Trinity College Dublin
The University of Dublin

Minutes of the Human Resources Committee

Thursday, 18th October 2018 at 10.00am – 11.40am
Board Room, House 1, College Campus

PRESENT: Prof. Deirdre Ahern (Chair), Ms. Antoinette Quinn (Director of Human Resources), Prof. Kevin Mitchell (Senior Lecturer), Ms. Patricia Callaghan (Academic Secretary), Mr. Michael Slevin (Vice Provost / Chief Academic Officer's nominee), Prof. Celia Holland, (nominee of the Dean of the Faculty of Engineering, Mathematics and Sciences), Ms. Áine Mulcahy (Chief Financial Officer's nominee) Ms. Stephanie Farrell (Board nominee) and Mr. Shane De Rís (Students Union President)

APOLOGIES: Prof. Catherine Comiskey (nominee of the Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences), Prof. Anne Fitzpatrick (nominee of the Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Histories and Social Sciences), Ms. Sinead Mac Bride (Equality Committee Representative), Mr. Peter Donohoe (External Representative), Ms. Breda Walls (nominee of the Chief Operations Officer) and Ms. Paula Kennedy-Hogan (Deputy Director of Human Resources)

IN ATTENDANCE: Prof. Christopher Morash (Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer) for item 4
Prof. Eileen Drew (Director of T.C.G.E.L.) for item 7
Ms. Cora Mullins (Human Resources) for all items

Items for specific Board attention are denoted XXX

Section A

HRC/18-19/01 **Minutes of Last Meeting**
The minutes of the 24th May 2018 meeting were approved and signed.

HRC/18-19/02 **Matters Arising from the Minutes**

- The Chair advised the committee that Board approved the amendments to the Code of Practice applying to the Employment of People with Disabilities at their meeting on 27th June 2018.

- The committee were informed that the call for applications for Senior Academic Promotions would be confirmed and communicated in the near future.

- The Chair noted that a self-evaluation survey issued to the committee over the summer months. While the results haven't yet been analysed in full, it was noted that one suggestion was for the April and May meetings to be further apart.

ACTION: The Chair and the Director of HR will meet to review the results of the self-evaluation survey and present the findings to the committee at a future meeting for an open discussion on the frequency and structure of meetings, composition and function of the committee, suggested changes and other matters arising from the results.

HRC/18-19/03   **Director of Human Resources Report**
The Director of HR indicated that a number of items would be brought forward for consideration once finalised in line with the HR Strategy, which seeks to *"deliver solutions that enable Trinity College to harness and deploy its talent effectively to achieve the 2014-2019 Trinity Strategic Plan"*.

The HR Strategy is categorised into three key areas each with different purposes, namely:

1. Talent Management and Performance

The Career Framework, which sits under Talent Management and Performance will provide a competency framework, salary spine, job evaluation and role specific development once finalised.

Performance Management is scheduled to commence in early 2019 in line with the requirements of the Haddington Road Agreement. In response to a query from a member of the committee, the Director of HR explained what Performance Management is, how it is envisaged to work, what it is aimed to achieve and advised that an online platform linked with the CORE HR Upgrade will benefit the implementation and success of the programme when operational.

A member of the committee raised concerns about the roll out and suggested that a trial run take place in a pilot area to identify any pitfalls, areas for improvement or perceived barriers to its success.

ACTION: HR will identify a suitable pilot area to test the roll out of the Performance Management process and feed the outcome back to the committee on completion

Further initiatives under this category including Online Induction and Compliance Training, Early Career Development for Academics, Researcher and Management Development programmes are under construction and will be brought to the committee in due course. The newly appointed Head of Learning and Organisational Development and the support team will develop them.

2. Efficient Administration

The completion of the CORE upgrade project was on schedule and the new version is live. There is now functionality on the upgraded platform for online performance management, time and attendance, online form processing and a manager toolbox. The current focus is on performance management and the time and attend programs.

In addition to the above, there will be a review and streamlining of all key HR processes in areas including recruitment, payroll and pensions. There is also a move towards an online probations process and a scope on the feasibility of incorporating RSS into the performance management of academic staff.

3. Staff Engagement

The committee were advised that Employee / Industrial Relations issues are being monitored with a view to identifying and addressing any notable trends. It is intended that a wellness portal will be made available to all staff and that wellness seminars will continue. In addition, there are plans to launch an awareness campaign of the University's Dignity and Respect Policy.

Section B

HRC/18-19/04 **Meeting Hours Policy**

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer explained that the policy document sets out that where feasible, meetings will be held between the hours of 10.00am and 4.30pm without affecting the core hours of University business, which remain unchanged.

The policy, which has an equality dimension, aims to have a positive impact on working parents and other caregivers so has particular relevance on the grounds of family status and gender.

A discussion ensued and it was noted that adopting the policy across the board, where applicable to occupational requirements, would no longer require staff to justify their personal circumstances when having to exit a meeting which runs beyond ordinary finishing time.

While the consensus on the principle of the policy was mostly positive, it was observed that the proposed core meeting hours differ from the commitment made in TCD's Athena Swan Gender Action Plan (2015), the HEA Gender Equality Report (2016) and the TCD INTEGER Report (2017), all of which specify core meeting hours of 10.00-16.00 hours.

ACTION: The committee approve the policy subject to the core meeting hours of 10am to 4pm applying.

HRC/18-19/05   **Amendment to the (Annual) Leave Entitlements Policy**
This item was postponed pending a clarification briefing to the EOG at an upcoming meeting on one element of the amended policy.

HRC/18-19/06   **Workplace Wellbeing Policy**
This document generated much discussion amongst the committee. It was noted that the audience to whom it is supposed to be directed is unclear, as is the purpose. A member of the committee pointed out that not everyone in the University is directly employed and therefore may not be covered by the policy; however, it is still their 'workplace'.

It was agreed that while referring to useful values, the document is not a policy in its current format. It was further noted that there is no direction as to how it should be implemented or who is responsible for overseeing it.

The Director of HR indicated that the document was compiled in line with the Healthy Ireland Framework 2013 to 2025 and the proposed Health and Wellbeing (Workplace Wellbeing) Bill, which was signed off by the Department of Health in 2015. If passed, public service employers will be required to develop a 'healthy workplace' policy which promotes the physical, mental and social wellbeing of their employees. It was generally agreed that while well intentioned, the document lacked a clear audience or policy element to make it functional.

ACTION: The committee recommend that the document go back to the authors to be more actively worded so the audience, values, purpose and ownership are clearly identifiable. The committee will review the amended document when brought before them again. It was also recommended that a representative from HR attend to present the document with a view to gauging a better understanding of it.

HRC/18-19/07   **Information Briefing on the University's Athena Swan Application**

The committee were appraised on the Athena SWAN institutional and School / Faculty applications and renewals. It was noted that three key factors impacting on the information requirements on applications are employee data, student data and resourcing.

The matter of employee details relates to attaining data on trends such as maternity leave, parental leave and the return to work following such leave. It was indicated that SITS is not currently designed to capture the data requirements for Athena SWAN on students. Resourcing proves to be a barrier in preparing applications at School level as the application requires dedication and funding, both of which are not readily available. It was noted that the Faculty of Arts, Histories and Social Sciences (FAHSS) Executive agreed that each school applying should receive €5,000 from Faculty Strategic Funds (total €60,000) to support Athena SWAN applications.

It was suggested that the funding approach adopted by FAHSS also be applied in the Faculty of Engineering, Mathematics and Science (FEMS) and the Faculty of Health Sciences (FHS). It was further suggested that the Director of Human Resources bring the proposal for University investment, a dedicated resource for each of the three Faculties and the potential use of a contingency fund to the attention of the Planning Group.

ACTION: The Director and Deputy Director of HR will arrange to meet with Prof. Eileen Drew to discuss how data required for the Athena SWAN applications may be captured and shared anonymously, in line with the GDPR. The Director of HR will bring the noted proposals to the attention of the Planning Group for consideration.

HRC/18-19/08   **Any Other Business**

A member of the committee requested an update on the appeals process for the Administrative and Library Staff Review Committee Promotions and Progressions round. It was confirmed that appeals would be considered on 31st October 2018 and that the relevant applicants had been written to.

ACTION: The Director of HR will provide an update on the outcomes of the appeals process when concluded.

A member of the committee raised the University's *'Review of Academic Staff for Conversion to Established Posts'* procedure and the application of a similar approach across all grades.

The Director of HR confirmed that Administrative, Library, Technical and Support posts in the divisions could now be advertised and filled on a permanent basis (up to and including Administrative 1 level and

equivalent) in instances where the need is identified as permanent and ongoing. The committee were informed that HR had also entered into an agreement with the respective Unions to review retrospective cases presented to them through an agreed process and within the scope of the relevant Department of Education and Skills guidance note.

The committee were advised that administrative posts in the Schools would continue to be filled on the same basis as currently, subject to the completion of administrative restructuring under the 21st Century Project.

ACTION: The Director of HR will brief the committee further on the matter and in more detail at a future meeting.

Signed: ……………………………………

Date: ……………………………………