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

Review Report for the

Confederal School of Religions, Peace Studies

and Theology

27 – 29 March 2017

External Reviewers:
Professor Helen K. Bond, Professor of Christian Origins, University of Edinburgh
Professor Roger Mac Ginty, Professor of Peace and Conflict Studies, Humanitarian and Conflict Response Institute and Department of Politics, University of Manchester;
Professor Bettina Schmidt, Professor in Study of Religions, University of Wales Trinity Saint David;
Professor Clemens Sedmak, F.D. Maurice Professor of Moral and Social Theology, King's College London;
Professor William Storrar, Director, Center of Theological Inquiry, Princeton.

Internal Facilitator: Prof. Brian Foley, Trinity College Dublin

Table of Contents

1. Reviewers' Report

Table of Contents

Introduction

Executive Summary

The review team recommend the formation of one School of Religion, with one public profile, one academic staff, and one School teaching and research programme in six subject areas: Biblical Studies, Theological Studies, Religious Studies, Theology in the Catholic Tradition, Intercultural Theology & Interreligious Studies, and Peace Studies & Conflict Resolution; operating under the leadership of one Head of School, responsible for one School budget, and serviced by one School administration in one building; while continuing to be sustained by the School's institutional roots in the founding of Trinity College, the missions of the Irish School of Ecumenics and Loyola Institute, and the support of their alumni and trusts

Introduction

After an initial conference call on March 7, 2017 the reviewers conducted a three day-site visit (March 27-29). We were impressed by the level of organizational and logistical support provided by the Quality Office, the generous hospitality of the College and the School, the diligence and precision of the preparation of the School, and the spirit of cooperation and magnanimity shown by all colleagues and students who gave their time and wisdom generously and made themselves available for our questions. This is much appreciated and we want to express our sincere gratitude for this manifestation of "warm professionalism."

The reviewers do not claim to say anything "new" in this report; but they bring a variety of disciplinary and institutional backgrounds as well as international experience to the question of the state of the Confederal School and the text of this report has been approved by all reviewers.

This report is addressed to two parties that ideally would not perceive themselves or each other as two parties, namely the Leadership of Trinity College Dublin (on the "one side") and the Confederal School (on the "other side"). Most recommendations of this report are addressed to the School; but there are some points (notably O 2.5 and R 2.5) that are addressed to the leadership of Trinity College Dublin. We are convinced that the reforms suggested in this report cannot be successfully implemented without proper support from the highest level and without College investment in the School.

The report attempts to be concise and constructive. We will divide each of the following four sections into a set of assumptions (A 1-An), a set of observations (O 1-On), a set of commendations (C1-Cn), and a set of recommendations (R 1-Rn). For the purpose of referencing we use a decimal classification and list A 1.1-A 1.n for the assumptions of section 1, A 2.1 – A 2.n for the assumptions of section 2, etc.

The reviewers submit this report with the humility of persons who are not unfamiliar with the challenges faced by the Confederal School from our own experiences.

(1) General Observations

A 1.1: The Confederal School of Religions, Peace Studies and Theology (CFS) has been established by the College and has to be regarded and treated as one academic unit.

A 1.2: The School has a special status within the institutional landscape of the Schools of Trinity College Dublin; this special status is expressed in the fact that it is the only "confederal" School of the entire College.

A 1.3: All stakeholders involved prefer the existence of the School to institutional alternatives such as robust College leadership interventions including loss of jobs or the closing of the School with its units.

O 1.1: The School is ideally placed to become the premier place in Ireland to engage with the questions of religion(s) and the public sphere, religion and politics, even political ethics. This position is based externally on the "religious reconfiguration" Ireland is currently undergoing and the importance of religion in the global context; this position is based internally on the diversity of disciplines and range of expertise represented in the School, a rich intellectual and institutional history with its "corporate memory", and the niche the School can occupy within Trinity College Dublin, the city of Dublin and the whole of Ireland.

O 1.2: The School finds itself in adverse circumstances – given the unfavourable demand-situation of the "market for religious studies/theology", the financial challenges of Trinity College Dublin, and the institutional pressures on and within the School. Flourishing under adverse circumstances asks for resilience; institutional resilience can be built on the pillars of "sense of direction" (i.e. a sense of purpose and future), "sense of control" (i.e. a sense of agency and self-efficacy), and a "social sense" (i.e. a pro-social attitude with an active interest in establishing collaborations).

O 1.3: The reviewers were grateful to note the support from Vice Provost and Dean for the School and its staff; we felt a commitment to make the School a flourishing academic unit. This is a welcome attitude, but also not surprising given the importance of this particular School and its areas of expertise for the College and the country. The reputation of the historical units of the School is well established. The ISE is particularly successful in building and retaining networks, the R&T area carries the history of scholarship in religion back to the foundation of the College and is well known for its programme and academic rigour, the newly founded Loyola Institute occupies a niche within the academic world (but also from a church perspective).

O 1.4: The School is a comparatively small unit with considerable inner tensions; it struggles with student recruitment, in particular at the UG level, and faces questions of financial

sustainability. These factors make the School particularly vulnerable to institutional shocks and stresses (top down interventions) up to the point where the location and physical space, even the existence of the School, cannot be taken for granted. This situation calls for institutional resilience, inner cohesion and intellectual and organisational coherence. In other words: The School cannot afford to be internally divided.

O 1.5: The reviewers recognize the painful history and the "memory of wounds" the sub-units of the School and some of its members carry. It is evident that social change processes must be sensitive to and mindful of this history. However, the past must not chain the present, and even less so the future. The challenge will be to create a win/win/win-situation for all three sub-units. Given the precarious state the School is in, this should be possible. In other words: either there is a future for all three sub-units in unity, or there is no future.

C 1.1: We commend the great potential of the individuals to form a School as well as the significant efforts undertaken in this respect.

C 1.2: We commend the creativity in designing and delivering courses and in planning academic events.

C 1.3: We note the loyalty and vision of staff within different subgroups, even though we need to encourage a thinking in terms of "School identity."

R 1.1: We suggest approaching the issue of the future of the School from the perspective of a prospective student. What makes a prospective student feel attracted to study at the School? We would suggest making this viewpoint the primary perspective when constructing arguments within the discourse on the School's identity. Given the recruitment challenges of the School this is a survival strategy.

R 1.2: In order to strengthen the institutional resilience of the School we recommend preparing a purpose statement under the leadership of the Head of School; this purpose statement should reflect the sense of direction of the School; we recommend making bold structural decisions as an expression of agency to prevent the risk of agency being taken away from the School; we recommend focusing more on the external relations and the question of "service" and "point" of the School (in the light of R 1.1) rather than being inward-focused and spending a disproportionate amount of energy on internal communication matters. A purpose statement could look like this: "This School of Trinity College Dublin explores the role of religion, peace and ethics in historical settings and in the public sphere through research, collaborations, teaching and the facilitation of transformative student experiences. By making use of a variety of academic approaches, especially Biblical Studies, Religious Studies, Theological Studies, Theology in the Catholic Tradition, Intercultural Theology & Interreligious Studies, and Peace Studies & Conflict Resolution; and based on its commitments to interdisciplinarity, academic rigour, dialogue and the importance of civic engagement and social transformation, the School

contributes to the big ethical questions facing humanity." This is obviously only a suggestion, but it reflects the way five reviewers came to see the School.

R 1.3: We recommend renaming the School for marketing purposes to the "School of Religion." The rationale behind this suggestion (again made in the light of R 1.1) is the experience that simple names allow for clear and attractive messages; the inner diversity and richness of the School can and should be expressed on a secondary layer.

R 1.4: We recommend looking into the events organized by units and members of the School and to follow a "less is more"-approach; it is better to have fewer well attended and visible signature events than to have many small, but still work-intensive planned activities.

R 1.5: We recommend setting up a Corporate Identity Protocol for the School that puts the School and the Programmes in the foreground and not the subunits; we recommend making systematic efforts to seek marketing support for School purposes and if possible to invest in a School marketing officer.

(2) School management and leadership

A 2.1: A well-functioning academic unit is a structural entity within an academic institution that is characterized by inner cohesion and coherence, smooth internal processes, a clear sense of purpose and direction *ad intra*, and a clear profile and message *ad extra*.

A 2.2: The leadership of Trinity College Dublin is committed to ideals and standards of good governance.

A 2.3: A key ethical principle in the management of structures is the principle of subsidiarity; this is particularly relevant for the School; given the organizational decisions on College level it is evident that lower units have to give up power and hand it over to the encompassing unit.

A 2.4: A lack of proper structures leads to a lack of proper communication; lack of proper communication leads to a persistent loss of energy. That is why the School is well advised to reach structural clarity to gain the freedom to dedicate itself to full service.

O 2.1: The School is not well-functioning according to A1.

O 2.2: The reviewers arrived at the clear judgment that the institutional situation is unsustainable and must not continue; if the situation were to continue it would be difficult not to see the School as a "failing structure" and it would be difficult to deny poor governance on the level of the College.

O 2.3: The School cannot be properly managed by the Head of School since the Head of School has no proper power in terms of budgetary decision making, line managing and reporting lines. The result is a disturbing lack of unit management.

O 2.4: We have observed that there are organizational anomalies with two academic staff members - these situations need to be remedied. We ask for the appropriate College support for these measures.

O 2.5: In our meetings with representatives of the two trusts we were pleased to see the willingness of both trusts to engage in the building of the School as a unified structure. "The development of the Confederal School is now central to the future of the flourishing of ISE" we read in the ISE Trust document "Towards a Vision for the Confederal School." Fundamental support together with an expression of the concerns for sensitive handling of identities can also be read in the document submitted to the reviewers by the Loyola Institute Trust.

O 2.6: The reviewers identified staffing needs (the challenge of short term contracts) as a major concern of the entire School, especially the Religion and Theology area. Without these positions being secured as permanent appointments the feasibility of the School cannot be consolidated and the core undergraduate curriculum cannot be delivered. There are also other colleagues on short term contracts which gives reason to worry about the structural sustainability of the School.

O 2.7: The School is faced with the challenge of transforming "departmental cultures" into a "School culture"; this transformation has to happen in the light of A 1.3 and O 1.3. This transformation can be successful if a culture of "permeability" (School-wide communication and initiatives, inter-programme cooperation) is introduced that reduces elements of intra-School competition and any sense of "multiple structures".

O 2.8: The "Memorandum of Agreement" is a source of conflict and open to different interpretations; we see this document as an expression of "transitional justice" for a limited transition period that needs to come to be revised to realize the School's full potential.

O 2.9: We have been given to understand that there are legal issues concerning the interpretation of College Statutes; these disputes have to be solved on a College level as soon as possible. There has to be a firm legal basis for the organizational development of the School.

O 2.10: We also noted the forming of an Advisory Board without "funding issues of a trust structure" within the R&T area; the reviewers identify the rationale and the character of this body as an area of concern.

C 2.1: We commend the strong commitment of the staff, including the administrative staff.

C 2.2: We commend the establishment of new School-wide committees such as a PG committee; these are important steps in the right direction towards becoming a well-functioning and unitary School.

C 2.3: We commend the current Head of School's efforts to bring a unified vision to the School and to pursue a collaborative and inclusive leadership style.

C 2.4 The reviewers want to express their appreciation of the Loyola Institute and its commitment to the Common Good of the School by making funds available for two posts in the R&T area. This is highly commendable and reflects the kind of spirit we need to have throughout the School.

R 2.1: We recommend that the Head of School be elected by the whole School and that all academic staff will realign themselves and report directly to the Head of School. The Head of School, in consultation with the entire School, will appoint one Director of Undergraduate Teaching and Learning for the whole School, one Director for Postgraduate Teaching and Learning for the whole School, and one Director of Research for the whole School. With this structure the Head of School may be in a position to remedy the organizationally dysfunctional position of two staff members as mentioned in O 2.5. The Head of School needs to meet annually with each member of staff for appraisal and workload assessment purposes.

R 2.2: We recommend a new organisational model that presents the School in terms of the six main disciplines found in its teaching and research programmes: Biblical Studies, Religious Studies, Theological Studies, Theology in the Catholic Tradition, Intercultural Theology & Interreligious Studies, and Peace Studies & Conflict Resolution. Running through all aspects of the School we see three main features: interdisciplinarity, civic engagement, and a focus on ethics. The current subunits would be organizational units in the background only. See the visual attached. This is a paradigm shift but this paradigm shift is necessary.

R 2.3: We recommend introducing one budget for the whole School to be controlled by a financial committee led by the Head of School who retains decision making power in case of conflict. Without financial decision-making powers the role of the Head of School can only be symbolic leading to unacceptable managerial deficits and putting the functionality of the School as a School at risk. The budgetary structure will consider ring-fenced monies of the trusts with a clear vision of the common good of the School (see O 2.6).

R 2.4: We recommend changing the discursive culture of the School – only "School common good" oriented arguments are acceptable as arguments; i.e. reasons for particular positions are only acceptable on the basis of statements like "it is not in the interest of the common good of the School that…"

R 2.5: We recommend that the College invests in the School by making at least two short-term contracts permanent (as School positions); of course, it would be desirable to have all six fragile positions secured and there are operational reasons (PhD supervision, long term planning, trust building, etc.) to do so. In the judgment of the reviewers, however, the necessary minimum for the safeguarding of the core curriculum is the transformation of two positions in Religions and Theology into permanent positions. This is a necessary investment to ensure the feasibility of the School (the running of the core curriculum) and to offer a "quid pro quo" for structural changes that include sacrifices. The reviewers want to be very clear at this point: without this investment the School cannot be and will not be a well-functioning academic unit.

R 2.6: We recommend developing a fundraising plan for the whole School; part of the portfolio of the finance committee mentioned in R 2.3 should be the pro-active consideration of possible funding streams drawing on the fundraising capacities not only of the trusts but also through alumni and external funding bodies including foundations. The research grant income needs to be higher and there have to be explicit efforts in that direction.

R 2.7: We recommend rethinking the use of the names "ISE" and "Loyola Institute"; in all public communication the School and the programmes should be in the foreground – see R 1.5. We are, however, not recommending dropping the names entirely for historical, identity and funding reasons.

R 2.8: We recommend that the School adopts the best practice in governance and organization recommended by the College instead of using the "Memorandum of Agreement."

R 2.9: We recommend making all the necessary efforts to have the School united in one physical space even if classrooms have to be sacrificed in the Loyola/ISE building. Physical space shapes culture and the sharing of space necessarily leads to new possibilities of encounter and a new culture. (These comments on space and the bi-location of the School refer to the Trinity campus and not the Trinity-Belfast or indeed Churchtown dimension).

R 2.10: We recommend looking into the possibility of giving those more sceptical about the project of School-building School-wide responsibilities to foster a sense of ownership – always in line with R 2.3.

R 2.11: We suggest establishing one academic advisory board for the whole School reflecting the different disciplinary areas; this small and committed board should be established for a set period of time to help with the transition challenges of the School.

R 2.12: We recommend including staff at Trinity-Belfast and the Churchtown partner more in activities such as research seminars and meetings for instance through the use of video-link facilities or Skype, and to keep them fully informed about any changes.

(3) Teaching and Learning Provision

A 3.1: As a unit the School needs to recruit students and has to provide high quality teaching.

A 3.2: Contemporary high quality teaching has to be research-led.

A 3.3: Students – see R 1.1 – can be considered the key stake holders in a teaching environment; students' experience is a leading factor in evaluating teaching units.

O 3.1: The reviewers were very pleased to hear the positive feedback of the students, past and present. Both current students – UG and PG – and Alumni/Alumnae were very appreciative of the School and its staff members. This shows the deep commitment of the staff to their

students; repeatedly it has been mentioned that staff members "went out of their way" to support students.

O 3.2 An important element of the quality of study programmes is the social capital that is facilitated by the programme; we were impressed to see the networks built by the ISE preserving a commitment of former students to the programmes. This is important and inspiring and should be made a point of the entire School.

O 3.3: We were surprised to hear that the PG students of the School came together for the first time during the review. This has been documented in a photograph taken by a reviewer (see appendix). There is clearly need for "permeability" and School-wide community building.

O 3.4: The structure of the School with its internal divides is detrimental to the PG experience; this is a clear finding from the reviewers' meeting with PG students. There have to be strong efforts to build a School-wide community of PG students.

O 3.5: Whereas the Belfast campus is an important selling point, the exchange and communication between campuses and the inclusion of Belfast in the Dublin community have been identified as challenges; there is no travel bursary to encourage students to travel back and forth; there is not sufficient provision of IT-based cross-campus teaching, especially video-conferencing.

O 3.6: The reviewers are concerned by the problems experienced with the College-wide system of academic registration; this has led to frustration of administrative staff and students, and even to a loss of students because of the unsatisfactory handling of applications. This is undeniably a failure on the College level and must not happen, especially not over an extended period of time (see A 2.2). Vulnerable units struggling with recruitment like the School have to be given priority in College-wide administrative procedures.

O 3.7: There are currently a "multiplication of roles"-phenomena throughout the three sub-units of the School; given the importance of School-building as well as the workload challenges this is unsustainable (see R 2.1).

O 3.8: The reviewers have led a number of discussions about the structure of the UG degrees; we have discussed the option of "single entry, multiple exits" having all UG students together for the first two years. "Catholic Theology" could be taught as a case study, as an elective or within a general course on "theological method" or "academic approaches to religion" which was also encouraged in the meeting with the Loyola Trust (see O 2.6).

O 3.9: Teaching provision necessities require R 2.1 to be implemented and School-wide sabbatical coordination to take place.

O 3.10: The reviewers were impressed by the variety of teaching methods, including community-based placements. This variety is a selling point of the School.

O 3.11: We have noted in UG students' comments a lack of choice and options. The situation is aggravated by the ending of the agreement with the Near and Middle Eastern Studies unit.

O 3.12: One student mentioned in our meeting that every student was diminished by the fractures in the School. This is clearly problematic (see R 1.1).

O 3.13: One (former) student mentioned the counter-cultural character of the teaching culture, approaching religion rigorously from an academic point of view and at the same time recognizing its importance; "this is like 21st century punk". A clear selling point (even if you do not care for punk music).

C 3.1: We commend the broad nature of the interdisciplinary courses.

C 3.2: We note, acknowledge and commend the passion and dedication of the teaching staff.

C 3.3: We commend the many ways of implementing the vision outlined in R 2.2 already through interdisciplinary, civically engaged and ethics-focused teaching.

C 3.4: We note and commend the practical orientation and the creative methods of teaching.

C 3.5 The reviewers commend the School on its PG provision; it is impressive to see the range, depth and novelty of the various PG degrees; we would like to see the MPhil programmes continuing broadly as they are.

C 3.6 The reviewers would also like to acknowledge the excellent reputation of the Peace Studies Programme; even though we want to encourage PG students to see themselves as first and foremost part of the School we have to commend the special contribution of the ISE to the PG culture within the School.

C 3.7 We commend the exemplary gender balance at postgraduate teaching level.

R 3.1: We recommend introducing a unified degree structure on the basis of "single entry, multiple exits" at undergraduate level. This would offer teaching synergies, lead to student community-building, and help the School to be recognizable as one unit.

R 3.2: Administrative roles in relationship to teaching (e.g., examiner officer) must not be multiplied (see R 2.1). There needs to be one School Office with one Senior School administrator and all admin staff need to report to this officer.

R 3.3: We recommend the encouragement of team-teaching, especially across the programmes within the School.

R 3.4: We recommend pro-actively including the students of the Belfast campus, also by making funds available (see R 2.3 and O 3.5). Video-conference technology could play a significant role here. The Belfast operation should be fully included in all College systems.

R 3.5: We encourage exploring the theory of "community-based" learning and to enter a dialogue with the field of "community-based learning" to have theory-led teaching also in this area.

R 3.6: We recommend targeting mature students (post retirement students) who might have an interest in studying religion; it has worked in other places.

R 3.7: We recommend looking into the possibility of providing courses for the entire College such as the "Religion in Public: Great Speeches" course.

R 3.8: We recommend that the links between the School and the Near and Middle Eastern Studies teaching provision have to be kept; this is also an appeal to the College leadership to make this happen. There has to be an understanding with those teaching Jewish Studies and Islamic Studies (or any other major religion-related discipline) outside of the School. The College leadership needs to support this concern for the sake of the integrity of the study programmes on offer through the School.

R 3.9: We recommend organising events for PG students of different programmes to meet and also to include them in School activities such as conferences and UG teaching (as paid TA).

(4) Research

A 4.1: Peer-reviewed internationally visible academic publications are the primary expression of academic scholarship.

A 4.2: Research of this kind requires a proper research environment with its macro, meso and micro levels.

A 4.3: A research culture has to be fostered through collegiality, mutual support and academic freedom; it is at the core of an academic unit, also in terms of the quality of teaching (see A 3.2).

O 4.1: The reviewers were impressed by the quality and variety of research outputs; there is recognized scholarship conducted within the School; the School has a number of remarkable research-active colleagues.

O 4.2: Ireland does not have a "REF" or an equivalent; this creates research assessment challenges and pressures on College level; these pressures translate into School level as well.

O 4.3: Not all staff members are equally productive and research-active; it would be important to know what the constraints in these situations are and what could be done in terms of encouraging both research and outputs. Chronic research underperformance needs to be addressed.

O 4.4: External grant income is very low. There are a range of international research agendas/funds (bio-ethics, countering-violent extremism etc.) that the School would be well placed to compete for, yet this is not happening.

O 4.5: The PG research student culture could be and should be an integral part of the School's research culture; there needs to be a component of mentoring that includes junior staff as well; research students should have the possibility to inhabit academic roles such as tutors or teaching assistants or leaders of a research seminar. Some PG research students commented on isolation and lack of community; this has to be addressed.

O 4.6: The noted lack of seniority (Self-Assessment Report 7.2.3) may be an issue of lack of mentoring or research accountability or both. The School needs to establish mechanisms of research accountability (transparent research goals).

C 4.1: Many aspects of the research done reflect the structure outlined in R 2.2.

C 4.2: Teaching is mostly research-led within the School.

C 4.3: We commend the internationally recognized approach to Peace (making use of intercultural theology, religions, theology and ethics). "Peace Studies" is a well-established "brand" and one of the best-selling points of the School.

C 4.4: We commend the establishment of research groups that brings staff of all sub-units together (e.g., the Biblical Studies centre).

R 4.1: We recommend that a School-wide research committee look into the formation of more research groups (preferably inter-departmental). These research groups could and should also draw in colleagues from outside the School.

R 4.2: We particularly encourage research and research activities (such as academic events and networking) in the areas of applied and political ethics and in the areas of the big questions of the present times such as climate, migrations, global citizenship. The School can occupy a place of its own on campus with these areas of expertise.

R 4.3: We recommend that the research committee to be formed look pro-actively into "strategic publishing" (where, with whom, on what) and into research grant possibilities.

R 4.4: We recommend having a monthly or even bi-weekly School research seminar at a regular time and place which has to be attended by all academic staff members and by all research students.

R 4.5: We recommend introducing School-wide research outlets such as a "Working Paper series" or a regular Scholar in residence programme.

R 4.6: We recommend that MLitts and PhDs should be admitted to the whole School (rather than to a sub-unit of the School) and that supervision happens across sub-units.

R 4.7: We recommend having annual research reviews and research planning with the individual staff member, the Head of School and the Director of Research (see O 4.2 and O 4.3); these meetings should also feed into the development of a School-wide research strategy with the well communicated identification of core research areas and activities (see R 4.1, R 4.2).

R 4.8: We recommend transforming some of the "ideological challenges" of the School into research agenda; if there are issues about the nature of theology it could be helpful to have a structured academic discourse – we recommend thinking about School-organized conferences on "hot topics" such as the range of approaches in different disciplines (an example could be the "Bible and Migration" conference).

R 4.9: We recommend having research-building activities such as "research away days" or even have the conferences mentioned in R 4.8 outside of Dublin.

Concluding Remarks

We do not want to offer a mere "laundry list" of suggestions; that is why we will also provide a clear sense of the primary recommendations, i.e. the recommendations that have to be prioritized in our view: These are the following four

Priority One: R 1.2 (purpose statement) and R 1.5 (corporate identity)

Priority Two: R 2.5 (College investment in the School)

Priority Three: R 2.1 and R 2.2 (management structure and financial management)

Priority Four: R 1.1 and R 2.2 (students' perspective and common good oriented arguments)

Without the College's support this cannot happen – the College leadership is explicitly addressed in R 2.5 and R 3.8. We consider R 2.5 *a conditio sine qua non* for the paradigm shift envisaged by the reviewers. We also believe that Trinity College Dublin given its tradition and given the importance of the topics cannot afford not to have a properly functioning "School of Religion".

Institutional change will inevitably meet resistance. We anticipate this to be the case with some aspects of this report as well; so we need to ask for two things: First, we ask for "principles of charity" in receiving especially the recommendations. This attitude of accepting the report as an expression of a discourse led by reasonable, well-informed, and good-willing persons should be the default position of interpretation. Every and any point can be contested; there could be counter-arguments to each point. We want to express our sympathy with this struggle since the

report asks each stakeholder to make some sacrifices. We want to state *expressis verbis* that we have no stakes of our own and have tried to be constructive and helpful to deserve the principles of charity.

Institutional changes can only be successful if there are "sticky solutions", the "right inviters" and a "promise of a better life". We have tried to honour these concerns by offering simple points, by speaking from a perspective of benevolent outsiders, and by pointing out that the vision outlined in this report seems to be the only way forward for the School as a School. Otherwise we do not see a future for the School at all. But the future that we envisage – and this report tries to contribute to the building of this future – is promising given the unique position the School is in to become the premier place in the country academically and publicly to address issues of religion, ethics and the public sphere.

APPENDICES

Visualizations of suggested new School structure

Final Schedule of Site-Visit

Trinity College Dublin

SCHOOL OF RELIGION

Common Purpose:

Interdisciplinary – Ethics – Engaged

Teaching & Research Areas / Expertise: The Big Six

The big six are Biblical Studies, Religious Studies, Theological Studies, Theology in the Catholic Tradition, Intercultural Theology & Interreligious Studies, Peace Studies & Conflict Resolution

One School Staff

One School Governance / Administration

One School Budget

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Sustaining a Flourishing School

TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN	**Loyola**	**Irish School of**
1592	**Institute**	**Ecumenics**
(Alumni/External)	**(& Trust)**	**(& Trust)**

TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN
SCHOOL OF RELIGION

COMMON PURPOSE

INTERDISCIPLINARY - ETHICS - ENGAGED

SCHOOL TEACHING & RESEARCH AREAS | Expertise

THE BIG SIX

BIBLICAL · RELIGIOUS · THEOLOGICAL · CATHOLIC · INTER- · PEACE
STUDIES   STUDIES   STUDIES   STUDIES   CULTURAL   STUDIES
                                           STUDIES

ONE SCHOOL FACULTY

ONE SCHOOL BUDGET

ONE SCHOOL GOVERNANCE
              & administration

THE VITAL ROOTS OF A FLOURISHING SCHOOL

TCD   Loyola   Irish
                      School of
1592   Institute   Ecumenics
(+ALUMNI/External)   (+ Trust)   (+ Trust)

CONFEDERAL SCHOOL OF RELIGIONS, PEACE STUDIES AND THEOLOGY REVIEW
Monday 27th – Wednesday 29th MARCH 2017

External Reviewers:
Professor Helen K. Bond, University of Edinburgh, UK
Professor Roger Mac Ginty, University of Manchester, UK
Professor Bettina E. Schmidt, University of Wales Trinity Saint David, UK
Professor Clemens Sedmak, University of Notre Dame, USA (visiting professor 2015-2017) & King's College London, UK
Professor William Storrar, Center of Theological Inquiry, Princeton, USA
Internal Facilitator: Professor Brian Foley

Day 1: Monday 27 March 2017

Time	Meeting	Venue	Attendees
08.50	Meet Reviewers to escort them to Trinity College for first meeting	Lobby of Davenport Hotel	Ms Helen Condon, Quality Office, Trinity College.
09.15 – 10.00	Introductory Meeting with College Officers	Vice-Provost Office, West Theatre	Professor Christopher Morash (Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer), Professor Darryl Jones (Dean of Faculty – Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences), Ms Patricia Callaghan (Academic Secretary), External Reviewers, Internal Facilitator.
10.05 – 10.50	Finance & Governance Meeting	West Theatre Boardroom	Professor Darryl Jones (Dean of Faculty - Arts Humanities and Social Sciences), Ms Marian Harte (Faculty Finance Partner), Professor Siobhán Garrigan (Head of School, Confederal School of Religions Peace Studies and Theology), Professor Maureen Junker-Kenny (Head of Department of Religions and Theology (R&T), Professor Fáinche Ryan (Head of the Loyola Institute), Professor Andrew Pierce (Head of the Irish School of Ecumenics (ISE), Ms Aideen Woods (School Administrator), External Reviewers, Internal Facilitator.
11.00 – 11.20	Transfer to the Confederal School of Religions, Peace Studies and Theology; coffee on arrival	G8, ISE-LI Building	External Reviewers, Internal Facilitator

CONFEDERAL SCHOOL OF RELIGIONS, PEACE STUDIES AND THEOLOGY REVIEW
Monday 27th – Wednesday 29th MARCH 2017

Day 1: Monday 27 March 2017: continued			
Time	**Meeting**	**Venue**	**Attendees**
11.25 – 12.30	School Strategy (to include Research Strategy)	G7, ISE-LI Building	Professor Siobhán Garrigan (Head of School), Professor Fáinche Ryan (HoD Loyola), Professor Maureen Junker-Kenny (HoD R&T), Professor Andrew Pierce (HoD ISE), Professor Cathriona Russell (Director Teaching and Learning, Undergraduate (DTLUG)), Professor David Shepherd (Director Teaching and Learning, Postgraduate (DTLPG)), Professor Jacob Erickson (Director of Research), Ms Aideen Woods (School Administrator)**,** Professor Jane Ohlmeyer, (Director, Trinity Long Room Hub (TRLH), Dr Caitriona Curtis (Institute Manager, TLRH), Ms Maureen Burgess (Research Programme Officer, TLRH), Professor Trevor Spratt (representing the Director of Trinity Research in Social Science (TRiSS)), Professor Gillian Wylie (academic staff member (ISE), representing Trinity International Development Initiative (TIDI)), Professor Linda Hogan (academic staff member (ISE) and former Vice-Provost /CAO), Ms. Jennifer Matchain Eloisa (Student representative for PG Research), Mr Hayden Prendergast (Student rep. for PG Taught), Ms Emma Purser (Student rep. for UG), External Reviewers, Internal Facilitator
12.30 – 13.30	Lunch	G8, ISE-LI Building	External Reviewers, Internal Facilitator
13.45 – 14.30	Meeting with Undergraduate students	G7, ISE-LI Building	UG Student Rep. for whole School - Ms Emma Purser; <u>Junior Fresh Students</u> - Ms Ailbhe Redding, Mr Gerard Doherty; <u>Senior Fresh Students</u> - Mr Ben Pignatelli, Ms Meaghan Higgins Coyne, Mr Ruairi Meyler; <u>Junior Sophister Students</u> - Mr Timothy Graham, Ms Colleen King; <u>Senior Sophister Students</u> - Mr Eoghan Stanley, Ms Emily Cusack; a representative of international students taking UG courses via Study Abroad/Exchange; External Reviewers, Internal Facilitator.

CONFEDERAL SCHOOL OF RELIGIONS, PEACE STUDIES AND THEOLOGY REVIEW
Monday 27th – Wednesday 29th MARCH 2017

Day 1: Monday 27 March 2017: continued			
Time	**Meeting**	**Venue**	**Attendees**
14.30 – 15.30	Undergraduate Education	G7, ISE-LI Building	Professor Cathriona Russell (DTLUG), Professor Fáinche Ryan (Course Co-ordinator, Catholic Theological Studies), Professor Maureen Junker-Kenny (Course Co-ordinator, World Religions and Theology), Additional School staff involved in UG teaching - Professor Siobhán Garrigan, Professor Andrew Pierce, Professor Alexandra Grieser, Professor Daniele Pevarello, Professor David Shepherd, Professor Katie Dunne, Professor Jacob Erickson, Professor Damien Janos, Dr. Con Casey, External Reviewers, Internal Facilitator.
15.30 – 16.15	College-wide Strategic Initiatives Trinity Education Project, Internationalisation and Online Education	G7, ISE-LI Building	Professor Siobhán Garrigan (Head of School), Professor Linda Hogan (ISE & former Vice-Provost/CAO), Professor Juliette Hussey (Vice-President, Global Relations), Dr. Silvia Gallagher (Open Education Project Manager), Ms. Fedelma McNamara (Project Manager, Trinity Education Project (TEP), Ms Mary McMahon (Trinity Education Project), External Reviewers, Internal Facilitator.
16.15 – 16.30	Reviewers' reflection time and coffee	G8, ISE-LI Building	External Reviewers and Internal Facilitator.
16.45 – 17.45	External Governance and Advisory Bodies to the Confederal School of Religions, Peace Studies and Theology	G7, ISE-LI Building	Dr Joseph Egan (Acting Chair of the Loyola Trust), Dr Gerard O'Hanlon (Loyola Trustee), Dr Salters Sterling and Revd. Mary Hunter (representatives of the Irish School of Ecumenics Trust Steering Committee), Professor Gerard Whyte (Chair of the R&T International Advisory Board), Professor Shane Allwright (former Trinity Registrar and member of the R&T International Advisory Board), External Reviewers, Internal Facilitator.
17.45	Escort Reviewers to restaurant		Internal Facilitator
18.00	Dinner with College Officers	The Library at The Pig's Ear, 4 Nassau Street Dublin 2	Professor Christopher Morash (Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer), Professor Darryl Jones (Dean of Faculty - Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences), Ms Patricia Callaghan (Academic Secretary), External Reviewers, Internal Facilitator.

CONFEDERAL SCHOOL OF RELIGIONS, PEACE STUDIES AND THEOLOGY REVIEW
Monday 27th – Wednesday 29th MARCH 2017

Day 2: Tuesday 28 March 2017			
Time	**Meeting**	**Venue**	**Attendees**
08.30 – 09.30	Reviewers' reflection time and coffee	G8, ISE-LI Building	External Reviewers, Internal Facilitator
09.30 – 10.15	Postgraduate Taught and Research Students	G7, ISE-LI Building	Ph.D. Students- Ms Jennifer Machain Eloisa, Mr Joel Feurt Hanisek, Mr Alexander Chance, Ms Bryana Tunder, Ms Julia Wisdom, Mr Paudie Holly, Ms Niamh Brennan, Mr Daniel Daley, Ms Kathleen Lynch, Ms Helen Cashell, Ms Megan Ayers, Ms Allison Harmon, Ms Mary Steffanzi, M.Phil. Students - Mr Hayden Prendergast, Mr Max DeGraffe, Ms Teresa Rupp, Mr Daniel Owens, Ms Alexandra De Nassau, Mr Lindsey Friedrich, Ms Sophia La Cour, Mr Samuel Scanlon; Masters in Theology (CITI)- Ms Karen Salmon, Mr Trevor Sargent, Mr Stuart Moles; PG Diploma: Conflict & Dispute Resolution Studies - Mr Wayne Butler; External Reviewers, Internal Facilitator
10.15 – 11.15	Postgraduate Education	G7, ISE-LI Building	Professor David Shepherd (DTL PG), Professor Siobhán Garrigan (HoS), PG Course Co-ordinators - Professor Etain Tannam (M.Phil. International Peace Studies), Professor Brendan Browne (M.Phil. Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation (Belfast), Professor Jude Lal Fernando (M.Phil. Intercultural Theology and Interreligious Studies), Professor Iain Atack (Evening PG Diploma in Conflict and Dispute Resolution Studies), Professor Cathriona Russell (M.Th.), Dr Katie Heffelfinger (Church of Ireland Theological Institute/M.Th.) Additional School staff involved in PG teaching - Professor David Mitchell (M.Phil. CRR (Belfast)), Professor Carlo Aldrovandi (M.Phil. IPS and M.Phil. IT&IS), Professor Jin Kim (M.Phil. IPS), Professor Gillian Wylie (M.Phil. IPS and CDRS), Professor Linda Hogan, (MPhil. IPS and MPhil. IT&IS), Professor Fáinche Ryan (new M.Phil. Christian Theology), External Reviewers, Internal Facilitator

CONFEDERAL SCHOOL OF RELIGIONS, PEACE STUDIES AND THEOLOGY REVIEW
Monday 27th – Wednesday 29th MARCH 2017

Day 2: Tuesday 28 March 2017: continued			
Time	**Meeting**	**Venue**	**Attendees**
11.15 – 11.35	Reviewers' reflection time and coffee	G8, ISE-LI Building.	External Reviewers, Internal Facilitator.
11.40 – 12.45	Tour of Facilities (Irish School of Ecumenics - Loyola Institute Building, Arts Block - including Department of Religions and Theology Offices, Trinity Long Room Hub and Library.)	Multiple venues across the Dublin campus	Professor Siobhán Garrigan (Head of School), External Reviewers, Internal Facilitator.
12.45 – 14.30	Lunch with School	G8, ISE-LI Building	Professor Siobhán Garrigan (Head of School), Professor Cathriona Russell (DTL UG), Professor David Shepherd (DTL PG), Professor Jacob Erickson (Director of Research), External Reviewers, Internal Facilitator.
14.30 –15.00	Student Lifecycle – Academic Registry (AR)	G7, ISE-LI Building	Professor Siobhán Garrigan (Head of School), Ms Aideen Woods (School Administrative Manager), Ms Jane Welch (Executive Officer, R&T), Ms Helen McMahon (Executive Officer, Loyola), Ms Christine Houlahan (Executive Officer, ISE), Ms Mary Priestman (Executive Officer, ISE), Ms Brid O'Brien, (Assistant Librarian, ISE - Belfast), Ms Caroline Clarke (Senior Executive Officer, ISE - Belfast), Ms Karen Nicholson (Administrative Assistant, ISE - Belfast), Professor David Shepherd (Exams Officer, Loyola), Professor Daniele Pevarello (Exams Officer, R&T), Dr Katie Heffelfinger (CITI), Ms Lynda Levis (Bursar and Secretary to the Staff, CITI), Ms Leona Coady (Director, Academic Registry (AR), Ms Jennifer Pepper, (Head of Operations, AR), Mr. Peter Hynes (Head of Business Support and Planning, AR), External Reviewers, Internal Facilitator.

CONFEDERAL SCHOOL OF RELIGIONS, PEACE STUDIES AND THEOLOGY REVIEW
Monday 27th – Wednesday 29th MARCH 2017

Day 2: Tuesday 28 March 2017: continued			
Time	**Meeting**	**Venue**	**Attendees**
15.00 – 15.30	Administration / Supports/ Systems	G7, ISE-LI Building	Ms Aideen Woods (School Administrative Manager), Ms Jane Welch (Executive Officer, R&T), Ms Helen McMahon (Executive Officer, Loyola), Ms Christine Houlahan (Executive Officer, ISE), Ms Mary Priestman (Executive Officer, ISE), Ms Brid O'Brien, (Assistant Librarian, ISE - Belfast), Ms Caroline Clarke (Senior Executive Officer, ISE - Belfast), Ms Karen Nicholson (Administrative Assistant, ISE - Belfast), Dr Katie Heffelfinger (CITI), Ms Lynda Levis (Bursar and Secretary to the Staff, CITI), External Reviewers , Internal Facilitator.
15.30 – 16.00	Library and Careers Advisory Services (CAS)	G7, ISE-LI Building	Mr David McNaughton (representing the Subject Librarian), Ms Orlaith Tunney (Careers Advisory Service), External Reviewers, Internal Facilitator.
16.00 – 16.30	Alumni/ae	G7, ISE-LI Building	Alumni/ae from the Department of Religions and Theology, and the Irish School of Ecumenics (TBC), External Reviewers, Internal Facilitator.
16.30 – 17.00	Meeting with Head of School	G7, ISE-LI Building	Head of School, External Reviewers, Internal Facilitator
17.00 – 18.00	Reviewers' reflection time and coffee	G8, ISE-LI Building	External Reviewers, Internal Facilitator
19.00 / 19.30	Reviewers' Private Dinner	Bang Restaurant 11 Merrion Row Dublin 2	External Reviewers

CONFEDERAL SCHOOL OF RELIGIONS, PEACE STUDIES AND THEOLOGY REVIEW
Monday 27th – Wednesday 29th MARCH 2017

Day 3: Wednesday 29 March 2017			
Time	**Meeting**	**Venue**	**Attendees**
09.00 – 09.30	Meeting with Head of Department of Religions and Theology & staff	G7, ISE-LI Building	Prof. Maureen Junker-Kenny, Head of Department of Religions & Theology, Professor Cathriona Russell, Professor Alexandra Grieser, Professor Daniele Pevarello, External Reviewers, Internal Facilitator
09.30 – 12.45	Preparation / Reflection time for Reviewers (to include lunch)	G8, ISE-LI Building	External Reviewers, Internal Facilitator.
13.00 – 13.15	Private meeting with VP/CAO & Academic Secretary	VP's Office, West Theatre	Professor Christopher Morash (Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer), Ms Patricia Callaghan (Academic Secretary), External Reviewers
13.15 – 14.00	Wrap-up meeting with Head of School and College Officers	VP's Office, West Theatre	Professor Christopher Morash (Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer), Professor Darryl Jones (Dean of Faculty – Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences), Professor Siobhán Garrigan (Head of School), Ms Patricia Callaghan (Academic Secretary), External Reviewers, Internal Facilitator.
14.15 – 14.45	Presentation of Reviewers' key findings:	G16, ISE-LI Building	External Reviewers and invited stakeholders, including - all teaching staff, all administrative staff, and all students who served as representatives in the earlier meetings).
15.00	Reviewers Depart		

Updated: Wednesday 28th March 2017

2. Response from the Head of School

Confederal School of Religions, Peace Studies and Theology

On behalf of the School, I would like to thank the five external reviewers and to express our profound appreciation for their diligence, interdisciplinarity and generosity in preparation for and during their site visit. I also thank the reviewers for their candid and constructive Report.

We are delighted that the reviewers were unanimous in their praise for both the School's current assets and its future potential. The Report's remarks about staff excellence in their fields and dedication in their teaching and research, as well as leadership acumen in the School and the high quality of student education are all reassuring; its remarks about our potentially significant contribution to discourse on religion and on peace in today's world are encouraging.

We are also grateful for the Report's many recommendations which, although they individually are described as "not new", together offer a new vision for the School. We echo the Report's recognition that it will require a lot of work on the part of College, as well as the School, to implement the changes it recommends. There is particular resonance in this line: "We are convinced that the reforms suggested in this report cannot be successfully implemented without proper support from the highest level and without College investment in the School."

Proper support may be needed most obviously with regard to funding for staffing, but it will also be needed in other areas of crucial importance, perhaps the primary one being negotiating with the ISE and Loyola Trusts and R&T Advisory Board. These bodies support the sub-units that comprise the School and are partners in the legal frameworks governing the School. A fruitful response to the Report is entirely contingent upon the Trusts' and Advisory Board's involvement.

The Report offers 35 recommendations. Obviously, this brief document cannot respond to all of them. What follows, therefore, is an initial reaction from the School to the 'headline' items, in the trust that Council (should it approve the Report) will set in train a process which will allow us to respond in more detail to the many and vital recommendations we have been given here.

(1) General Observations

The Report's recommendations have been broadly welcomed by the School. Efforts already begun at School level to gain greater clarity about the mission and identity of the School *qua* a School (to supplement those already in place for its three sub-units) will be aided and accelerated by the Report's call for "a purpose statement". Adopting a "corporate identity protocol" should enable us both to think as a School and to come across as a School, as well as to realise our acknowledged strengths, and to remedy the dysfunction that the Report rightly observes. In these efforts it will be vital to honour *all* the expertise in the School; the theoretical aspects of our work as well as the practical, the historical as well as the contemporary. It will also be wise to amplify our Belfast facilities and programmes; beyond Brexit, they could be poised to offer a unique opportunity in Europe for those wishing to engage interdisciplinarily in conflict, reconciliation and peace studies.

While the School welcomes these recommendations aimed at improving our marketing strategies, the suggestion of a new name for the School has given rise to significant concern. Losing "confederal" is generally viewed as an improvement, but reducing "Religions, Peace Studies and Theology" to "Religion" both neglects important distinctions and risks losing students for Peace Studies, which recruits well and does not fit easily under the title "Religion". We welcome the opportunity to improve how we are seen from outside — not only by potential students but also by peers in academic settings at College, national and international levels — and we hope that the opportunity and resources will be given us to gain the advice needed to re-brand appropriately.

(2) School management and leadership

This section addresses the structural problems that have hampered the School's flourishing by suggesting specific and widescale structural reforms. The School's current structures were devised through a series of sequential discussions between College and philanthropic donors, and little attention was given in that process to the practical implications for the internal workings of the School. The School notes the extensive nature of the recommendations and agrees with the Report that College's co-operation in implementing them will be indispensable, not least in negotiating with the Trusts and Advisory Board to change existing structures.

We are encouraged that the Report recognises both the outstanding commitment of staff (including administrative staff) and the great potential of current staff to form a School, as well as significant efforts already undertaken to do so. Particular praise is given to the loyalty and vision of staff within the three sub-units and the respective strengths of the different sub-units.

Re-framing the School in terms of its "big six" disciplines invites us to both re-conceptualize and re-organize it. The majority of the School understand this recommendation as allowing discipline-specific mission to be maintained while also transforming the ways we must work together to be a School. For this to work, it will be vital that academic staff are not restricted to working in only one of the big six; many colleagues will straddle two (or more) of them.

Inevitably, there is not unanimous approval of all the recommendations; but a signficant majority of the School see as positive the Report's recommendation of:

- An elected Head of School (not rotating between the sub-units), who can be re-elected.
- All staff re-oriented and reporting to the Head of School re: workload, etc., as in the statutes.
- A single cost centre (with transparency regarding any ringfenced monies, including benefactions), a single budget, and a finance committee chaired by the HoS.
- A School no longer operating under an internal Memorandum of Agreement.
- Forefronting talk of One School and minimizing talk of three differently named sub-units in our outward-facing communications and inward-facing negotiations.

While the School greets the Report's insistence that College fund the two fragile positions in R&T with nothing but relief, it also sees it as essential to secure the other fragile positions in the School. In particular, the fixed-term post in Belfast. Without two academic staff in Belfast, the programmes there are not viable, and without programmes in Belfast, the basis of ISE's Dublin programmes are in jeopardy (due to the terms of the agreement with the ISE Trust).

The recommendation of a single Advisory Board is a complicated matter that, while welcomed by many staff in the School, will have to be decided with the Trusts and the Advisory Board.

The recommendation that we all operate out of one building is not contentious for Loyola and ISE, but the Department of Religions and Theology value highly the retention of a hub in the Arts Block for UG students (including TSM and visiting students).

We note the nuanced language in which R.2.7 is framed: to "rethink the use" of the names "ISE" and "Loyola Institute" [and we would add R&T]. It is clear from the Report that the Reviewers do not recommend that these entities disappear, which implies that these 'brands' will continue to be afforded adequate positions within which to flourish. This nuance allows great scope, and we would welcome further input from the Reviewers on how this recommendation might be implemented.

We are also eager to think creatively (both programmatically and through re-branding) about how best to take forward the profile and purpose of the projects that have invested so heavily in the School, seeing this Review as an opportunity to increase the return on those investments.

(3) Teaching and Learning Provision

The Report's recognition of the dedication and student-centred focus of the staff, their innovation in designing and delivering courses, their creativity in planning academic events, the range and depth of PG programmes and the social capital facilitated by these programmes, as well as of the rigour and quality of both the UG and PG teaching was all heartening. We agree there is a need "for greater 'permeability' [between sub-units] and School-wide community building", and for those in distinctive programmes to nonetheless also see themselves as part of One School.

The School accepts the need for a unified UG degree structure on the basis of a "single entry, multiple exits" model, and the "big six" within "One School" approach should help us imagine this, along with the Graduate Attributes. Team-teaching, eliminating duplication and streamlining administration should all flow from this change, and the TEP should help facilitate it. The TEP could also be a vehicle to facilitate Religion students taking modules in NMES on an ongoing basis.

(4) Research

We are delighted that the Report notes that the Reviewers were impressed by both the quality of research in the School and the variety of its research ouputs, and we welcome the suite of recommendations aimed at enhancing and supporting research across the School in the future. In particular, the creation of a research committee, promoting a greater number of grant applications, the formation of more inter-departmental research groups, identifying more strategic publishing outlets, annual research reviews with the HoS and DoR, away days, the admission of PGR students to the whole School (rather than to a sub-unit) and turning some of the "ideological challenges" for the School into research agenda *of* the School are all of enormous potential value to the School, its partners and collaborators.

While we also welcome the proposed development of trans-unit research cultures and *fora* comparable to that which we have developed in Biblical Studies, we would not want to see whole-

School research seminars monopolize the space for research seminars to the exclusion of something like the Biblical Studies Research Seminar. Several UK universities have succesfully navigated these same waters and, again, we would welcome further discussion with the Reviewers about how best to proceed in our own case.

Conclusion

We completely concur with this concluding remark from the Report: **"**Without the College's support this cannot happen – the College leadership is explicitly addressed in R 2.5 and R 3.8. We consider R 2.5 *a conditio sine qua non* for the paradigm shift envisaged by the reviewers. We also believe that Trinity College Dublin — given its tradition and given the importance of the topics — cannot afford not to have a properly functioning "School of Religion".

Professor Siobhán Garrigan, Loyola Chair of Catholic Theology

Head of School, the Confederal School of Religions, Peace Studies and Theology   12/4/17

3. Response from the Dean of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

MEMORANDUM

TO: Quality Office

FROM: Professor Darryl Jones, Dean AHSS

DATE: 12 April 2017

SUBJECT: Confederal School of Religion, Peace Studies and Theology review– Dean's response

I would like to begin by thanking the reviewers, Professors Helen Bond, Roger MacGinty, Bettina Schmidt, Clemens Sedmak, and William Storrar. They approached what was an unusually difficult task, given the unique history and structural complexity of the Confederal School, with broad-mindedness, sympathy, and rigour. They have produced a report which I believe will be invaluable in guiding the future direction of the Confederal School. I welcome all the report's findings, and the generous and constructive spirit in which those findings were arrived at. My own strong preference would be for all the report's recommendations to be implemented, in full. This would, as the report makes clear, result in a School which would be perhaps uniquely placed internationally, and which would be a major contributor to the College's international reputation.

The report's recommendations are essentially all structural, to do with the future organization and direction of a unified School of Religion. This will be a major undertaking, but it is an essential one. The School's confederal nature has long made it an anomaly in College's structure, and it has become very clear – and the report makes it very clear – that as currently configured 'The School is not well functioning' (O 2.1). I completely agree with the report's assertion that 'either there is a future for all three sub-units in unity, or there is no future' (O 1.5).

As the report makes very clear, such a School would be built upon very strong foundations. The report commends 'the deep commitment of the staff to their students' (O 3.2), their 'passion and dedication' (C 3.2), and 'the broad nature of the interdisciplinary courses' on offer (C 3.1). The report recognizes that 'the School has a number of remarkable research-active colleagues' (O 4.1), though notes that not all staff-members are research active, and that Chronic research underperformance needs to be addressed' (O 4.3). The report makes a number of useful suggestions to help further embed the School's research culture.

An tOllamh Darryl Jones
Déan

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The reviewers draw attention to the relatively large numbers (in a small School) of contract staff (O 2.6), whose own precarious positions could make the future of the School, in turn, precarious. The Head of School and I have been in discussions for some time about a staffing plan which would stabilize staffing in the School. The report can only add force to these discussions. I would see sorting out the issue of staffing as indissociable from the structural issues which the report identifies, and as a major enabler of the report's recommendations.

No one imagines that the kind of wholesale structural reimagining which the report proposes will be easy. But I am certain that it is necessary. The reviewers' 'no future' comment is worth reiterating here. My greatest anxiety is not that the report's findings will be rejected outright, but that the process of negotiation in attempting to implement it would lead to a series of compromises which would so weaken the report's recommendations as to render it useless. This would be a disaster. I would urge Council to recommend a firm line in implementing the report. To achieve this, I would recommend to Council the creation of a task force, with the explicit remit not of discussing the report's findings, but of realizing them.

An tOllamh Darryl Jones
Déan

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