

Trinity College Dublin
Quality Committee

Minutes

Minutes of the meeting of the Quality Committee held on 22nd May 2014 in the Boardroom, House 1.

Present: Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer(Chair), Chief Operating Officer, Senior Lecturer, Dean of Faculty of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences, Dean of Graduate Studies, Quality Officer, Professor Catherine Coxon, Professor Sheila Ryder, Ms. Laura Conway-McAuley, Mrs. Jessie Kurtz, Education Officer of the Students' Union.

In attendance: Ms Michelle Tanner (Head of Sport & Recreation), Dr Jose Sanchez-Morgado (Director of BioResources Unit), Mr Paul Mangan (Director of Buildings), Mr Graham Daniels (Head of Accommodation & Catering), Mr Adrian Neilan (Commercial Director), Professor Eoin O' Sullivan (Head of School, Social Work & Social Policy), Dr Liz Donnellan (Secretary to the Committee).

Apologies: Dean of Health Sciences, Dean of Faculty of Engineering, Mathematics & Science, Academic Secretary, Professor Ciaran Brady, Professor John Walsh, Professor Simon McGinnes, Vice-President Graduate Students' Union.

QC/13-14/029 Minutes of the meeting of the 20th March 2014

The minutes of the meeting of the 20th March 2014 were approved.

QC/13-14/030 Matters arising

The Quality Officer reported that data from the Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE) (QC/13-14/020) which was conducted from the 17th February to the 7th March 2014, has been received. Some comparative data is still to follow and full analysis on the data has not been completed as yet. The response rate was 16.5%, up 9% on last year's response rate. The main point of difference between the 2013 and 2014 findings was improvement in Postgraduate taught students' performance in 7 of the 11 indices. The Quality Officer reported that key findings emerging from the data would be fed back to students by the end of June with a detailed comparative analysis being prepared for discussion at key College committees by late September 2014.

QC/13-14/031 Quality Reviews:

(i) Review report for Sports & Recreation

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer welcomed the Head of Sport and Recreation to the meeting, who reported that the review had been timely given the proposed changes in sport at TCD. The main recommendation arising from the review is the formation of a Task Force for Sport, chaired by Chief Operating Officer (COO), whose remit is to develop an integrated strategy for sport and a plan for implementing this strategy. The Head of Sport and Recreation welcomed this recommendation and supported the formation of the Task Force as a matter of urgency. In terms of organisational changes, the Reviewers' recommendation in relation to the implementation of an integrated organisational structure and funding/budget management plan combining DUCAC with Sport and Recreation has met with general support from the students but mixed support from DUCAC officers. A sports club development model is under development and the Head of Sport & Recreation is working with a small number of key clubs in that regard. In terms of funding, a preferendum will be held in September to assess support from students for a new funding model to include a student levy. In addition, the Students Union has approved a non-sabbatical Sports & Recreation Officer who will engage with the Sports Centre in relation to College events such as Health week. The Sports Centre is engaged with the Bursar with regard to the decanting of sports facilities from the Luce Hall and the inclusion of Sport in the Estates Strategy. The Sports Centre is also actively inputting to the development of the College's Strategic Plan.

A short discussion followed during which the Chief Operating Officer commended the Reviewers' report and committed to working with the Head of Sport & Recreation to develop an Implementation Plan. Following a query regarding the impact on some sports clubs of the decanting of sports facilities from the Luce Hall, the Head of Sport and Recreation reported that she was working closely with the clubs involved, and with the Bursar, to formulate a long-term solution. The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer thanked the Head of Sport & Recreation, and the Committee approved the Reviewers' report, which will now proceed to Board for consideration.

(ii) Implementation Plan for BioResources Unit (BRU)

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer welcomed the Director of the BioResources Unit (BRU) who spoke to an Implementation Plan to address recommendations arising from the review of the Unit. He reported that some of the Reviewers' recommendations are already complete and others are in progress. The name of the unit has been changed to Comparative Medicine and a number of teaching/training activities have been initiated. More administrative support will be provided for grant applications involving animal research and

for researchers submitting Irish Medicine Board (IMB) project applications. The Director informed the Committee that a new Facilities Manager will be recruited in 2015, as the current Facilities Manager is retiring, and that a re-organisation of the unit's staff to improve efficiency will be completed in 2015/16. The unit now has its own budget with implementation of full cost recovery planned in 2015. From 2015, the Animal Care and User Committee will be replaced by the Executive Committee, and the Ethics Committee and Animal Welfare Body will be combined. Finally, the Transgenic Core Facility will remain under the line management of the ITN management.

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer thanked the Director for his presentation and remarked that a lot had been done to address the Reviewers' recommendations in a very short timeframe. She then invited comment and questions from the Committee. Regarding the rationale for transferring the functions and responsibilities of the Animal Care and User Committee to the Executive Committee, the Director reported that the latter was better suited to the role, given its senior membership and action-orientated approach. The nature of the interaction between the newly formed Animal Welfare Group and the Ethics Committee was raised and the Director clarified that the Ethics Committee will be responsible for ensuring that the requirements of the Irish Medicine Board are met while the Animal Welfare Group will deal with animal welfare issues. The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer thanked the Director for his contribution and closed the discussion.

(iii) Progress report for Director of Buildings Area

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer welcomed the Director of Buildings, who spoke to a Progress Report on the implementation of recommendations arising from the quality review of the Director of Buildings Area in April 2012. The Director reported that 13 of the Reviewers' 26 recommendations had been implemented so far, two had been partly implemented, five were in progress, three were outside the remit of the Area and two remained outstanding. The recommendation to co-locate the department could not be implemented as scope for it was not included in the plans for the Luce Hall development.

Addressing the Reviewers' key recommendations, the Director reported that a name-change to the Estates and Facilities Department had been approved by START governance and that rebranding of the department was in-hand. There will be three direct reports to the Director which incorporate all interactions with staff and students. A staff development programme has been agreed with Human Resources and new governance arrangements for projects are in place. A prioritised list of capital projects and the development of a property acquisition policy, along with a capital investment plan are currently being progressed by the Bursar through Executive Officers. The Director emphasised the need for a policy on property acquisition as the lack of a coherent strategy exposes College to the risk of losing out on properties to buyers who can move more quickly to secure prime real estate adjacent to the College.

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer thanked the Director and opened the discussion to the Committee. In response to a query regarding the Reviewers' recommendations on comparative data and KPIs, the Director agreed that both are useful tools and reported that while high level KPIs are in place, he is working with the START team to identify more detailed KPIs for the Department. In relation to a query on funding for essential maintenance and minor works, the Director reported that the money available for both has been reduced progressively in recent years. As a result, planned maintenance and upgrading work cannot be prioritised and only essential maintenance and repair work can be carried out. Committee members expressed concern at this situation and it was noted that current fundraising activity is directed more towards capital investment than maintenance and operation costs. Committee members suggested that College needs to think laterally in terms of sourcing funds for maintenance operations, and that maintenance costs will rise as the College grows. A Committee member reported that in other institutions creative approaches have been taken to attracting funding – for example, the naming of endowed chairs and buildings in some institutions are for a fixed period of 10 years after which renewed funding can be sought.

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer thanked the Director of Buildings and the Committee for their input, noting the Committee's concerns regarding the impact of reduced funding for maintenance work.

QC/13-14/032 Review of Membership and Terms of Reference of the Quality Committee

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer introduced the item by outlining that a review of the Committee's membership and terms of reference is conducted annually. Reminding the Committee of the revised composition and function of the Quality Committee in 2013/14, she emphasised the importance of getting feedback from members on how the Committee is operating and discharging its enhanced role. She noted that no members have yet reached the end of their term of office and re-iterated the importance of including self-nominated members on the Committee. The Quality Officer reported that a survey of members' views of the terms of reference and functioning of the Quality Committee was completed. She gave a brief overview of the overall response rate and a summary of responses to the Survey. A full report on the survey results will be presented to the Committee at the first meeting in Michaelmas Term. Preliminary findings showed that members were generally happy with the governance and administration of the Committee, and that they felt that improvement had occurred as a result of the reform of the Committee. Members expressed a desire, however, for more proactive engagement in quality improvement initiatives, greater levels of feedback to the Committee on resolution of issues brought to Council, and completion of the feedback loop in terms of system-wide recommendations that emerge from Quality Reviews. The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer thanked the Quality Officer and opened the discussion to the floor.

In relation to the Terms of Reference, it was agreed that the description of the representation from non-academic members needs to change to reflect the new structures under START. The Committee's role in reviewing quality processes in respect of research measures as outlined in section 2.6 of the Terms of Reference was queried by a Committee member, who wondered if this should fall under the Committee's remit. The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer reported that a process and cycle of reviews of Trinity Research Institutes and Centres was under development, and that a process to support a review of research themes across the Institution was also being established. The reports arising from these reviews would be discussed at the Quality Committee in due course but it was agreed that section 2.6 should be amended to explicitly say that the Committee's role extended only to Research Institutes and Centres, and did not encompass a review of research measures generally (amended Terms of Reference attached).

A query arose as to whether it is intended to go forward into 2014/15 with the existing interim Quality Committee model. The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer confirmed that as we don't yet have full implementation of devolvement of quality assurance, we have not yet seen a full cycle of the structure and that therefore the interim model would be retained into 2014/15. The Quality Officer acknowledged the need to work closely with schools to support them in implementing quality issues and confirmed that the Faculties would be reporting on the local implementation of quality assurance processes at a meeting in December.

QC/13-14/033 Quality Reviews:

(i) Review report for Accommodation & Catering

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer welcomed the Director of Accommodation and Catering, and the College's Commercial Director to the meeting. The Director of Accommodation and Catering spoke to the Reviewers' report and stated that he had found the review process to be very helpful in identifying what the individual issues pertaining to the service were. He expressed disappointment however that the Report did not comment explicitly on the quality of the service that the Area is providing. In terms of implementing the Reviewers' Recommendations, he reported that as the new line manager for the Service, the Commercial Director will lead on the Implementation Plan in the context of the START and Commercialisation Agenda.

In the discussion that followed, the Senior Lecturer expressed concern in relation to the Reviewers' Report and specifically the Reviewers' comments on the lack of visible leadership and consequent risk in relation to maintaining the loyalty and trust of staff. Additionally, regarding the recommendation to introduce an 'all you care to eat' facility on campus, he felt this would be detrimental to students' health.

In response, the Chief Operating Officer noted that there were many positive and helpful recommendations in the report, particularly in relation to capacity and internationalisation. She reiterated that all of the recommendations would be discussed at Board, and that College had the option to accept or reject the recommendations as appropriate. The Commercial Director supported this viewpoint and agreed that while there are some issues of concern around language in the report, he highlighted positive recommendations that College could begin to address in order to improve the service to students. The Director of Accommodation and Catering supported this approach and suggested that the Reviewers' perceptions around 'visible' leadership had arisen because the interim COO and Commercial Director were newly in post at the time of the review. The roles for both are now embedded and the Director undertook to amend his response to reflect this. Responding to concerns about the 'all you care to eat' recommendation, he reported that this had been tried before and would likely not be considered on the grounds of student health.

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer thanked the Director of Accommodation and Catering, and the Commercial Director for their input to the discussion. She confirmed that revised responses from the Director and the Chief Operating Officer addressing the Senior Lecturers' concerns would be drafted to accompany the report to Board.

(ii) Implementation Plan for Social Work & Social Policy

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer welcomed the Head of School for Social Work & Social Policy to the meeting. The Head of School reported that since the quality review in November 2013 a number of the reviewers' recommendations had been implemented. A new research plan for the School has been drafted, aligned to College's research strategy, which will strengthen the School's research performance. The School has agreed to implement the Faculty Sabbatical policy and has approved sabbatical leave for an Associate Professor in 2014/15. The School's new on-line diploma in Applied Social Studies has been approved and there is significant interest from potential students. Placement arrangements already exist with the Probation Service and talks are underway with the new child and family agency, TULSA as to the feasibility of developing placement opportunities with them. A data storage and retention policy has been drafted by the School and additional data storage has been purchased through the TCD iCloud for scanning and storing existing files. An event will take place in December 2014 to mark the School's 80th anniversary, which it is hoped will create fundraising opportunities. In relation to the impending retirement of two Social Policy staff members in September 2014, the Head of School reported that measures have been put in place to maintain the BA in Sociology and Social Policy for a further year but that it may not be sustainable after that without additional staff. In relation to the space issues raised by the Reviewers, the School has participated in the recent space audit of the Arts Building and has highlighted a dedicated teaching space for postgraduates as one of its priorities.

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic officer thanked the Head of School for his report and invited comment from the Committee. The Dean of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences acknowledged the space and staffing issues in the School, particularly the critical situation in relation to the future of Social Work & Social Policy. He explained that current College policy dictates that when a staff member retires, replacement of that member is not automatic but rather considered at a Faculty level in conjunction with requests from other Schools. In terms of the School's space requirements, he acknowledged the request for a dedicated space for postgraduates but reported that dedicated teaching spaces tend to be underused compared to pooled space. He stated that the Faculty is committed to a capital project for the Arts Building and that the space issue will be dealt with in this context. Responding to a query from a Committee member as to whether the staff member on sabbatical in 2014/15 will be replaced, the Head of School reported that masters funding associated with the course on which the staff member teaches had been withdrawn and that a replacement for that staff member would therefore not be needed next year. The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer clarified that each Faculty is expected to have its own sabbatical leave policy and that Schools must find their own resources to support these leave periods and manage their teaching accordingly.

QC/13-14/034 Any other business

The Quality Officer reported that the Annual Dialogue with Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) has taken place on the 16th May 2014. Issues that arose during the discussion included consultation on the development of policy around the International Education Mark. The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer remarked that this was topical given the recent closure of several English Language Schools and she emphasised the importance for TCD to be involved in the development of policy around this. She undertook to circulate the summary note from the Annual Dialogue when it becomes available.

In closing the last meeting of 2013/14, the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer acknowledged the work of Committee members this year and in particular thanked the two student union representatives and the Senior Lecturer, all of whom are all finishing their term of office.

TERMS OF REFERENCE¹ OF THE QUALITY COMMITTEE

The Quality Committee is a Compliance Committee of the University and reports to Board and Council. It is responsible for the creation of policy for the implementation of quality processes across academic and administrative areas of College and for overseeing their implementation.

1. **Membership** (revised CL/12-13/204)

Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer
Chief Operating Officer
Dean of Graduate Studies
Senior Lecturer
Academic Secretary
Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences
Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences
Dean of the Faculty of Engineering, Mathematics and Science
Quality Officer

Representatives from academic staff

- *Prof. John Walsh, Faculty of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences*
- *Prof. Ciaran Brady, Faculty of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences*
- *Prof. Simon McGinnes, Faculty of Engineering, Mathematics & Science*
- *Prof. Catherine Coxon, Faculty of Engineering, Mathematics & Science*
- *Prof. Sheila Ryder, Faculty of Health Sciences*

Representatives from the Academic Services Division and Corporate Services Division

- *Ms Laura Conway-McAuley, IS Services*
- *Mrs Jessie Kurtz, Acting Librarian*

Students' Union representative – Education Officer
Graduate Students' Union representative – Vice-President
Administrative Officer, Quality Office, *Secretary*

2. **Functions** (revised CL/12-13/204: subject to further revision)

The main functions of the Quality Committee are to:

- 2.1 Approve and oversee the implementation of quality policies arising from the College's Strategic Plan.
- 2.2 Review quality policies in line with the strategic planning process and legislative requirements, or as otherwise required.

¹ Terms of reference including membership of the Quality Committee will be revised following the outcome of consultations with Faculty Deans on embedding responsibility for quality assurance and improvement at local level (see Council minute CL/12-13/204)

- 2.3 Approve, in consultation with Schools and Administrative/Student support areas, procedures for quality reviews of Schools and Administrative/Student support areas.
- 2.4 Consider internal and external quality assurance and improvement reports arising from quality review processes and make recommendations to the University Council and/or the College Board.
- 2.5 Review and approve quality processes in respect of student assessment of programmes and modules.
- 2.6 Approve quality review processes in respect of Trinity Research Institutes and Research Centres
- 2.7 Review on an annual basis, the effectiveness and outcomes of the quality review processes.
- 2.8 Keep under review the requirements of national policy regarding quality in education and ensure that College policy and procedures are consistent with them, where appropriate.
- 2.9 Advise on matters relating to Quality development that the Council, Graduate Studies Committee, Undergraduate Studies Committee, Research Committee, and other Committees as relevant, may refer to the Quality Committee.
- 2.10 Commission as necessary the development of new or review of existing policies in respect of quality assurance and improvement.

3. Meetings, Quorum and Sub-Committees

- 3.1 The Quality Committee is a Compliance Committee of Council and Board and shall meet once per term or more frequently if the business requiring its attention should so dictate.
- 3.2 The quorum for meetings shall be ten (50% of the membership plus one).
- 3.3 Members of the Quality Committee other than those present *ex officio* are selected by a process of self-nomination. Candidates who put their names forward for membership must complete an expression of interest form. Completed forms are evaluated by a selection panel comprising some of the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer, the Faculty Deans, the Academic Secretary (or her nominee) and the Chief Operating Officer. Candidates are scored against a number of published criteria.
- 3.4 The term of office for members shall be three years and no member may stand for more than two consecutive terms of office.

- 3.5 Other College Officers shall attend meetings by invitation for specific agenda items. The Committee may also invite any Officer of the College, or other person to attend any meeting(s) of the Committee, as it may from time to time consider desirable, to assist the Committee in the attainment of its objectives.
- 3.6 The draft Minutes of the Quality Committee shall be circulated to the University Council and the College Board as soon as possible for noting and/or discussion/decision as necessary.
- 3.7 In order to aid its operation the Committee may from time to time arrange for subgroups to consider specialist issues and bring forward recommendations to the Quality Committee. These subgroups will involve members of the College community with relevant expertise and experience.

4. Authority

- 4.1 The Committee shall operate under delegated authority from the College Board.
- 4.2 The Committee may investigate any matter falling within its terms of reference, calling on whatever resources and information it considers necessary to so do.
- 4.4 The Committee is authorised to seek any information it requires from any employee of College to enable it to discharge its responsibilities and shall have made available to it on a timely basis all information requested from any employee in a clear and well organised manner.

5 Performance Evaluation

- 5.1 The Quality Committee shall, at least once a year, review its own performance and its terms of reference and shall report its conclusions and recommend any changes it considers necessary to the University Council.