

Quality Assurance/Quality Improvement Programme



Peer Review Group Report

President's Office

Peer Review Group Member	Affiliation
Prof. David Croke (Chair)	Director of Quality Enhancement RCSI Quality Enhancement Office Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland
Ms. Monica Illsley	Chief of Staff, Vice-Chancellor's Office University of Essex
Ms. Barbara Wiseman	Head of Communications St. Michael's House Ballymun Rd Dublin 9
Mr. Richard Stokes	Invent CEO and Director of Innovation Dublin City University
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Date of Review Visit: 6th-8th December, 2017

Date of Peer Review Report: TBC

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 (QuIP) in response to the various issues and findings of the SAR and PRG reports.
5. The PRG report and the draft QuIP are considered by the Quality Promotion Committee (QPC) and University Executive.
6. The draft QuIP 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 QuIP.
7. The PRG Report and the QuIP including the University's response is sent to the Governing Authority of the University, who approve publication in a manner that it sees fit.

This document is the report referred to in Step 3 above and is a report of the findings of the PRG arising from review of the SAR and discussions with a range of relevant staff, students and other stakeholder undertaken during the site visit.

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1. Introduction and Overview

Location

The President and Deputy President of Dublin City University are supported by a small administrative team under the direction of an Operations Manager. This administrative area, hereafter referred to as the President's Office, is the focus of this Quality Review.

On the DCU Glasnevin Campus, the President's office is located on the 1st Floor, Albert College Building and comprises the following room allocations:

- A102 President's Office reception and administration office (3-person office)
- A104 Deputy President reception and administration office (2-person office)
- A105 Operations Manager.

On the DCU St. Patrick's Campus, the President's Office is located in Rooms C202 and C203 of Belvedere House.

Staff

The President's Office is a team of six, comprising the following staff and their current roles;

- Operations Manager – Mary Colgan
- Assistant to the President – Jane Neville
- Events and Administration officer – Theresa O'Farrell
- Administrative support – Vikki Doyle and Yvonne Duff (part-time)
- PA to the Deputy President – Natalie Hooper.

Role of the President's Office

The role of the President's Office is to provide the necessary administrative, scheduling and senior executive support necessary to enable the President and Deputy President to fulfil their obligations and responsibilities to DCU's stakeholders, both internal and external. The Office is responsible for a wide variety of administrative and operational duties that reflect the priorities of the President, including:

- Administration: Diary management, travel arrangements, meeting scheduling, handling correspondence and invitations, managing President's Office web content, budget management, preparing the President's Office Risk Register, preparing FOI responses etc.
- Support for University Committees: preparation, management and recording of University Committees that are chaired by the President or Deputy President. The Office can provide clarification on matters discussed and all actions and decisions of the President and his Senior Management Group
- Events and protocol: organising key events and high profile visits to DCU, processing speaking requests and preparing briefing notes/remarks for the President, advising on matters of protocol, and organising itineraries for visiting senior delegations (academic, industry, government) to the University
- Stewardship of special initiatives/projects undertaken on behalf of the President
- Support for the President's international engagements
- Archive management and document retrieval
- Facilitating communication with the university community (staff, students, alumni, trustees, governing authority) and with external constituents (including government, state agencies, industry and the university's domestic and international strategic partners)

- Production of the President's Annual Report
- Acts as gatekeeper for access to the President
- Point of contact to coordinate access to the President's residence for maintenance purposes.

2. The Self-Assessment Process

The Co-ordinating Committee

At the outset of the Self-Assessment process, the President's Office convened a 3-person Quality Review Working Group (QRWG) comprising of Mary Colgan (chair), Jane Neville and Danielle Montgomery (until taking up a new role within the University in August 2017). The QRWG addressed any matters pertaining to the SAR through their fortnightly President's Office team meetings.

Methodology adopted during process

This section provides an overview of the approach of the Area to Self-Assessment and a broad timeline of respective activities.

Having convened a Quality Review Working Group (QRWG) in March, 2017, from April through November, the QRWG met, on a number of occasions, with members of the Quality Promotions Office (QPO) personnel for guidance on the Quality Review QR process.

In September 2017, the QRWG engaged in a consultation process with DCU Human Resources (HR) personnel regarding mechanisms for gathering feedback on stakeholder perceptions of the effectiveness and professionalism of the President's Office.

Following from this consultation, the QRWG engaged an external agency to facilitate focus group sessions with internal stakeholders (representative of a cross-section of Schools, Administrative and Support Units, DCU campus companies and DCU Senior Management) and to conduct phone interviews with a number of external stakeholders.

The QRWG finalised their Self-Assessment Report SAR in early November and formally submitted the President's Office SAR to the QPO on 10th November, 2017 which subsequently circulated the SAR to the members of the Peer Review Group PRG.

3. The Peer Review Group Process

The Review Group

The PRG was a panel of five peer assessors composed of three members who are external to DCU and two members who are internal staff of DCU.

The following table provides details of the names, current roles and affiliations of the PRG members.

Peer Review Group Member	Affiliation
Prof. David Croke (Chair)	Director of Quality Enhancement RCSI Quality Enhancement Office Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland
Ms. Monica Illsley	Chief of Staff, Vice-Chancellor's Office University of Essex
Ms. Barbara Wiseman	Head of Communications St. Michael's House Ballymun Rd Dublin 9
Mr. Richard Stokes	Invent CEO and Director of Innovation Dublin City University
Dr. Kay Maunsell (Rapporteur)	Associate Professor, Psychology and Human Development School of Human Development Institute of Education, Dublin City University

Site Visit Programme

The PRG undertook the requisite PRG visit to the DCU President's Office from 6th through 8th December, 2017. The formal timetable of the visit provided by the QPO and as updated by the PRG during the course of the actual visit may be found in Appendix 1 of this Report. Appendix 1 also contains a list of attendees at all meetings during the PRG visit.

Methodology

The PRG met initially with the Director of Quality Promotion who outlined the conduct and timetable of the visit, and provided a general overview of aims and goals. The PRG then conducted a private meeting where Professor David Croke (RCSI) was elected as Chairperson of the PRG.

A number of aspects of the SAR were identified as guiding the discussions during the visit, an overall plan was devised for the visit and each PRG member took on particular aspects or themes to address during meetings and interviews. Across the three days of the visit the members of the PRG attended all of the meetings jointly.

Communications with both the President's Office and the Quality Promotion Office were very positive throughout the exercise, and staff members were particularly helpful in providing any additional

data/support as requested by the PRG at different stages throughout the process. Again, this was much appreciated by the PRG.

Schedule of Activity

The PRG were of the view that the peer review group process was appropriate, involving adequate time for discussions with the range of relevant staff, students and other stakeholders, along with sufficient time allocated for the peer review group reflective process.

All of the groups met by the PRG responded enthusiastically, engaged in open and frank discussion and provided useful feedback. This was much appreciated by the PRG and commended to the Area. All groups, without exception, noted the professionalism of the staff of the President's Office.

View of the Self-Assessment Report

It is the view of the PRG that the President's Office SAR was a clear, accessible and self-critical report on the structures and activities of the Area.

The previous quality review of the President's Office undertaken in 2008 was addressed within the SAR report, however, it was the view of the PRG that, given the timeframe since the previous quality review and the significantly changed structures within the University in the intervening time, it was entirely appropriate that this SAR concentrated primarily on the current activities of the President's Office.

4. Findings of the Peer Review Group

Overview and Context of the Review

This internal quality assurance review of the President's Office at Dublin City University takes place some nine years following the first such review. In the intervening period, much has changed both internal and external to the President's Office. The remit of the President's Office and now focuses on the provision of high-level administrative support to the President and Deputy President, the management of events and functions initiated by the President and Deputy President, strategic project work and the support of high-level committees within the University. The substantial growth in DCU's activities since 2008, together with the recent 'Incorporation' process, has placed ever-increasing demands upon the President's Office. This review has offered a timely opportunity for the staff members to reflect on the President's Office remit, their individual roles within it and what measures may be appropriate to enhance the functioning of the Office.

The evidence presented to the PRG and the meetings with stakeholders demonstrated that the President's Office functions very effectively and is a well-run, collegial team which does an excellent job. The recommendations presented by the PRG are founded in a recognition that the President's Office team deals with an enormous variety of duties and priority demands, and are offered to assist the team and University senior management in optimising their staff complement and in refocusing President's Office activities to create capacity for further high-value activities.

Perhaps the most striking aspect of this review was the universal esteem in which the President's Office and its staff were held by all of the stakeholders who met the PRG during the course of the site-visit. Stakeholders expressed their admiration for the ability of the President's Office to do so much, to such a high standard and with such a small staff complement. The President's Office staff members were described as professional, calm, approachable and accessible. In fact, not a single expression of criticism was heard by the PRG.

History & Incorporation Process

The 'Incorporation' process, which has seen the incorporation of St. Patrick's College (Drumcondra), Mater Dei Institute of Education and the Church of Ireland College of Education into Dublin City University (together with the acquisition of the All Hallows campus), has been a major positive step for the University. It has led to a substantial increase in student numbers, to a significant shift in the DCU educational programme portfolio and to a new multi-campus environment for students and staff. The process has had significant consequences for the President's Office also in terms of further increases in workload and a requirement to provide administrative support to the President and Deputy President when on the St. Patrick's & All Hallows campuses.

The following provides a summary of the PRG's main findings which form the basis of the PRG Commendations and Recommendations to be found in Sections 5 and 6. The headings employed in the President's Office Self-Assessment Report are used to organise the main findings:

- 4.1. Strategy and Planning
- 4.2. Management of Resources
- 4.3. Effectiveness of Activities and Processes
- 4.4. Communication and Provision of Information
- 4.5. Ongoing Quality Enhancement

Followed by an outline of the Overall Analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Concerns

4.1. Strategy and Planning

Enhance Strategic and Project Management Capacity

As noted previously, it was readily apparent to the PRG that the President's Office functions very effectively and does an excellent job while faced with an ever-growing variety of duties and demands. In the midst of this activity, the President's Office has undertaken and delivered effectively upon a number of high-level strategic projects for the University, for example managing DCU's accession to membership of YERUN, the Young European Research Universities Network. Such projects are of high strategic value for DCU, and their natural home is within the President's Office. At the same time, the President's Office staff expressed a clear wish to have greater capacity for this type of work. The PRG formed the view that it is imperative that the University provide additional capacity for this type of work within the President's Office.

The PRG Recommendation No. 1 is to expand the staff complement of the President's Office through the appointment of an additional senior role, working under the Operations Manager, so as to enhance the strategic and project management capacity of the Area.

Events Management

The President's Office has responsibility for organising key events and high profile visits to DCU, processing speaking requests and preparing briefing notes/remarks for the President, advising on matters of protocol, and organising itineraries for visiting senior delegations (academic, industry, government) to the University. As identified in the SAR, the President's Office has gained considerable experience and expertise in event and protocol management. Their knowledge should be shared more with the wider DCU community. More comprehensive guidance on event planning and matters of protocol could be provided either directly, if resourced via an event management and protocol unit within the President's Office, or indirectly, through a central event planning and support unit. The SAR also identified the associated issue regarding contingency planning.

It was clear to the PRG from the description of the events-related activities of the team and from the feedback gathered in meetings with various stakeholders, that responsibility for the professional and effective planning, management and delivery of high profile corporate events rests with the President's Office. This ensures that events are of a consistently high quality and that they present DCU in the best possible light. It also ensures that the President is well supported in the delivery of his role in relation to high profile events. By all accounts, this work is done extremely well by the team but the growing and increasingly complex nature of the University would suggest the need for further resource in this area to ensure that high level strategically important events continue to be managed in a professional manner.

An additional dedicated events management resource (perhaps an Events Manager to work with the current Events Coordinator) would provide dedicated leadership capacity, improve resilience in this area where the consequences of error could be serious, and ensure institution-relevant knowledge and professional expertise that can be shared with others undertaking events across DCU (e.g. through information and guidance on event protocols on the intranet). The additional resource would have a positive impact on the workload of others in the team (particularly on the Operations Manager), and would enable the team to continue to provide high quality support in relation to its various core functions, and help ensure that the workload of individual staff is appropriate and sustainable.

The additional resource might be best placed within the President's Office in the short term given that that this is where the current Events support is located and the fact that the current President is very involved with and clearly prioritises his engagement in relation to this activity. This might be reviewed in the future both to assess whether there is a need for further additional events capacity and whether a central high-level Events Unit for the University operating across its campuses is required.

The PRG Recommendation No. 2 is that the President's Office implements a phased approach to the expansion of events capacity initially through either the reallocation of existing duties or through the creation of an additional post. This additional capacity should be evaluated after a twelve month period with a view to considering whether further expansion is required perhaps through the creation of a central high-level Events Unit for the University across its campuses.

Positioning of President's Office across a Multi-Campus University

As noted, significant growth and development have occurred within DCU in the recent years. DCU is now a multi-campus University reaching across five campuses – DCU Glasnevin Campus, DCU St Patrick's Campus, DCU All Hallows, DCU Alpha (Innovation Campus) and DCU Sport – leading to a significant increase both in staffing and student numbers. The SAR identified that the President's Office needs to reflect the fact that DCU is now a multi-campus university. Arising from discussions during the PRG visit, there was a strong sense amongst the President's Office and from across a range of stakeholders that there should be a visible presence of both the President and Deputy President, and consequently of members of the President's Office team, across the DCU campuses. It was recognised that the President's Office needs a communications strategy which will include measures to support the visibility of the President's Office across all DCU campuses.

The PRG Recommendation No. 9 is for the President's Office to explore how best to provide administrative support for the President/Deputy President when on St. Patrick's and All Hallows campuses.

4.2. Management of Resources

Sign-off/Authorisation Process

Under the present system, the President and Deputy President are required to sign-off expense claims for their direct reports. The often unavoidable delays with this process, due to, for example, travel commitments can cause financial difficulties for the individual claimant and the Finance Office. While the President's Office internal processes have gone some way to address this problem, there is a strong case to be made for delegating sign-off/authorisation, even in part (i.e. claims within a certain band of value) to ensure a more efficient turnaround.

Following consultation with the staff and the President and Deputy President and other stakeholders the PRG recommend that delegation and approval pending further later audit, as appropriate, should be implemented. It was noted that the President is the accounting officer ultimately and that he has the responsibility to ensure that whatever processes or limits are agreed are reasonable to enable him to continue to comply with this duty and to ensure that staff are not personally affected financially by necessary delays.

The PRG Recommendation No. 7 is for the President's Office to simplify the process for evaluating expenses claims and delegate sign-off authority to senior officials below the level of President / Deputy President (at least up to an agreed limit).

Modernise Office Space

The SWOC analysis identified the issue that A102 serves as a reception area for visitors to the President's Office but is dated and in need of refurbishment. The SAR also identified that, as the reception office to the President, the offices should present a modern, professional image and that this was currently under review by the Office. The SAR identified the need to create a more welcoming reception area for the President's Office and a less cluttered working space for the team. The PRG noted that this was currently under review. The dated appearance of the office was also remarked upon in the focus group sessions conducted as part of the President's Office SAR.

The main entrance to the Albert College building serves as the arrival point for all external visitors to the President's Office and visitors are directed to this entrance. The immediate reception area is very spacious and a beautiful and impressive traditional space but it can feel rather unwelcoming and leave a visitor wondering how to make their arrival known. There is no sense of welcome or reassurance of having arrived at the right place, and little in the way of guidance as to how to contact members of staff in the President's Office. Comments were received from external stakeholders to suggest that this was an issue that should be addressed.

The PRG discussed various options and agreed that, whilst the ideal solution would be to have a permanent staffing presence in the reception area, this might prove difficult to achieve given that the President's Office team are located on another floor. Consideration should therefore be given to how to make the space more immediately welcoming and how to reassure visitors that they had arrived in the right place. This might be achieved through both very clear welcoming signage and advice on how a visitor might alert staff in the President's Office as to their arrival so that a member of the team can come and meet and greet the visitor and escort them as necessary. Another potential solution would be to direct visitors to another nearby reception space that is staffed (if this exists) where they could report their arrival and President's Office staff could then be alerted and could meet them there and walk them to Albert College.

In relation to the working space of the President's Office, the PRG had the opportunity to visit the office so as to see the working environment of the team. Whilst there appears to be a good range and size of both meeting rooms and individual and shared offices, the PRG concurred with the SAR

in relation to some of the spaces being a little dated and in need of refurbishment. The team are already working with Estate Management colleagues on potential redesigns for the area and are conscious of the need to address the availability of appropriate waiting spaces for (primarily internal) visitors, the need to ensure the confidentiality of information (both in paper form and as visible on computer screens), and the need to maintain the exemplary team working that exists and is supported by the current configuration. The office may wish to consider alternatives to the high level counter in the main office. Whilst it served the purpose of partitioning the room, it does not seem entirely appropriate given the nature of the interactions. The PRG would support the current plans to reconfigure the space and encourage the Operations Manager to visit similar offices in other Universities (or out of Sector comparable offices) to see how they make use of spaces that fulfil a similar function.

The PRG Recommendation No. 10 is to undertake a re-design / refurbishment of the President's Office physical footprint, to include consideration of the utilisation of the ground floor Reception Area.

4.3. Effectiveness of Activities and Processes

Production of DCU Annual Report

The notable time-delay in producing the DCU Annual Report was raised as a matter of concern by the President's Office. The Annual Report is a statutory requirement of the University.

In PRG discussions with internal and external stakeholders, while it was noted that respective stakeholders were not requesting or missing the document, however it was viewed as a marketing opportunity missed by some members and a simple statutory requirement that was not met by others. The PRG explored the options for producing the DCU Annual Report to comply with statutory requirements and in consideration of office workload and resources available.

The PRG Recommendation No. 3 is to explore, with the Governing Authority, alternative mechanisms to comply with statutory requirements for University Annual Reports, perhaps by limiting the published document to the requisite financial accounts and governance information thereby reducing the administrative burden.

Archives Management

The President's Office holds a significant amount of archival materials. Key issues raised for consideration in respect of the storage of the archive are (1) the risk of water damage in the event of flooding and (2) the adequacy of storage capacity. While this was not perceived as an immediate priority, the Area noted that in time a larger space, designed to adequately protect these records will need to be acquired. In the SWOT analysis provided by the Area this was raised as an issue.

Reflections of the PRG following feedback in discussion with the President's Office and other stakeholders it became clear that continuing access by the President's Office staff to many records is essential to support compliance with Freedom of Information (Fol) requests and Comptroller and Auditor General enquiries. It is recommended that the President's Office should maintain the records for a suggested period of 10 years. Thereafter, subject to a new Archives policy being developed to protect sensitive information and having regard to the 30-year rule for making state documents publicly available that the library should take responsibility for the historical archives and the provision of appropriate space and cataloguing.

The PRG Recommendation No. 5 is for the President's Office to explore, in the context of the development of a new Archives Policy for DCU post-incorporation, a new mechanism for Archives management where some of the responsibility (perhaps for documents before a certain cut-off date) could be managed by DCU Libraries. This would reduce work-load and might also free up space within the current President's Office

4.4. Communication and Provision of Information

Alignment of Communications Functions

Given the ongoing need for updated website content from the President's Office, the SAR outlined the need for an overhaul of webpage content. The preparation of speeches for multiple Presidential events is completed with a speech request form. The process can be challenging and the growth of requests is continuing. Both internal and external stakeholders acknowledged the growth in events and indeed speech writing and were surprised that this entire task was managed solely in the President's Office. On the basis of both the SAR and discussions with a range of stakeholders during the PRG visit, the PRG concluded that the President's Office should seek support on this skill-set.

The PRG Recommendation No. 4 seeks the President's Office to identify specific tasks which would more properly sit within the restructured Communications function, for example, President's Office web-site content, input to speech-writing and aspects of the Annual Report.

Enhancing Staff Profiles

The SAR identified the need for the President's Office pages on the DCU Staff Intranet to clearly communicate the roles and responsibilities of the individual members of the team. It identified the need for clearer staff profiles on the Intranet, highlighting individual roles and responsibilities and for improved visibility of the Presidents' Office across DCU's campuses.

On the evidence gathered by the PRG it was clear that the team perform their functions in an exemplary fashion. The feedback received from all stakeholder groups was overwhelmingly positive. Without exception, all stakeholders commented on the exceptionally responsive, effective and professional work of the team. They also commented on the fact that team members were knowledgeable and flexible and willing to take ownership of any enquiry or task and to ensure a timely and effective response, regardless of whether it was their specific responsibility or area of expertise or that of another member of the team. This strong team spirit, flexibility, and shared knowledge is a significant strength of the team.

From feedback gathered from the meetings with various stakeholders it was also apparent that there is a lack of clarity as to the individual roles of members of the team. Comments made suggested that people might not know who best to contact in relation to a particular query but that, when they contacted any member of the team, their experience was that team members could be relied upon to take ownership and ensure a prompt and helpful response (either responding themselves or ensuring that the most appropriate member of the team responded).

Stakeholders indicated that, whilst they valued the team's ability to provide cover for each other as necessary, they would welcome greater clarity on individual roles and areas of responsibility. This could be achieved by having comprehensive information on the intranet on the President's Office functions and on the roles and key responsibilities of individual members of staff. This would also have the benefit of raising the visibility of the team, whose work by its nature can be quite hidden and behind the scenes, and would help raise awareness of the work of the team across all campuses. This provision of additional information on primary roles and responsibilities should not imply a move away from the existing very positive culture and commitment to team working.

The PRG Recommendation No. 8 is to increase awareness of individual areas of responsibility / points of contact within the President's Office through the publication of individual staff profiles on the DCU Staff Intranet.

4.5. Ongoing Quality Enhancement

Benchmarking with Best Practice

The PRG wish to affirm, as previously noted herein, the high standard of processes and practices of the President's Office as evidenced by both the SAR and the extent of positive feedback provided across the range of stakeholder meetings during the PRG site visit.

In addressing some of the key areas identified through the process of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Challenges (SWOC) analysis and arising in discussions held during the site visit, the PRG note the openness of the President's Office to opportunities to benchmark its office operations and service delivery against best practice within other higher education institutions. Such an initiative is viewed by the President's Office as both 'valuable and welcome' in the context of ongoing Quality Enhancement for their Area.

The PRG Recommendation No. 6 is to provide appropriate funding to enable the Operations Manager to benchmark the office function and individual roles within the President's Office relative to best-practice.

Overall Analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Challenges

The PRG felt that the analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Challenges (SWOC) undertaken by the President's was, in the main, a fair and realistic one. To echo a point made earlier in this document, it was also felt by the PRG, that it presented a self-critical reflection of the structures and activities of the President's Office, which enhanced this aspect of the SAR in particular.

The following is the findings from SWOC analysis completed by the President's Office in tabular form:

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Experienced, highly professional team ➤ Strong team spirit; positive rapport with colleagues ➤ Shared knowledge of office systems and processes ➤ Committed to open and transparent communication ➤ Committed to respect and integrity ➤ Strong event management skills ➤ Organisational memory ➤ Willing to adapt and introduce new processes ➤ Exercises judgement in acting as gatekeeper for direct access to President. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Impact of cancelling meetings/events at short notice ➤ Difficult to schedule time for President on other campuses due to complex diary ➤ Gap in communication across campuses ➤ Finding time for maintaining President's Office webpages ➤ Lack of suitable welcome/reception area for visitors ➤ Inadequate Office archive storage facility ➤ Limited capacity to plan ahead/be more strategic.
Opportunities	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Improve profile of the President's Office across all campuses ➤ Improve guidance to staff on protocols relating to welcoming senior international delegations and other high ranking visitors ➤ Appointment of a Communications Director ➤ Avail of Staff Mobility funding schemes to gain access to best practice in universities abroad. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Multiple demands on President's and Deputy President's diaries ➤ No copywriter to support the following: drafting remarks, briefing notes and welcome messages from President for various publications; annual report etc. ➤ Absence of a central internal conference/event management unit places an extra onus on the President's Office to assist ➤ Conflict between reacting quickly to externally-driven opportunities and giving adequate notice to colleagues (e.g. holding provisional block booking with Helix; seeking rapid turnaround on print collateral etc.) ➤ In responding to miscellaneous requests for intervention to the President (students/ parents/ local residents), due care must be taken not to undermine university processes. ➤ Managing expectations that the Office can/will bridge funding/staffing gaps elsewhere in the University ➤ Insufficient capacity to produce Annual Report ➤ Challenge posed in maintaining a balanced budget.

5. Commendations

The commendations of the PRG, while few in number, nonetheless reflect the very high esteem in which the staff of the President's Office are held (collectively & individually) by colleagues, internal and external stakeholders.

Commendations	
1	A well-run, high-functioning team doing an excellent job.
2	The leadership role played by the Operations Manager in creating a distinctive culture of professionalism and service delivery to the University.
3	The dedication and professionalism of the staff both individually and as a team maximising the value of both continuity over time and the expertise that newer members have brought.
4	The striking and universal degree to which peers and stakeholders (internal and external to the University) value and appreciate the role played, and the service provided by the team.
5	These are some of the comments made by the various stakeholders in relation to their engagement with the team: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● very positive experience, ● professional ● calm, ● approachable, ● accessible, ● so much done, so well, by so few.

6. Recommendations for Improvement

The following recommendations for improvement reflect the wish of the PRG to affirm the Area's own reflections on going forward and provide supplementary ideas on how to enhance the role and function of the President's Office at Dublin City University.

Note: The recommendations made within this section have used the classification system provided by the University. Priority levels of the recommendations have been noted, using the following University classification system:

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 of the Area.

Additionally, the PRG have used the University rubric to indicate the level(s) of the University where action is required, as follows: **A:** Area under review and **U:** University Senior Management. Actions at multiple levels have been recommended, as appropriate. For instance: P1- A & U indicates a recommendation that is important and requires urgent action at Area level as well as by the University's senior management.

Recommendations			
No.	Recommendation	Priority	Level
1	Expand the staff complement of the President's Office through the appointment of an additional senior role, working under the Operations Manager, so as to enhance the strategic and project management capacity of the Area.	P1	A & U
2	Implement a phased approach to the expansion of events capacity initially through either the reallocation of existing duties or through the creation of an additional post. This additional capacity should be evaluated after a twelve month period with a view to considering whether further expansion is required perhaps through the creation of a central high-level Events Unit for the University across its campuses.	P1	A & U
3	Explore, with the Governing Authority, alternative mechanisms to comply with statutory requirements for University Annual Reports, perhaps by limiting the published document to the requisite financial accounts and governance information thereby reducing the administrative burden.	P1	A & U
4	Identify specific tasks which would more properly sit within the restructured Communications function, for example, President's Office web-site content, input to speech-writing and aspects of the Annual Report.	P1	A & U
5	Explore a mechanism for shared Archives management and document retrieval where the current functional archive (i.e. documents up to 10 years old) is managed by the President's Office and the historical archive be managed by DCU Libraries.	P2	A & U
6	Provide appropriate funding to enable the Operations Manager to benchmark the office function and individual roles within the President's Office relative to best-practice.	P2	A & U
7	Simplify, as appropriate, the authorisation process for expense claims up to an agreed limit.	P2	A
8	Increase awareness of individual areas of responsibility / points of contact within the President's Office through the publication of individual staff profiles on the DCU Staff Intranet.	P3	A
9	Explore how best to provide administrative support for the President/Deputy President when on St. Patrick's and All Hallows campuses.	P3	A
10	Undertake a re-design / refurbishment of the President's Office physical footprint, to include consideration of the utilisation of the ground floor Reception Area.	P3	A & U

Appendix 1: Site Visit Programme

QUALITY REVIEW OF: President's Office

DATE: 06 to 08 December 2017

Time	Peer Review Group (PRG) Activity/Meeting	Venue	Meeting No.
Day 1- Wednesday			
1000-1030	Arrival of PRG Members, coffee on arrival- Albert College	A204	
1030-1130	Briefing by Director of Quality Promotion; guidelines provided to assist the PRG during the visit and in developing its report		
1130-1230	PRG Private Meeting Time. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PRG Selects a Chair PRG discusses key themes, areas for exploration based on the SAR PRG assigns tasks and responsibilities amongst members 		
1230-1330	Lunch with Director of QPO (Light lunch)		
1330-1445	Consideration of the SAR with the Area Head, Mary Colgan, Operations Manager, and Jane Neville, President's Office, with members of the Quality Review committee. Shall commence with a short presentation by Area head, followed by discussion (Director, QPO to attend)	A204	1
1445-1515	PRG private discussion time	A204	
1515-1555	Key staff from other university department where the area under review has significant co-operation (professional and admin support staff) 1	AG01	2
1600-1700	Meeting with external stakeholders	AG01	3
1700-1730	PRG private discussion time	AG01	
1730-1800	Informal Reception – PRG, Area Head, Members of Quality Review Committee, Director of Quality Promotion	1838 DCU	
1800-1930	PRG Private Dinner and discussion	Private Dining Room	
Day 2- Thursday			
0900-0940	Professor Brian MacCraith, President Professor Daire Keogh, Deputy President	AG01	4
0945-1025	President's Office Team	AG01	5
1030-1100	PRG Coffee/ Private Meeting Time	AG01	
1100-1140	Key staff from other university department where the area under review has significant co-operation (academic staff)	AG01	6
1145-1230	Key staff from other university department where the area under review	AG01	7

	has significant co-operation (professional and admin support staff) 2		
1230-1300	Meeting with representatives of DCU Student's Union	AG01	8
1300-1330	Tour of Facilities		
1330-1400	Lunch/ PRG Private Meeting Time	AG01	
1400-1425	Staff Open Forum for any member of Area staff	AG01	
1430-1510	Relevant Central Support Units- senior representatives	AG01	9
1515-1630	PRG Private Meeting Time	AG01	
1630-1715	Meeting with Area Head	AG01	10
1830 -2000	PRG Private Dinner and Meeting		
Day 3- Friday			
0900-0930	PRG Meeting with Senior Management Group	AG01	11
0930-1000	Meeting with Professor Brian MacCraith, President	AG01	12
1000-1200	PRG Private Meeting Time- final discussion on recommendations.	AG01	
1200-12.45	PRG working lunch including briefing with Area Head and Director of QPO on key recommendations	AG01	
1245-1300	Finalization of exit presentation	AG01	
1300-1330	PRG Exit Presentation	AG01	13

Meetings with Peer Review Group – Quality Review Visit

Meeting No:	Name(s) and role
1	Ms Mary Colgan, Operations Manager President's Office Ms Jane Neville, Assistant to the President
2	Professional and Admin Support Group 1 Ms Gillian Barry, Student Awards Manager Registry Ms Michele Pringle, Faculty Manager Engineering and Computing Ms Fina Akintola, Office of the Chief Operations Officer Mr Jonny Hobson, Graduate Studies Office Mr Eoghan Stack, Chief Executive DCU Ryan Academy Mr Plunkett Tormey, DCU Educational Trust Ms Ellen Breen, Associate Director, Research & Teaching, O'Reilly Library
3	External Stakeholders Professor Eugene Kennedy, DCU retired staff Mr Michael Brady, Manager The Helix Ms Louise Plumber, Trispace catering Mr Deiric O'Broin, Director of NorDubCo Mr Ken Robinson, Chief Executive DCU Sport Ms Marguerita Lardner, Irish Universities Association (IUA) Cecilia Cruickshank PA to the Ambassador Embassy of Mexico
4	Professor Brian MacCraith, President Professor Daire Keogh, Deputy President
5	President's Office Team Ms Jane Neville, Assistant to the President Ms Theresa O'Farrell, Events Coordinator / Administrator Ms Natalie Hooper, PA to the Deputy President Ms Yvonne Duff, Executive Assistant Ms Vikki Doyle, Executive Assistant
6	Academic Staff Dr Eilish McLoughlin, School of Physical Sciences Profess Gary Murphy, School of Law and Government Professor Federico Fabbrini, School of Law and Government Dr Emer Ní Bhrádaigh, Fiontar agus Scoil na Gaeilge Dr Conor Burke, Fraunhofer Project Centre for Embedded Bioanalytical Systems Dr Noel O'Connor, Insight Centre for Data Analytics Dr Yvonne Crotty, STEM Education, Innovation and Global Studies
7	Professional and Admin Support Group 2 Ms Grainne Mooney, Communications Manager Ms Colette O'Beirne, School Liaison Officer Student Recruitment Dr Claire Bohan, Director of Student Support and Development Ms Maria Johnson, Operations & Enterprise Development Manager Invent Ms Pauline Mooney, Academic Secretary Office of the Vice-President Academic Affairs Ms Maeve Fitzpatrick, Faculty Manager Institute of Education Ms Bernadette Dalton, Office of the Vice-President External Affairs Ms Helen Coleman, Office of the Vice-President Academic Affairs Mr William Kelly, Deputy Registrar / Dean of Teaching & Learning Dr Mark Glynn, Head of the Teaching Enhancement Unit

8	<p>Representatives of DCU Student's Union Mr Niall Behan, President of the DCU Students' Union Mr Matt Davey, Vice-President Education and Placement Mr Podge Henry, Vice-President Welfare and Equality Mr Brendan Power, Vice-President Academic Affairs</p>
9	<p>Central Support Units – Senior Representatives Ms Phylomena McMorrow, Director of Registry Ms Emer McMahan, HR Mr Gerard McEvoy, Head of Estates Mr Ray Wheatley, Estates Office Security Mr Justin Doyle, ISS Mr Brendan Gillen, Finance Office Mr Ian Spillane, ISS</p>
10	Ms Mary Colgan, Operations Manager President's Office
11	<p>Senior Management Group Ms Marian Burns, Director of Human Resources Professor Michelle Butler, Executive Dean, Faculty of Science and Health Professor John Doyle, Executive Dean, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Professor Eithne Guilfoyle, Vice-President Academic Affairs/Registrar Professor Trevor Holmes, Vice-President External Affairs Professor Greg Hughes, Vice-President Research and Innovation Mr Ciaran McGivern, Director of Finance Dr Declan Raftery, Chief Operations Officer</p>
12	Professor Brian MacCraith, President
13	<p>Exit Presentation to President's Office Team Professor Brian MacCraith, President Ms Mary Colgan, Operations Manager Ms Jane Neville, Assistant to the President Ms Theresa O'Farrell, Events Coordinator / Administrator Ms Natalie Hooper, PA to the Deputy President Ms Yvonne Duff, Executive Assistant Ms Vikki Doyle, Executive Assistant</p>