

Enterprise and Learning Committee

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1. Introduction

1.1 Trinity College, Carmarthen (TCC) endorses the broad view put forward by Higher Education Wales (HEW) in its response to this review. The following submission seeks to highlight the particular contribution TCC makes in terms of strategic engagement with business in Wales and beyond, and its impact on the local and regional economy.

2. Trinity College, Carmarthen

2.1 Within the context of Wales, Trinity has attributes that clearly differentiate it from other HEIs. It has a distinct role to play within higher education.

As a community university, the institution has been acutely aware of its role as a key agent for lifelong learning. The current strategic plan confirms the role of the institution in servicing the needs of West Wales and of developing a range of strategies to support various Welsh Assembly Government policies. In doing so, it articulates the core *raison d'être* of the institution as a community university institution, which offers a range of quality courses that make an effective contribution to the economic, social, cultural, spiritual prosperity of Wales. Its role within the life of Wales, as a central hub of promoting the arts, education and the Welsh language, places it on a par with other specialist university and conservatoires within the higher education sector.

2.2 Bute Communications were commissioned in 2005 by Trinity College to undertake an independent evaluation of the strategic role of the institution in the light of the various policy initiatives established by the Welsh Assembly Government. They were charged with undertaking an assessment of the economic impact of the institution on the local economy of South West Wales. The findings of this report clearly indicate the contribution the College makes to the Welsh economy and society:

"There is clear evidence to support the claim that it contributes to a strong vibrant national identity and is recognised as an academic institution that services the needs of Wales. The College has undergone major management and structural changes since 2000 and has successfully developed a new academic portfolio which reinforces its distinctive contribution as a Community University which is proactive, innovative and respondent to change. The strong bilingual ethos of the institution makes it one of Wales's leading academic institutions in the active promotion of the languages and cultures of Wales."

In addition, the findings of the second Rees Report confirmed that of all the institutions in Wales, Trinity had the highest percentage of Welsh domiciled students. The vast majority of students attending Trinity College [92.4%] were from Wales. The research also shows that the College had the highest percentage of students aged 18-20 who came from Wales [85%]. In 2006/07 2626 students were enrolled, of which 1222 were part time (46.5%).

3. Trinity College as an employer and consumer of goods and services

3.1 Trinity College has a tangible economic, social and cultural impact upon the region. Economically there are three main factors which determine our impact; staff, students and purchasing. With an overall annual budget in excess of £11.1m in 2005/6 Trinity College has a massive impact upon the local economy, supporting a total of 305 direct and indirect jobs and injecting a total of £17million into the local economy.

As stated in the Bute Report:

"There is clear evidence to support the claim that the institution has made a substantial contribution within West Wales to increasing the skill and knowledge base of graduates who have entered full time employment within the sub-region. Given that the College recruits such a high percentage of students from a local radius the economic impact of the training is likely to make a real difference to the longer term development of the local workforce. The institution is having a positive impact on tackling economic inactivity and developing new improved opportunities for informal and flexible learning pathways, which are demonstrated by very high numbers of students aged 26-65, the high level of disabled students and the increasing proportion from Communities First Communities. The economic and social impact of community regeneration will also be assisted by the development of a Community University which seeks to increase the skills and knowledge base of the region and foster a spirit of entrepreneurship in its graduates. Every pound from WAG invested in Trinity College provides a high return and value for money across WAG broad strategic objectives".

4. Trinity College's contribution to the Skills Agenda and contribution to the local and regional economy

4.1 The repositioning of the College over the last five years has placed it in a key position to take forward major initiatives which will support the enhancement of skills in the development of a knowledge base economy in South West Wales. Its contribution is seen as complementary to the research led mission of the University of Swansea as it drives forward innovation and enterprise. Trinity College contributes to the development of the workforce skill base which will be required to underpin the high level economic activity developed by the University. It is clear from the College's strategic plan that the institution is committed to the sustainable economic development of communities in the region through the proactive enhancement of innovation for local competitiveness and wealth creation.

4.2 In response to the Leitch Review of Skills, Trinity College undertook an audit of the College's interaction with Sector Skills Councils

(SSCs). Trinity has made it a key aim of its Third Mission Strategy to engage with SSCs in meaningful partnerships and the audit established that there were effective working relationships with the key SSCs of relevance to the College's activity: Skillset, Creative and Cultural Skills, e-Skills, SkillsActive, People 1st, Skills for Justice, Skills for Care and Development and Lifelong Learning Skills. Progress is already being made in a number of areas including the development of Foundation Degrees, part-time and flexible study opportunities, focused postgraduate programmes which develop higher level skills and the provision of management training in relevant subject areas.

4.3 There is a clear focus on the development of Work Based Learning in the College's Strategic Plan. The College has been committed to developing a series of undergraduate and postgraduate courses which will contribute to the economic development of the region. This was attested in the independent review of the college:

"Given that such a high percentage of students are from West Wales, the impact on local human capital is considerable. Graduates are likely to remain within the area and to make a substantial contribution to the labour market...Trinity College is committed to the concept and delivery of lifelong learning and has delivered proactive local labour market improvements. Between a half and two thirds of recent alumni have been mature students, aged between 26-65, compared to a level of 45 percent in Higher Education Institutions across Wales. Over 95 percent of graduates are in full time employment or are engaged in further study within a period of six months after leaving the institution."

4.4 The College has developed strong links with a diverse range of employers linked to its academic portfolio. In addition to their role in making available a wide range of opportunities for students, their input into the development of the institution's academic programmes, and discussions regarding student skill acquisition and developing employability are considered extremely important. The views of employers and professional bodies are formally sought as part of routine quality assurance processes.

4.5 Graduate attributes and skills associated with employability are incorporated alongside subject knowledge and understanding in all academic programmes across both Faculties. In line with the vocational orientation of the College's academic provision, advice and feedback from employers is highly valued. This interaction takes many forms including:

direct input into programme development and review;

providing external expertise to the teaching and examining of specialised subjects;

4.6 All Schools have well-established contacts with organisations relevant to their disciplines. These contacts enrich the student experience, for example, thorough special lectures by visiting speakers and 'real life' case studies. Project work may be based in an external organisation or inspired by the practical challenges faced by employers. The School of Computing, Business and Tourism, for example, is actively involved in the development of tourism in the area through representation in local tourism associations and through a number of consultancy exercises and research projects; the School of Education Studies and Social Inclusion makes use of external organisations such as voluntary agencies, family centres and Adult Learning Centres in relation to student learning experiences; the School of Theatr, Cerdd a'r Cyfryngau has developed an excellent working relationship with Theatr Genedlaethol Cymru, Cwmni Arad Goch, numerous television and radio companies and a number of freelance directors and actors who frequently contribute to the teaching of undergraduate modules; whilst the School of Creative Arts and Humanities has established close links with the publishing industry on both the BA and MA Creative Writing programmes and with a range of visiting practitioners in art and media.

4.7 A key element of the Fee Plan proposals from the College from 07-08 will be to introduce internships for students. They will take the form of extended Summer placements with local employers. As well as enhancing the learning experience of students, the interns will contribute to the development of SMEs and promote a more effective dialogue with the College.

5. Trinity College's Collaborative Involvement

5.1. South West Wales Higher Education Partnership (SWWHEP)

5.1.1. 2007/08 will herald the first full year of a £7.4m collaboration project between Trinity College, Swansea University and Swansea Metropolitan University. The College is pro-active within a rapid ever changing context and is working to the premise endorsed in Reaching Higher that by 2010 Higher Education in Wales will be defined by 'networks of excellence'. The focus is on developing a diverse sector of varied missions which takes its rightful place in the delivery of the Assembly's wider priorities. The current strategic partnership focusing upon joint delivery, partnership, efficiency savings and greater integration is central to the College's ongoing development. Work packages have been agreed with HEFCW, project staff across the 14 defined areas of activity have been appointed, and a detailed work programme is underway. The development of the virtual University of South West Wales will be a model for collaborative working. It builds upon and celebrates distinctiveness of mission and identifies common areas for collaboration.

5.2 South West Wales Economic Development Consortium (SWWEDC)

5.2.1 In addition to the SWWHEP collaboration outlined above, Swansea University (SU), Swansea Metropolitan University (SMET) and Trinity College Carmarthen (TCC) have developed a collaborative approach to the development and delivery of certain aspects of their Third Mission (3M) provision. This has successfully secured an additional £1.17m from HEFCW to take forward collaborative activity in the area of Third Mission. The collaboration will be based on the sharing of good practice, the open exchange of policy developments within the 3M arena and, where appropriate, a mutual commitment to assist in building delivery capacity in critical 3M performance areas such as IP commercialisation, technology/knowledge transfer and training/consultancy.

5.2.2 The SWWEDC activities will seek to add value to the 3M approach adopted by each individual HEI; and furthermore the support of

the consortium will enable partners to develop new strands of activity and/or strengthen performance in current understrength areas.

The more salient benefits of the SWWEDC approach will be felt by business and community throughout the region, as the consortium will offer greater choice and access to HE expertise via a more efficient and streamlined delivery model spanning a significant geographical area, ranging from Neath Port Talbot in the East to Pembroke Dock in the West.

5.2.3 In broad terms, the strategic aims of SWWEDC can be summarised as follows:

To align Third Mission activity for the three institutions with the development of the Swansea and Western Valleys Wales and Pembrokeshire Spatial Plan areas

To embed the SWWEDC brand as a recognised conduit to HE expertise and knowledge throughout the South West Wales region

To collectively contribute to national policy in respect of economic development, technology transfer, cultural and industry-HE links

To deliver more Third Mission activity across a wider geographical base than would be possible for individual institutions, thereby maximising the contribution of each individual HEI to the region

To maximise the economic and social impacts for each HEI arising from Third Mission activity

To enhance the cultural and social contribution of the three HEI through shared access to expertise in social and community enterprise, the creative and cultural arts and Welsh medium/bilingualism

5.3. South West Wales Regional Learning Partnership (SWWRLP)

5.3.1 The SWWHEP reconfiguration and collaboration exercise has enabled the three partner Institutions to develop proposals for a South West Wales Skills Academy to meet the need to upskill the region at Level 4 and above and to support the Widening Access agenda. This development links closely with the wider development of the South West Wales Regional Learning Partnership as outlined below.

5.3.2 Trinity and its partners are involved in the development of a South West Wales Regional Learning Partnership. Membership of the partnership includes the local authorities for Neath Port Talbot, Swansea, Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire, the four regional HEI (TCC, SU, SMET and Lampeter), the 5 FE Colleges (NPT, Swansea, Gorseinon, Coleg Sir Gar, Pembrokeshire) and representatives of the Voluntary and Private sector training providers.

5.3.3 The SWWRLP will aim to create a network of learning provision that is learner centred, offering high quality training and education across all levels of training, to maximise benefit to the regional economy. The SWWRLP offers a valuable opportunity for the collaborative delivery of services in partnership with FE and other sectors, and to secure additional European funding to enhance and improve access for the learner to wide ranging academic and work based learning opportunities.

5.4. The Centre for Inclusive Living (CIL)

5.4.1 In reviewing the college's commitment to social inclusion and empowerment, the College is pioneering radical new models for promoting higher education for disabled students. In partnership with key agencies the College is developing a Centre for Independent Living (CIL) in Carmarthenshire that would provide support and services that enable and encourage people with disabilities to fully participate in their own community. The College will be a major part of that community in offering an educational focus. The CIL will provide a unique barrier free environment and become a beacon of good practice and equality of opportunities for all. This is the first example in Wales of delivering integrated educational training and support within a University context. It will act as a centre of excellence for inclusion in West Wales that would deliver a Disabled Students' Programme, enabling students with disabilities to have access to Higher Education opportunities with the provision of a range of services from accommodation, assistive technology and auxiliary services, including communication assistance and sign language interpretation.

The Centre will also provide the wider population of disabled people in the county with an opportunity to set up and deliver their own self help Peer Support groups, access Information, Advice and Advocacy services, and Accessible Transport and Employment opportunities. This centre of excellence will be able to offer training programmes to organisations, agencies and businesses in Disability Awareness. Modules offered by the College's Social Inclusion programme would include foci on Disability and Inclusion as well as Disability and Gender. There is the potential for the Social Inclusion programme to develop a West Wales Centre for Disability Studies by involving those with special needs in the delivery of educational programmes.

The proposal is being developed in partnership with Carmarthenshire County Council, the NHS Trust, Local Health Board, Leonard Cheshire, Carmarthenshire Association of Voluntary Services and a wide range of voluntary sector support agencies such as the Touch Trust and Arts Care.

5.5. Early Years Centre with Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin

The WWAG funded 'Geiriau Bach' project has successfully trained over 250 students and has led to the development of new awards including the HE Certificate in Welsh and Bilingual Practice in the Early Years.

In recognition of the importance of bilingual Early Years provision and the introduction of the Foundation Phase, Trinity will be developing a £0.9m Early Years Centre for early years training for practitioners across Wales through the medium of Welsh. This project

builds on the successful work already undertaken in this arena through "Geriau Bach" programme, and will enable Trinity to further its reputation as a centre of excellence in partnership with Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin.

5.6. The Carmarthenshire Local Service Board (LSB)

5.6.1 Trinity College is actively involved in the Carmarthenshire Community Planning Steering Group which is currently acting as a pilot area for the development of Local Service Boards. Trinity is represented on the LSB, and on the Regeneration and Environment Partnerships that feed into the LSB via the chairs of the Partnerships. Membership of the LSB comprises the local authority, Coleg Sir Gâr, Carmarthenshire Association of Voluntary Services, Chair of the Community Networks, Local Health Board, NHS Trust, Environment Agency, Dyfed Powys Police, DCELLS, DET, and WAG.

5.6.2 The overarching themes for the pilot LSB have been agreed as Health and Well Being and Sustainable Development. Trinity is making a substantial contribution to these agendas via the CIL project outlined above, and through its involvement on the Environment Partnership's Executive Committee. Through a Knowledge Exchange Project (KEP) on Corporate Social Responsibility, Trinity will be providing research data on the involvement of the private sector with the climate change agenda to feed into the sustainability target outcomes for the LSB, and will also be developing a multi media social networking facility for members of the LSB and other agencies to share good practice in sustainability with the private sector.

5.7 The activities outlined above clearly indicate the significance of Trinity's commitment to collaborative working, and the wider impact of this activity on the local, regional and national economy. Trinity recognises the value of working across sectoral and geographical boundaries to maximise the value of its key strengths to the region, both in taking a lead role in the development of major capital projects, and in supporting wider collaborative projects.

"The College contributes to the development of the regional economy and reinforces the significance of Carmarthenshire as a regional centre for the development of higher learning opportunities that could support economic and social innovation between the Swansea Bay/ Western Valleys and Pembrokeshire regions. The College has developed a clear role for itself as a 'knowledge hub' which supports a number of priority areas identified by the Assembly Government. This is in line with the recommendations of the Wales Spatial Plan." (Bute Report: Trinity College, Carmarthen: Working for Wales 2006 page 8)

6. Trinity College's Entrepreneurship Strategy

6.1 Trinity College, along with other Welsh HEIs, has benefitted from the Knowledge Exploitation Fund (KEF). Funding to support the development and integration of entrepreneurship into the curriculum has resulted in a number of significant developments, including the development of a student/staff Enterprise Club. In keeping with the College's focus on the Creative Arts, the Ffrinj Festival Committee, developed as part of the annual Gwyl y Drindod, is now running as a sub group of the Enterprise Club so that students gain first hand experience of setting up, promoting and managing an event as part of their studies.

6.2 The success of this activity is demonstrated by the number of KEF Scholarships generated, 13 between 2004 and 2008. The College has supported the development of new businesses via the Spinout programme, with four applications recently put forward for approval in the key areas of tourism, the creative arts, social inclusion and sustainability.

6.3 In keeping with the College's mission, there is additional emphasis on the development of social and community enterprise. Trinity's first Spinout (or Spin in) was also the first Community Interest Company registered in Wales, Trysordy. Enterprise modules delivered to Business and Management studies include those on Corporate Social Responsibility and ethical business practice: the College has played a key role in supporting Carmarthenshire's application for Fair Trade status, and will shortly receive institutional Fair Trade status also, aligning with WAG's commitment to make Wales the first Fair Trade country.

6.4. Trinity's commitment to the enterprise agenda is most obviously evidenced by its investment in the state of the art Creative and Cultural Enterprise Centre, Y Llwyfan. This £2.5m development was supported by WAG and Carmarthenshire County Council. The vision of the centre is to provide a key development that meets the needs of graduates aspiring to start their own business as well as provide a resource for creative and cultural industries. The aims and objectives of the 'Y Llwyfan' accord with the vision of 'People, Places, Futures' and the Carmarthenshire Community Strategy's key priorities of arts and culture, job creation and retaining a young work force. The centre opened for business on 1 September 2007 and provides a permanent administrative and rehearsal base for Theatr Genedlaethol, office space for companies operating in the cultural sector as well as up to ten incubator units for KEF scholars and spin-out companies. The opportunity for these new businesses to link directly with an established cultural enterprise is an important one as the combination creates a business hub above a critical mass. The centre has been fully occupied from the outset. 'Y Llwyfan' has a 'fat' broadband facility which is of particular application to media industries. An application has been made to the EU-funded Rural Development Plan (RDP) for project funding to support the growth of creative and cultural industries in rural Carmarthenshire, and provide demand-led training and development opportunities for the sector.

6.5. Curriculum development to support the enterprise agenda, and specifically the findings of the Cox Review, is ongoing. The College has developed a highly innovative multi-disciplinary Masters in the Creative Arts programme which will allow graduates and practitioners from a range of disciplines to work together in a creative way. The programme is currently recruiting, and has attracted interest from the United States and Canada, following Trinity's representation with Creative Business Wales at the Toronto International Film Festival in August 07.

6.6 **Consultancy.** Trinity's academic and support staff are also actively involved in income generating research and consultancy activity.

This activity has been contracted by public sector agencies, but is inevitably of benefit to the economy and/or society. It includes a number of research projects, including an ESRC funded project, Prosiect Dysgu Cydradd where staff are working in collaboration with Manchester University to identify key principles of effective teaching and learning for secondary school teachers, and a project with WAG to improve the understanding and knowledge of teachers working with pupils who have special educational needs.

6.7 Trinity is actively involved in the development of e-learning and was one of only three Welsh HEIs to take part in the HEA e-learning benchmarking scheme in 2007. The College has attended the educa Berlin International e-learning conference for the last three years, where it has showcased the materials developed via the Geriau Bach and Tenderwise projects.

7. Trinity's Success in Accessing Funding from a range of sources, including European Structural Funds.

7.1 In terms of European Structural Funds, Trinity College has accessed European Social Fund (ESF) grants to support 6 projects with a total project cost of over £1m, all of which have had an impact on the local and regional economy. Five of these ESF projects have supported Masters-level provision in areas such as Heritage Tourism, Tourism Management and Education for Sustainability.

7.2 Trinity College has also worked in partnership with other institutions to access European Structural Funds. Examples here include collaboration with Cardiff University and partners on both phases of their ERDF-funded Geoenvironmental Research Park (GRP) projects since 2002.

7.3 In addition Trinity College has worked in collaboration with Irish institutions to access Territorial Cooperation (Interreg) funds. Examples here include the ParNetourism project on tourism partnerships in collaboration with Dublin Institute of Technology and the Tenderwise project (Public Sector Procurement Toolkit for SME's) in partnership with University College, Dublin. The toolkit takes the form of a multi media interactive CD ROM and website (www.tenderwise.com) which supports SME's seeking familiarity and greater awareness of the regulatory requirements of the public sector's procurement policies in order to tender for contracts and the provision of services.

7.4 Trinity has been successful in securing project funding from the WAG KEF and KEP programmes to support innovative projects in the key areas of new media and the creative arts, and sustainability. These project have involved collaboration with a range of partners, including relevant Sector Skills Councils - Skillset Cymru and Creative and Cultural Skills - and key organisations such as the Sustainable Development Commission and Institute of Welsh Affairs.

8. Trinity's wider contribution to community and cultural agendas

8.1 Trinity's significant contribution to the cultural life of Wales is well attested.

"The institution has developed into a distinct centre of excellence for the critical, creative and performing arts in Wales. It plays a strategic role in the bilingual and Welsh medium delivery of performing art courses. It is the only institution of higher education in Wales which offers full Welsh language undergraduate courses in the performing arts. We are aware that performance training is arguably very different from the training offered in less specialised departments within other Universities and that the nature of the performance culture is vastly different. It is clear that a number of training schemes offered at the College are practical in nature, similar to conservatoire based training. The decision to locate Theatr Genedlaethol Cymru at the College has reinforced the institution's position as a national centre of excellence for the performing arts in Wales. The College offers a wide range of practical courses in the Performance Arts which are similar in nature to those offered at any other College of Music and Drama in England and Wales. In Trinity's case, the institution also makes a unique contribution to the enhancement of bilingual delivery of the performing arts, which will support the bilingual professional needs of Welsh artists and industries. Given the clear strategic priorities of "Cymru Creadigol" and the importance of the College in delivering those objectives, there is a case to be made that the Assembly Government and its relevant sponsored body should review the current position whereby the College does not receive the appropriate level of funding for delivering conservatoire type courses through the medium of Welsh."

9. Conclusion

The above information clearly defines the key role that Trinity plays within the cultural, social and economic development of West Wales, and its considerable contribution to WAG's policies, particularly in supporting Welsh graduates in gaining high level skills to work within Wales. The willingness to work collaboratively with a wide range of partners is a key strength in maximising the impact of the College's specialisms and expertise. The Bute report clearly summarises Trinity's position and contribution.

"College offers a very distinctive brand of higher education in Wales. That brand is not available in any other Higher Education institution in Wales. Its commitment to lifelong learning is evidently clear. The College has identified its niche and has focused on providing added value within a number of key policy priorities of the WAG. There is clear evidence to support the claim that the new training schemes offered by the College since 2000 have had a positive impact. The vision of the College and the management drive to create a central learning hub for the region which delivers tangible outcomes in relation to the future needs of Wales is convincing. The clarity of the management action since 2000 in driving forward this agenda places the institution in a strong position.

Given the fact that Trinity offers University education to Welsh domiciled students, the strategic implications for the Assembly in considering value for money principles are significant. The value of the investment of Welsh taxpayers' money in this context is clear. The investment in higher education at Trinity College makes a difference not only to the individual students, but to the development of the regional knowledge base and the social and cultural regeneration of Wales; boosting community regeneration and improving the competitiveness of the economic base."