

The University values good communication and the recommendation from the reviewers on this matter is noted. I, and my colleagues in the Communications Office, would be happy to work with the Chaplains to explore ways in which the profile of the Chaplaincy may be raised.

From a governance perspective, I welcome the reviewers' findings in relation to a formal mechanism through which to receive feedback on the services provided by the Chaplaincy. I am happy to liaise with the team on this and to explore methods such as self-evaluation.

A greater clarity on the role, terms of reference and work of the Chapel Committee would also be welcomed.

- **Denominational ministry and responsibilities**

The University embraces equality and strives to ensure appropriate gender balance in all of its activities. The recommendation to address this issue in the Chaplaincy is a welcome development, however it is noted that this is a matter for the respective churches to address directly.

### **Conclusion**

To conclude, I would like again to welcome this report and the timely review which has provided the University and the Chaplaincy with an opportunity to reflect on current structures and practices. It is encouraging to see that the feedback provided to the reviewers was positive with students and staff describing the contribution made by the Chaplaincy team to the College community as vital and important.

The recommendations in the report are very helpful. I intend to work with the Chaplains and other appropriate University Officers to address the recommendations and will prepare an Implementation Plan in due course.

## **Appendix 1: Minute of Quality Committee discussion**

### **QC/14-14/061 Quality Review of the Chaplaincy**

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer welcomed the Chair of the College Chaplains, Reverend Julian Hamilton, the Secretary to the College, Mr John Coman, and the Dean of Students, Professor Kevin O’Kelly, to the meeting for the discussion of the review of the Chaplaincy.

Rev. Hamilton reported that the experience of the review was a challenging and beneficial one for both the Chaplains and the University, and that it raised some important questions about the Chaplaincy and its role in College. He noted that the timing of the review was pertinent, with the imminent appointment of two new Chaplains in 2015/16. The Secretary to the College warmly welcomed the Reviewers’ acknowledgment of the vital role played by the Chaplaincy in College life as part of the network of supports for students. The Dean of Students noted the unique nature of the TCD Chaplaincy in having unpaid Chaplains that are deeply embedded in College life, and reported that in other Irish Universities chaplaincy positions are salaried posts that are often difficult to fill.

The Chair invited comment from the Committee and the following key points were discussed:

- In relation to the recommendation to make the Chapel more accessible to the wider community, the Committee agreed that opportunities to make the Chapel available for suitable social and fundraising events should be explored, provided its character as a place of worship is respected. Additional funds resulting from any extension of its usage could be directed back to the Chaplaincy;
- It was agreed that regular and structured feedback mechanisms for users and stakeholders of the Chaplaincy should be put in place;
- The importance of ensuring that a gender balance is maintained among the Chaplains was discussed and it was agreed that a conversation should be initiated around a balanced representation;
- It was suggested that if further financial support could be provided by College for the Chaplaincy, it would have a significant impact as existing resources are stretched;
- The increasing numbers of international students envisaged by the College’s Strategic Plan will broaden the cultural and religious mix of students on campus. This will necessitate the provision of pastoral care, on a more formal basis, for people of other faiths. The mechanism for achieving this should be discussed with leaders from the individual faiths concerned in order to ensure that whatever model is chosen is appropriate for individual religious groups. For example, out-reach, a prayer space.

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer thanked the Committee for its input and closed the discussion.