

# Quality Assurance / Quality Improvement Programme



## Communications and Marketing

### Peer Review Group Report

#### Members of Peer Review Group

Mr. Michael Lavery, (Chair) Director of External Relations Teesside University
Ms. Janet French, Partner, You&ME, Research and Planning
Ms. Rhonda Gibson Director of PR & Communications University of Ulster
Dr. Jennifer Bruen, (Rapporteur) School of Applied Languages and Intercultural Studies, Dublin City University
Dr. Kieran Moran, School of Health and Human Performance, Dublin City University

**Date:** 12<sup>th</sup> November 2014

## Introduction

This Quality review has been conducted in accordance with a framework model developed and agreed through the Irish Universities Association Quality Committee and complies with the provisions of Section 35 of the Universities Act (1997) and the 2012 Qualifications and Quality Assurance Act. The model consists of a number of basic steps.

1. An internal team in the School/Faculty/Office/Centre being reviewed completes a detailed self-assessment report (SAR). It should be noted that this document is confidential to the School/Faculty/Office/Centre as well as the Review Panel and senior officers of the University.
2. This report is sent to a team of peer assessors, the Peer Review Group (PRG) – composed of members from outside DCU and from other areas of DCU – who then visit DCU and conduct discussions with a range of relevant staff, students and other stakeholders.
3. The PRG then writes its own report. The School/Faculty/Office/Centre is given the chance to correct possible factual errors before the PRG report is finalised.
4. The School/Faculty/Office/Centre produces a draft Quality Improvement Plan (QulP) in response to the various issues and findings of the SAR and PRG reports.
5. The PRG report and the draft QulP are considered by the Quality Promotion Committee (QPC) and University Executive.
6. The draft QulP is discussed in a meeting between the School/Faculty/Office/Centre, members of the PRG, the Director of Quality Promotion and members of Senior Management. The University's responses are written into the draft document and the result is the finalised QulP.
7. The PRG Report and the QulP including the University's response is sent to the Governing Authority of the University, who approves publication in a manner that it sees fit.

This document is the report referred to in Step 3 above.

## Peer Review Group Report for Communications and Marketing

### 1. Introduction and Overview

The Department of Communications and Marketing (C&M) is managed by its Director, Ms Teresa Murray. The C&M Director position initially reported into the Director of External and Strategic Affairs. This post has been vacant since August 2013. During this time the C&M Director has reported directly to the President of DCU. A new Vice-President for External Affairs, Mr Trevor Holmes, was appointed in October 2014 and C&M once again reports to this role.

#### Location

The C&M team is located in a large open plan area on the second floor of the Albert College extension, Room A247. The team relocated here from the ground floor of the same building in February 2013. There is one office within the room, occupied by the Director. There are 12 desks in the open area, arranged in groups of four, and a group meeting table. The room also has a small sound proof booth with a secure ISDN line, and a small kitchen facility. A separate storage facility is located on the ground floor of the same building.

#### Staff

There are currently 9 people in C&M, a Director and 8 staff (see summary details below). There is also currently a part-time resource in place to assist the Director in the DCU Incorporation process. The Student Recruitment team is a relatively recent addition to the department, having, until 2013 been a part of Access and Student Recruitment.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Role</b>
Teresa Murray	Director of Communications and Marketing and Student Recruitment
Alison Molloy	PA to Director and Office Administrator
Grainne Mooney	PR and Communications Manager
Marie Leahy	Graphic design/Photography
Katy Halpin	Graphic design/Photography
Deirdre Wynter	Marketing Manager
Ita McGuigan	Senior Recruitment Officer
Colette O'Beirne	Student Recruitment Officer
Lauren Quinn-Taylor	Student Recruitment Officer

#### Product / Processes

The Communications and Marketing department has responsibility for the management of the reputation and messaging of DCU and the DCU brand through a range of channels and outputs. The core functions of the department encompass communications, marketing, graphic design and student recruitment as follows:

## Communications

The Communications function is provided by the PR and Communications Manager with support, where required, from the Director of Communications and Marketing. The primary objective of this function is to manage the profile and presence of the DCU brand and ancillary brands. Responsibilities include:

- Managing relationships with key journalists.
- Managing the profile of the DCU president.
- Preparing press releases and liaising with various media to engage DCU academic experts for comment.
- Managing the university's web news page and ensuring that stories are kept up to date.
- Managing DCU events and activities
- Providing support to the events team in the President's Office.
- Maintaining the DCU Expert Guide.

The Communications function engages in ongoing media monitoring to set targets and to assess the level of coverage for the university across various media.

## Marketing

The Marketing function is provided by the Marketing Manager with support, where required from the Director of C&M. A key function is the marketing and positioning of the DCU brand. The Marketing Manager manages the relationship with the university's advertising, design and media agencies and liaises on a daily basis with faculty/school Marketing Co-Ordinators, Senior Faculty Administrators, and Heads / Deans to ensure that all marketing communications produced are being communicated through the most appropriate and effective channels, and are in keeping with the university's brand guidelines.

The Marketing Manager also manages three primary undergraduate advertising campaigns each year the Open Day campaign, the CAO campaign and the Change of Mind Campaign. She also manages and advises on larger branding projects for the university, such as the recent DCU Connected campaign and the re-brand of DCU Business School. Such campaigns are supplemented by postgraduate campaigns, which she develops and manages on behalf of specific schools and faculties across the university, e.g. the Faculty of Humanities postgraduate digital campaign 2014/15. The Marketing Manager manages the university's official social media accounts, and provides social media advice and training both within the department and across the university, as needed. She also works closely with the Graphic Design team to advise on print and digital campaigns and materials.

## Graphic Design

The Graphic Design team consists of two members, one full-time and one half-time. The team provides a graphic design and photography service for the university's faculties/schools, departments and research centres to support their needs. The team's outputs range from a variety of printed publications: brochures, leaflets, signage, design for web & advertising. Supporting the President's Office through the provision of annual reports, presentations, photography at events etc. is also a key function, along with

maintaining the department's image bank. The Graphic Design team is also involved in the implementation of design across linked colleges including St Patrick's College & Mater Dei Institute.

### Student Recruitment

The Student Recruitment function covers all aspects of the recruitment of undergraduate students to DCU. The Student Recruitment team comprises of three fulltime team members, one senior Student Recruitment Officer and two Student Recruitment Officers and is supported by a team of 30 trained Student Ambassadors, who provide support at recruitment events and activities.

While core Student Recruitment activity, such as school visits is shared across the team, different members of the team take responsibility for specific tasks throughout the recruitment calendar, e.g. the production of the university's undergraduate prospectus, event planning and management of DCU's Open Days and co-ordination of DCU's presence at Higher Options. The Student Recruitment team actively liaise with Guidance Counsellors and prospective undergraduate students through a variety of channels/activities, including school visits across the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, attendance at recruitment fairs and events and managing communications and relationships with relevant bodies, such as the IGC (Institute of Guidance Counsellors), Teaching Councils etc. In addition, the Student Recruitment team organises a number of initiatives aimed at undergraduate prospective students and their influencers. These include DCU Open Days, campus tours and the production of the university's undergraduate print prospectus.

## **2. The Self-Assessment Process**

### The Quality Review co-ordinating Committee

Teresa Murray	Director
Alison Molloy	PA
Deirdre Wynter	Marketing Manager
Ita McGuigan	Senior Recruitment Officer

### Methodology adopted during process

Following a presentation by the DCU Director of Quality Promotion providing an overview of the quality review process, the C&M Quality Review (QR) committee had its first meeting on 13/2/14. A number of key decisions were made at this meeting to enable the process to begin. These included the timing and scheduling of the process, committee membership, and the dissemination of information. For example, it was agreed that all other department members would be updated regularly on the QR planning process at the weekly departmental meeting.

An external facilitator, Ms Karen Hand, from Curly Enterprises was brought on board to support the team in managing the workload of workshops, surveys, focus groups and interviews. At a meeting

with the facilitator in February 2014, a draft timetable and outline for the process was produced, which was then taken to the QR co-ordinating committee for review and development.

Further meetings of the QR team were held prior to the commencement of the process during which a range of activities and parameters were agreed. These included identifying the audiences and individuals, both internal and external, with whom C&M would engage for feedback. A half day workshop was held during which the QR process was designed. The Marketing Manager designed and managed the anonymous internal All Staff survey and the external Agency & Partner survey. The Department Administrator managed the logistics, and worked with all team members to co-ordinate the full list of internal DCU staff and external media and agency partners who would be asked to contribute. The Senior Recruitment Officer identified a list of Guidance Counsellors who would be approached to participate. The Director briefed the facilitator on the background to the QR process procedure and supplied relevant documentation. The final process, timetable and structure were agreed by the committee on 3/4/14. The overall QR process for C&M included the following:

- Desk research, covering previous QR's in this and other DCU departments
- 9 C&M staff 1:1 interviews
- 10 internal 1:1 interviews
- 4 x internal focus groups
- All staff survey
- Agency and partner survey
- 4 x 1:1 Guidance Counsellor Interviews
- 3 x 1:1 journalist interviews
- 1 x 1:1 interview with strategic partners
- 1 x 1:1 interview with agency partner

Interviews took between 45 and 60 minutes and were conducted in the interviewee's offices. Focus groups took 60 minutes and took place in a central meeting room in DCU. All engagement was anonymous and confidential, unless a participant specifically requested that their comments be attributed to them.

### **3. The Peer Review Group Process**

#### The Review Group

The Peer Review Group (PRG) was made up of the following members:

Mr. Michael Lavery, (Chair), Director of External Relations Teesside University
Ms. Janet French, Partner, You&ME, Research and Planning
Ms. Rhonda Gibson, Director of PR & Communications University of Ulster
Dr. Jenny Bruen, School of Applied Languages and Intercultural Studies, Dublin City University
Dr. Kieran Moran, School of Health and Human Performance, Dublin City University

## Site Visit Programme

The programme for the site visit was as follows:

### QUALITY REVIEW: Communications and Marketing 15<sup>th</sup> October – 17<sup>th</sup> October 2014

Time	Peer Review Group (PRG) Activity/Meeting	Venue	Meeting No.
<b>DAY 1</b>			
12.45-14.00	Lunch with Director of Quality Promotion and available PRG members	1838 DCU	
14.00-15.00	Briefing by Director of Quality Promotion; Guidelines provided to assist PRG during the visit and in developing its report.	A204	
15.00-15.45	PRG selects Chair. Discussion of main areas of interest and/or concern arising from the Self-Assessment Report (SAR).	A204	
15.45-16.00	<i>Coffee</i>	A204	
16.00-17.15	Consideration of SAR with Director of Communications & Marketing and staff members. Short presentation by Director of Communications & Marketing followed by discussion of SAR. ( <i>Director of Quality Promotion in attendance</i> )	A204	
17:15-17.55	PRG Private meeting	A204	
18.00-19.00	Reception – PRG, Director and staff of Communications and Marketing, Director of Quality Promotion	1838 DCU	
19.00-20.30	PRG Private dinner	1838 DCU	
<b>DAY 2</b>			
08.45–09.00	PRG Private meeting	CG35	1
09.00-09.25	Director of Communications and Marketing	CG35	2
09.30-10.10	Marketing, Graphic Design and Administrative Support staff.	CG35	3A
10.20-11.00	Student Recruitment and Communications Staff	CG35	3B
11.00-11.30	<i>Coffee</i>	CG35	
11.30-12.10	Heads or Senior staff in DCU Support / Service Offices working with Communications and Marketing.	CG35	4
12.20-13.00	Administrative Staff representatives from DCU Schools, Faculties or Research Centres and / or administrative staff representatives from varying levels within central administration	CG35	5
13.00-14:00	<i>Lunch</i>	CG35	
14.00-14.25	Tour of Facilities	A204	
14.30-15.20	Representatives from varying levels of DCU academic staff familiar with Communications and Marketing, including Programme Chairs.	CG35	6

15.30-16.15	Representatives of DCU students / student officers familiar / working with Communications and Marketing.	CG35	7
16:15-16:45	<i>Coffee</i>	CG35	
16.50-17.10	Open forum for any member of Communications and Marketing staff regarding the Self-Assessment Report	CG35	
17.15-17.55	Meetings with external stakeholders (e.g. alumni, employers, suppliers, Colleges of DCU, members of Governing Authority depending on relevance to Communications and Marketing)	CG35	8
18.00-18.15	PRG private meeting time	CG35	9
19.30	PRG private dinner	Crowne Plaza Hotel	
<b>DAY 3</b>			
08.45–09.00	PRG Private meeting	CG35	<b>Meeting No.</b>
09.00-09.55	DCU Senior Management Group (SMG) <i>(Director of Quality Promotion in attendance)</i>	AG01	10
10.00–10.25	Communications and Marketing Reporting Head	AG01	11
10.30-11.00	<i>Coffee</i>	CG35	
11.00-13.00	PRG private meeting time	CG35	
13.00-14:00	<i>Working Lunch</i> Clarification of outstanding issues for PRG if required	CG35	
14.00-16.00	PRG Prepare Exit Presentation <i>(Coffee provided at 15.30)</i>	CG35	
16.00-16.30	Exit Presentation – by PRG to Director of Communications and Marketing and all staff members <i>(Director of Quality Promotion in attendance)</i>	CG35	12

## Methodology

The PRG was provided with the following documents in advance of its visit:

- An indicative draft timetable for the review visit
- DCU Quality Review Process 2014
- A Framework for Quality in Irish Universities
- “Transforming Lives and Societies”. The DCU Strategic Plan 2012-17
- A Notebook outlining the Quality Review Visit Process
- A Self-Assessment Report from the Department of Communications and Marketing

At the first meeting, the Director of Quality Promotion explained the remit and responsibilities of the PRG and Mr Michael Lavery agreed to chair the group. Ms Janet French and Ms Rhonda Gibson agreed to give the exit presentation as Mr Lavery had to leave DCU at 12.15 on the final day of the quality review visit process because of a prior commitment. It was also decided that



Ms Rhonda Gibson would return to DCU to represent the PRG in 2015 for a follow-up meeting to finalise the Quality Improvement Plan as part of the quality review process.

### Schedule of Activity

The review visit was largely conducted according to the timetable provided by the Director of Quality Promotion (above) with all members of the PRG in attendance at all of the meetings. In one or two instances, members of the discussion panels had to leave early or join a subsequent discussion group owing to other commitments. The timetable of meetings as presented above was, however, otherwise adhered to.

The PRG commend the thorough and intensive nature of the quality review process. Also commendable is the genuine and in-depth engagement with the process by DCU staff and external stakeholders as demonstrated in all of the meetings. The findings, commendations and recommendations contained in Section 4 are based on the discussions and meetings detailed in the Site Visit Programme (above).

### View of the Self-Assessment Report

The Self-Assessment Report (SAR) shows evidence of significant engagement with and commitment to, the quality review process by all members of C&M. Engaging with the SAR in such an in-depth and professional manner has already resulted in the need for particular changes being recognised by the department. In some cases, where these were not resource-dependent, they have already been implemented. Data to support the development of the SAR was collected using a variety of methods including focus groups, individual in-depth interviews and quantitative surveying.

As detailed in the SAR, C&M met frequently in order to determine what they wanted from the quality review and how best to achieve it. The department has already developed a three-year plan based on its own self-assessment. The department's SWOC analysis is comprehensive and in overall terms the PRG is of the view that the SAR is an accurate reflection of the activities of the Department and the service it provides. It provided an excellent starting point for the quality review visit.

## **4. Findings of the Peer Review Group**

### 4.1 Background, Overview, Strategy, Context

C&M is a committed, skilled, professional and collegial group with a strong team spirit. The department demonstrates an admirable openness to learning and innovation as well as considerable resilience given the challenging landscape and the requirements placed upon them. Its departmental review was detailed, open and honest displaying a genuine commitment to improvement. Each individual member of the team displays high levels of motivation and engagement.

The PRG noted, however, that the absence of a detailed, specific DCU brand strategy, agreed from the top down and communicated throughout DCU, can in some instances hinder C&M's activities. At times, it causes friction among academic and other departments who would like to disseminate individual, and sometimes non-brand specific, messages and may interpret C&M's reluctance to promote these messages as either interference or lack of understanding of their importance.

#### 4.2 Organisation and Management

The PRG commend the excellent organisation and management of the C&M department. It notes, at the same time, that a clearer demarcation of its responsibilities and accountabilities in tandem with a greater focus on and clarification of the DCU brand is required. This would help to ensure a focus of activities that would add most value to DCU and limit the opportunities that are currently being missed, for example, in the areas of postgraduate student recruitment and in research.

The considerable potential of the department to execute some of the most compelling communications is at times hampered by this limited articulation of brand and organizational priorities. This can result in the team spending a significant amount of its time organizing and managing the implementation of initiatives and tactical opportunities rather than having capacity to focus on strategic and well-considered outcomes and impact. In the allocation and management of resources the team has become conditioned and expected to attend to volume rather than value.

#### 4.3 Staffing and Accommodation

The level of staffing resource for C&M is less than optimal and is not comparable to DCU's comparator institutions. The gender balance of permanent staff is exclusively female and it is noted that this is unusual.

C&M currently operates a 'flat' structure with a Director overseeing dispersed staff resource across Communications, Marketing, and Student Recruitment operations, although the PRG noted that Student Recruitment is not reflected in the Department's name. The agreed Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for these three areas are unclear and while perceptions, or assumptions, of such KPIs are diverse, there is some commonality around somewhat crude quantitative metrics only, for example volume of press coverage rather than its impact.

The core operations are supported by a blend of in-house and outsourced creative resources. Graphic design, photography and videography are managed in house, with external support where necessary. In most cases, copywriting, brand development and consultation, market research and media buying along with other services are outsourced. Printing and print management is also outsourced but the benefits of this outsourcing have not been effectively communicated to, or at

least understood by, DCU colleagues. Capacity and responsibility for web and digital development is unclear between C&M, DCU's Information Systems and Services (ISS), and external partners.

In terms of staff accommodation, whilst the space is adequate for the size of the current team, the office environment could be enhanced with greater visibility of key university publications and campaign materials, more tangible monitoring of news sources and website analytics and clearer signposting of the ISDN recording booth. The open plan format and the open door culture adopted by the Director are applauded.

#### 4.4 Management of Financial and other Resources

The department has worked effectively with the procurement function and the DCU Finance department to ensure the most effective use of third party resources. The recent appointment of Neogen to broker and manage all print projects across the university is serving to save both time and money, freeing up resources in C&M by delegating to Neogen the role of custodian of the visual brand identity.

Access to brand guidelines has now been provided to all DCU staff via the website, even though some departments across the university continue to be unaware of this. There is also a retained relationship with DDFH&B, advertising agency, which goes to pitch every five years; and it is also proposed to identify a roster of design agencies in 2015 in an effort to secure best prices and consistency of quality, following this through with a regular cycle of shared feedback on how further improvements can be made.

#### 4.5 Functions, Activities and Processes

The PRG commend the on-going monitoring and refinement of processes in all areas of this Department and the continuous striving for improvement that is evident. For example, consideration has been given to extending the appropriate use of templates in the sourcing of rich editorial material, particularly research outcomes, through the research hubs.

Initiative saturation and the expectation of constant visibility represent a challenge for the C&M team. In addition, the lack of representation of the team and function on the SMG in recent months has negatively impacted upon the ability to influence decision making at the highest level. However, the recent appointment of the Vice President for External Affairs should help to ensure a movement away from a focus on necessarily reactive service provision in the direction of expert strategic guidance in the future.

#### 4.6 User / Customer / Supplier Perspective

The range of customers and stakeholders with whom the department engages is broad, and the level of engagement can vary across disciplines ranging from heavy engagement (daily communication of high priority and impacting the full team); to medium engagement (weekly concerning regular on-going projects); and to moderate engagement for ad-hoc projects. Those

who have worked closely with the department team are extremely positive about its expert skills, high standards, commitment and responsiveness which have led to some high quality outcomes. The *DCU Connected* delivery for the National Institute for Digital Learning (NIDL) is one such example and could be harnessed as an exemplar of robust communications outcomes, made possible through an integrated marketing approach, client engagement, collaboration and a thorough brief.

In addition, many internal customers consider that student undergraduate recruitment is a 'well-oiled machine' with excellent pre-planning and implementation. A significant number of staff also commented that graphic design has provided a strong look and feel for the brand and highly commend the PR and photography services available to them.

However, although desired by C&M, a consistent level of collaboration across faculties and centres has, not always proved possible. Some DCU colleagues, although cognisant of the huge pressure on resources, nonetheless feel that they do not receive sufficient attention. Other DCU staff are unaware of the services that C&M offers, many even unaware of the visual identity templates available for downloading from the DCU website.

There is also a perception among some DCU staff that the C&M department's consistent application of guidelines and regulations in relation to both the visual identity elements of the University brand, and 'newsworthiness' criteria when assessing positive DCU *stories* has been a source of tension. In recognition of this situation C&M has already proposed an in-depth review of the Marketing and Communications Forum with the aim of increasing its effectiveness, while the allocation of one Marketing Officer across the four research hubs may help to address missed opportunities.

Also, commended by the PRG are C&M plans to develop video content for the website (showcasing individual faculties and research institutes and leveraging key projects and individuals), to develop video content to support and showcase the DCU campaign and to provide internal training for film/video production and the writing of press releases. In addition, there is a growing expectation of a deeper engagement with schools via more interactive materials. C&M's planned student research program, to begin in September 2015, is intended to capture real time information about the decision making process of potential students that will enable tightly targeted and relevant communications.

Amongst external suppliers and external stakeholders, such as guidance counsellors, education journalists and strategic partners, for example Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) and the Department of Education and Skills, there is a sense of strong, collaborative, professional relationships and good briefing processes, with recognition of the very limited resources for communications. However, many science stakeholders are going directly to DCU's Research and Innovation Department rather than through C&M, and more opportunities for partnering more closely with third parties, such as SFI, are needed.

It became obvious during this process that many DCU colleagues are dissatisfied with the overall functioning and content of the DCU website. It should be noted at this point that the DCU website also falls under the remit of Information Systems and Services (ISS). A particular tension appears to exist between the dual functions the website currently appears to serve of being both outward and inward facing. Difficulties with the search function are also a source of concern.

#### 4.7 Staff Perspective

The PRG did not develop any significant concerns relating to staff morale and the team seem to work well and operate a supportive office culture. The PRG observe that in regard to the transfer of Student Recruitment from Access and Student Recruitment to C&M, the integration process for relevant operations is on-going. However, once the remit of this department has been clarified, for example in relation to postgraduate recruitment and international markets, C&M activity could further support the recruitment cycle for undergraduate, postgraduate, domestic and international students.

The perception of the PRG is that SMG engagement with student recruitment operations would appear to be less than it is for communications and brand marketing.

The invitation issued from 2013 for a Marketing Officer from DCU Students' Union (SU) to join the weekly C&M meeting is commended by the PRG. Greater integration of the student voice in both market testing and creative development of integrated campaigns and the generation of social media content could deliver a more authentic and contemporary marketing & student recruitment message.

Utilisation of SU led marketing channels could also be explored to ensure greater advocacy of DCU messages in marketing and student recruitment operations. SU officers and current DCU students could be recruited as 'brand ambassadors' to ensure coherence of experience for campus visitors with messaging in DCU marketing materials. Greater integration of SU offer in DCU Student Recruitment Marketing materials (including Undergraduate prospectus) could also be considered.

#### 4.8 Incorporation

C&M is heavily involved in the DCU Incorporation Programme, which refers to the planned coming together of St Patrick's College, Drumcondra, Mater Dei Institute of Education and the Church of Ireland College of Education with DCU, and has already absorbed significant workload relating to this process. In addition, the C&M Director is a member of the Change Management and Communications Workstream which meets weekly. The situation regarding the C&M functions in the other institutions involved in the Incorporation process is currently in flux and it remains unclear whether one C&M department for the 'New DCU' will emerge as part of the process or whether an alternative approach will be adopted.

The provision of a part-time resource to C&M to assist with the Incorporation process and the recent appointment of a Project Manager to the Change Management and Communications Workstream are both welcome initiatives.

#### 4.9 Overall Analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Challenges

As detailed above, the C&M Department plays a central role in the management of the reputation and messaging of DCU and the DCU brand through its core functions of communications, marketing, graphic design and student recruitment. The C&M Department has extensive domain specific expertise, the staff are experienced and highly motivated, and demonstrate several examples in the development of excellent projects through effective partnership and communication with some Units / Schools/ Faculties within DCU.

While C&M demonstrate strong relationships with a number of Schools / Units across the University (including the Students' Union), they face a number of challenges in delivering services across the whole University. There is a perception among some Units / Schools that their needs are not serviced or that they are unaware of the services available to them. There is also discontent with the website from many stakeholders within DCU, despite an obvious appreciation of the recent efforts to address this. Delivering a cohesive strategy and implementation plan for the website is challenging when it is unclear where "ownership" and development of it rests (for example, ISS and C&M).

In light of the challenges outlined above and in the previous sections, there is a need to clarify and prioritise the remit of C&M. There are a number of opportunities to further enhance the effectiveness of C&M, including directly utilizing and respecting the considerable expertise of C&M personnel in defining the DCU brand strategy and developing a marketing plan which relates to DCU strategic objectives.

Greater engagement with the Schools / Faculties could be achieved by providing supporting material (e.g. templates) and alternative communication channels to mainstream media (press). This could allow C&M to prioritise other key activities in the long-term. The following table summarises the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges (SWOC Analysis) identified by the C&M Department and endorsed by the PRG.

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professional, effective, provide good customer service</li> <li>• Brand has been built very effectively</li> <li>• Effective and efficient Student Recruitment model</li> <li>• Team and team work load is respected</li> <li>• Hard working team with good internal working relationships</li> <li>• Staff 'Champions' around DCU</li> <li>• Good relationship with Students' Union</li> <li>• History of good projects</li> <li>• Team keeps itself informed</li> <li>• Team are experienced and expert with high standards</li> <li>• Team is well-organised, highly motivated and flexible / open to change</li> <li>• Ability to maintain collaborative working relationships with stakeholders</li> <li>• Good representation of University at high level</li> <li>• Understanding of direction/vision of DCU</li> <li>• Innovative</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brand/profile 'built' at the expense of deeper detail</li> <li>• Lack of resources and budgets</li> <li>• Lack of clarity around KPIs</li> <li>• The website</li> <li>• Engagement with marketing team forum needs improvement</li> <li>• Needs to market internally and manage expectations</li> <li>• Lack of university awareness of expertise in C&amp;M</li> <li>• Lack of post-graduate recruitment strategy</li> <li>• Lack of engagement from some faculties</li> <li>• Protocol awareness ('operators manual')</li> <li>• Lack of information on Incorporation</li> <li>• Unplanned / urgent announcements and activities</li> <li>• Balance between corporate agenda versus other priorities across the university</li> </ul>
<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Challenges</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help others to understand what C&amp;M do</li> <li>• Further utilise staff and students outside the department</li> <li>• Set tangible Key Performance Indicators</li> <li>• Introduce more process / protocols and produce guidelines documents</li> <li>• Reach out at higher level to faculties</li> <li>• Develop and involve more staff 'champions'</li> <li>• Marketing Forum – 'Show and Tell'</li> <li>• Marketing C&amp;M by means of case studies</li> <li>• Annual evaluation of service / producing more metrics</li> <li>• Cross-Faculty outreach</li> <li>• Develop post-graduate recruitment</li> <li>• Expansion of role of Student Ambassadors</li> <li>• Adapt current promotional materials to suit various audiences</li> <li>• Grow relationship with IGC / other bodies</li> <li>• Incorporation</li> <li>• Work more closely as a team / understand each other's role better</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management of complete DCU Profile, spreading beyond the President</li> <li>• DCU Focus on Quantity versus Quality</li> <li>• Bringing along academics</li> <li>• Addressing post-graduate recruitment</li> <li>• Development of IT sector, especially DIT</li> <li>• ITs versus Trinity / UCD as competitors</li> <li>• Students' Union representatives only as good as current team</li> <li>• Limited resources, financial and human</li> <li>• Different perceptions of C&amp;M's role by both internal and external stakeholders</li> <li>• Greater value placed by DCU on CAO applicants/potential students with DCU as '1st preference'.</li> <li>• Lack of awareness of activities across DCU</li> <li>• Staff on contracts - risk losing expertise</li> <li>• Incorporation</li> <li>• Reduction in guidance hours in schools</li> <li>• Lack of accountability for public money being spent on campaigns</li> </ul>

## 5. Recommendations for Improvement

### Indication of Priority:

P1: A recommendation that is important and requires urgent action.

P2: A recommendation that is important, but can, or perhaps must, be addressed on a more extended time scale.

P3: A recommendation which merits serious consideration but which is not considered to be critical to the quality of the ongoing activities.

### Level(s) of the University where action is required:

A: Area under review

U: University Senior Management

No.	Priority	Level	Recommendation
			<b>Branding and Remit</b>
1	P1	A/U	<p>Prepare a proposal for the DCU Senior Management Group concerning the development of an agreed DCU brand strategy that would emanate from the top down and be communicated throughout DCU. The brand strategy should focus on how the DCU positioning of the University of Enterprise can be achieved over certain time frames, with specific definition of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The key proposition, supporting priority messages and brand values</li> <li>• DCU's main competitors</li> <li>• Key segments being targeted and</li> <li>• How the messages will apply across Faculties and Schools.</li> </ul>
2	P1	A/U	<p>Clarify and prioritise the remit of the C&amp;M team with regard to the following in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brand strategy and architecture</li> <li>• Research</li> <li>• The DCU website</li> <li>• Undergraduate and postgraduate recruitment and</li> <li>• Internal communication.</li> </ul>
			<b>Planning</b>
3	P1	A/U	<p>Develop a 1-year and 3-year year marketing plan which relates to DCU strategic objectives and identifies the relevant communication, recruitment and brand KPI's that focus specifically on the achievement of defined market share, especially in the light of Incorporation, and brand image targets.</p>
4	P2	A/U	<p>Revise the format of C&amp;M team meetings to map, plan, manage and report on project delivery and outcomes for clients, rather than focus on individual outputs and workload.</p>



5	P1	A	Schedule annual meetings with Deans of faculties and Directors/Heads of Units to agree area priorities, aid forward planning and workload modelling and mitigate 'eleventh hour' demands for support. Minutes from these meetings should be logged with the C&M team and reported to the Vice President for External Affairs.
			<b>Bench-marking</b>
6	P3	A/U	Complete a bench-marking exercise, ideally with one or two top marketing and branding university performers, if possible Harvard or MIT, to discover models and processes that can produce effective and efficient solutions without the need for additional resources.
7	P1	U/A	Conduct a bench-marking exercise against comparator HEIs relating to the use of in-house and outsourced creative resources. Review, in light of the findings, the value for money of the C&M department's provision of outsourced creative services.
			<b>Marketing of C&amp;M internally in DCU</b>
8	P2	A	Consider a "Re-launch" of C&M to inform DCU staff of its remit. In so doing C&M should consider positioning themselves as the 'Voice' of the customer in DCU, showcasing their in-depth knowledge of potential student needs via survey research and idea testing among the student body.
9	P3	A	Consider a change to the department name, possibly to Student Recruitment, Marketing & Communications (SRM&C) to reflect the integration of operations and the primacy of student recruitment to the DCU strategy and business sustainability.
10	P3	A	Create and publish a DCU events calendar (including key student recruitment events) to create greater clarity / transparency and to support C&M dialogue with Schools and departments over workload priorities.
11	P1	A	Review the title "Communications Manager" for the post currently being advertised. Given that the post reports into the Senior Public Relations Officer (SPRO). It is suggested that the SPRO adopts the Communications Manager title and the vacant post is renamed Communications Officer.
			<b>Devolution</b>
12	P2	A	Conduct a full review of the monthly Marketing & Communications Forum with a view to enhancing its membership, extending its remit and increasing its effectiveness, paying particular attention to how Marketing Officers in Faculties and research hubs can be more empowered, and possibly considering the involvement of members in annual planning meetings with Deans of Faculties and Directors/Heads of Units.
13	P2	A	Consider establishing a Research Communications Forum intended to ensure engagement, support and sequencing of the most valuable research material.

14	P2	A	Consider distribution to Marketing Officers / DCU colleagues of regional media contacts for 'low-risk' stories with an overview retained by C&M. In tandem, develop and launch a toolkit containing brand (visual identity) guidelines; photography guidance; key DCU messages (updated each quarter); news release templates; design templates (posters, flyers); social media tips; model project timeline (including production lead times); best practice case studies and testimonials (for example, Professor Mark Brown, NIDL).
			<b>Website</b>
15	P1	U/A	Consider the current disconnect between website build and website design capacity between Information Systems and Services (ISS) and C&M and explore transferring web development (build) resource into C&M to deliver a more responsive, content-led approach to website development.
16	P1	U/A	Consider establishing a web development board, to include colleagues from C&M and ISS, to map the required enhancements to the functionality, content and purpose of the website.
			<b>Management of Resources</b>
17	P3	A	Together with DCU Procurement, consider the pros and cons of identifying a roster of design agencies in 2015 particularly taking into account whether the appointment of just one main supplier, as was done with one print agency, Neogen, could result in significantly higher added value effect given the low overall budget.
18	P2	A	Increase the use of internal student skills and expertise, as in the case of the Augmented Reality App initiative, via a formalisation of a structured graduate internship programme for example in the School of Communication Studies.
			<b>Management of media and staff expectations</b>
19	P2	A	Develop a social media strategy segmented by audience and integrated into marketing and student recruitment campaigns. The social media strategy should include policy, practices, content and responsibilities in addition to well-defined metrics.
20	P2	A	Map a suite of 'alternative' channels for dissemination of positive DCU stories to mitigate demand for mainstream media coverage. Channels could include DCU website, alumni & SU channels; specialist academic websites, blogs and forums.
21	P2	A	Create a programme of media relations including campus visits to build relationships with key, 'non-news' media contacts: feature writers, freelance journalists, specialist correspondents, bloggers in national press to support improved citation of DCU academics and their research in comment and review pieces, supplements, feature articles etc. These relationships can be strengthened by provision of 'exclusive' interviews and case studies to key contacts.

## APPENDIX

### Meetings with Peer Review Group

#### Quality Review Visit – Communications and Marketing

Meeting No:	Name(s)	Position
1	PRG Members	Internal and External
2	Ms Teresa Murray	Director of Communications and Marketing
3A	Ms Deirdre Wynter Ms Marie Leahy Ms Katy Halpin Ms Alison Molloy	Marketing Manager Graphic Designer Graphic Designer PA & Administration
3B	Ms Ita McGuigan Ms Colette O'Beirne Ms Lauren TaylorQuinn Ms Grainne Mooney	Senior Student Recruitment Officer Recruitment officer Recruitment officer Senior Public Relations Officer
4	Dr Claire Bohan Mr Brendan Gillen Ms Pauline Mooney Mr Ian Bell Ms Phyl McMorro Mr Declan O'Donovan Mr Alan Mangan Mr Billy Kelly Prof. Mark Brown	Director of Student Support & Development Finance Operations Controller Senior Project Manager, Incorporation Programme Business Systems Applications Manager Director of Registry Human Resources Project Officer Estates Office Deputy Registrar/Dean of Teaching & Learning Director, National Institute for Digital Learning
5	Ms Mary Colgan Ms Bernadette McCulloch Ms Michelle Smyth Ms Michele Pringle Ms Christine Stears Ms Michelle Brennan	Operations Manager, President's Office Director of Alumni Relations, DCU Business School Marketing & Finance Administrator, Open Education Faculty Manager, Engineering and Computing Marketing Officer (UG), Engineering and Computing Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
6	Prof. Christine Loscher  Dr Declan Tuite Dr Ray Walshe	Director of Health Technologies Research and Enterprise Hub  Lecturer in Communications Director of <i>CloudCORE</i> Cloud Computing Research Centre
7	Mr Jonathan Gallagher Ms Janelle Kelly Mr Daniel Power Ms Eve Kerton	DCU Student – 2013 BSc in Multimedia DCU Student - 2013 BSc in Multimedia DCU Student - 2013 BSc in Multimedia DCU Student's Union Welfare Officer

	Mr Eoin Sheahan Mr Chris Spierin Ms Deirdre O'Sullivan	Senior Student Ambassador 2013/2014 Senior Student Ambassador 2013/2014 DCU Students' Union Communications Officer
8	Prof. Daire Keogh Mr Johnny Kelly Mr Ciaran Clancy Ms Anita Brennan	President of St Patrick's College, Drumcondra Director of AAD Ltd Director of NeoGen Print Ltd Financial Manager of NeoGen Ltd
9	PRG Members	Internal and External
10	Prof. Brian MacCraith Mr Jim Dowling Prof. Eithne Guilfoyle Mr Trevor Holmes Dr Declan Raftery Prof. John Costello Prof. Barry McMullin Mr Ciarán McGivern	DCU President Deputy President Vice-President Academic Affairs (Registrar) Vice-President External Affairs Chief Operations Officer Dean of Faculty of Science & Health Dean of Faculty of Engineering & Computing Director of Finance
11	Prof. Brian MacCraith Mr Trevor Holmes	President Vice-President for External Affairs
12	Communications and Marketing	All staff invited