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CCT Strategic Plan 2018 - 2020, Institution Strategy

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CCT College Dublin

Strategic Plan 2018 – 2020

Institution Strategy

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1. President's Introduction

We are delighted to introduce the third Strategic Plan since the establishment of the College in 2005. Our previous two plans have been designed and presented in a meaningful way with achievable and realistic strategic goals, and actions. To this end, we can report that most strategic goals set in previous plans have been achieved.

External Context

This strategic plan has been formulated and introduced at a time of general global economic recovery from the acute downturn spanning the period 2008 - 2013. However, the effects of the downturn are still widely felt in parts of the world and across Ireland. The current Irish government (2017) is currently reviewing a new approach to funding of higher education in Ireland. Exchequer funding for state institutions reduced in the main in late noughties, although creative state initiatives such as Springboard are still available for accessible higher education and training. For the first time in Irish history, students of established and state accredited independent colleges of higher education are being considered by government for state grant-aid to attend state validated programmes, with potential funding on fees also. Society expects opportunities within education and training, and the private sector of education in Ireland, has a role to play in this respect. Having navigated successfully through the very challenging downturn period, remaining profitable each year, and reinvesting all annual profits to maintain a steady organic and continuous strategic development, CCT is still a young College within an early growth stage. However, we recognise that the next three years of the College's development is a critical one in extending our scope of provision into delivery of postgraduate Masters level provision, professional education, and education through linked provision, and growing overall student numbers by 50%. As an independent College, we recognise that we have to continue to be creative and opportunistic in education provision and income generation, with the student, and quality at the core of everything we do.

Background to this Strategic Plan, 2018-2020

In this next Strategic Plan, we are building on our achievements and milestone developments so far, with a balanced approach to education, training, and innovation. Innovation in our plan includes the important area of knowledge transfer, but it is also emphasised as a feature in everything we do. This strategic plan sets out goals and targets which naturally evolve from previous goals met, and goals and targets which are continually met and strived for – serving as fundamentals to the success of any Institute of Learning. This strategic plan also incorporates ambitious targets of learner performance at undergraduate and postgraduate level, becoming validated by the Irish State to deliver CCT designed programmes at Level 9, growth to 1,500 students with a healthy student/staff ratio, diverse student body, remaining profitable and debt-free as an organisation, positioning CCT globally as an innovative, responsive, flexible, and highly specialised institute of learning for ICT and Business studies, and also becoming reputed as a significant contributor to the gap in the Irish secondary and primary Teacher-Training on Technology, Computing, and finally - the use of Technology for Learning.

This next strategic plan is a product of extensive consultation across the College, as well as external stakeholders. The new plan sets out aspirations and well-defined targets.

The quality and commitment of CCT's staff, and unique passion education and innovation underpin the success of the College so far, and the strategic planning for further development, and to position CCT as one of Ireland's leading providers of further and higher education and training in the ICT and Business areas, and to be recognised as a leading national and international College of Business and Technology.

Introduction to our next Strategic Plan, 2018 - 2020

CCT has prepared this Strategic Plan as a central pillar for its own management and further development. It is a public document that is intended to provide all stakeholders with the necessary information on how the Institute will operate over the next three years, 2018 - 2020.

It is not unusual for Strategic Plans to be more aspirational than functional. CCT recognises this and realises that its own Strategic Plan needs to be a document that is drafted in such a way to be as meaningful as possible but most particularly for those that will be responsible for its implementation, namely the College staff. This will be a living document that will be seen to have a relevance to every staff member. The College Strategic Plan will be linked with the Operational Plans of all Departments. It will be used as a roadmap in planning and importantly also in the ultimate evaluation of departmental plans, in monitoring progress on departmental objectives and in the achievement of Strategic Plan goals at the College level. It is important to recognise that CCT as a higher education institution has achieved a great deal in its short existence, and that the strategic objectives and key performance indicators outlined in this plan are enhancements, building on good foundations, principles, goals realised, and tasks already completed.

The foundations of the Strategic Plan are the Statements of Mission, Vision and Values. These are enduring and define who we are and what we are striving to achieve. More important perhaps in terms of this particular plan are the Themes and Actions (derived from our Consultation with stakeholders from the College) which have been designed in the context of the stage of growth of the College, and what we need to do over the coming years.

2. College Mission, Vision, and Values

CCT Mission

The Mission of CCT College Dublin is to provide learners with accessible and flexible higher education opportunities, and professional development programmes within the fields of Computing, Information Technology, and Business that reflect current and emerging knowledge and practices relevant to the learner and to employers.

Through a learner-centred culture of enquiry, innovation and excellence, we challenge our learners, staff, and other stakeholders to create, apply, and share knowledge and values in a supportive, responsive, caring, and vibrant learning environment.

CCT is committed to developing graduates with personal and professional knowledge and skills that will enable them to undertake the roles, responsibilities and challenges posed by business, industry, the professions, public service and society.

CCT Vision

CCT's main Vision as a leading college of higher education, is to transform lives through excellence in teaching and learning and by inspiring our teachers, students, and graduates.

We will do this through:

- Inspiring a lifelong passion for learning, exploration and discovery that will ensure leadership with a global outlook and innovative approaches to sustainable economic, social, cultural and personal development.
- Embracing access, equality of opportunity and progression in order that our diverse learner population is empowered to succeed as citizens of a challenging world.
- Blending theory with applied enquiry, industry-aligned, scholarly, professional and vocational pursuits with scientific and creative expression in the broad disciplines of Business and Information Communications Technology. Through these we serve to improve our region, our country and our world.
- Championing a co-operative teaching and research culture that connects with other higher education institutions, schools, industry, local communities, government and non-governmental development agencies.
- Actively nurturing continuous enhancement of all of our relationships to progress excellence in innovation, knowledge transfer and reputation in an international higher education landscape.

CCT Values

We are committed to

- excellence in teaching, learning, assessment, and innovation
- providing a student-centred, supportive learning environment
- recognising that our achievements are built on the expertise and commitment of our staff
- actively encouraging and promoting social inclusion and diversity
- making a positive impact on our local, national, and international communities
- Operating in an ethical, accountable, and transparent manner in all we do
- continually striving to facilitate enhancement and an innovative approach to education

3. Milestone Developments of the College so far

The following is a summary of the main achievements over the period spanning the first two Strategic Plans of CCT from 2005 - 2017, through an organic, steady growth and a financial strategy of reinvestment of all profit each year:

- **February 2005:** CCT opened its doors with offering Diploma level programmes at Level 6, and 11 enrolled students
- **2006 - 2008:** The College operated from two campus buildings, at 26 Merrion Square, Dublin 2, and 102-103 Amiens St., Dublin 1, offering mainly further education level programmes and ICT industry certification training programmes
- **2008 - 2011:** As the strategic intention of the College was always to become predominantly a provider of higher education provider, CCT commenced this journey through the provision of a BSc in Computing, BA (Hons) in Business Administration, and an MSc in Computer Science, awarded by University of Hertfordshire. This enabled the College to build up experience providing higher education programmes, in preparation for an application to the Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC) in Ireland, to become a state accredited provider of higher education programmes.
- **2008:** CCT agreed its QA Policies and Procedures with HETAC
- **2009:** CCT received HETAC validation to provide a level 6 Higher Certificate in Science in Computing in IT
- **2010:** CCT commenced its first cohort of its HETAC validated Level 6 Higher Education programme
- **2011:** CCT moved to its current premises at 30-34 Westmoreland St. (26,000 sq ft)
- **2012:** CCT received Quality & Qualifications Ireland (QQI - formerly HETAC) validation to provide its first Level 7 Bachelor of Science IT programme
- **2012:** CCT established a new Faculty of Business at the College
- **2013:** CCT received Quality & Qualifications Ireland (QQI) validation to provide a level 7 Bachelor of Business programme
- **2014:** CCT received Quality & Qualifications Ireland (QQI) validation to provide a level 8 Bachelor (Hons) of Science in IT
- **2016:** CCT received Quality & Qualifications Ireland (QQI) validation to provide a level 8 Bachelor of Business (Hons) award
- **2017:** CCT received Quality & Qualifications Ireland (QQI) validation to provide a level 8 postgrad Higher Diploma in Science in Computing

- **2013-2017:** CCT has provided Springboard+ funded programmes each year
- **2012-2017:** Growth each year of a student body from 250 full time students to 895 full time students
- **2015:** Introduction of an internally reviewed Quality Assurance System
- **2015-2017:** Growth of 35% in staff numbers, with an expanded and highly experienced Senior Management Team
- **2006-2017:** Net profit recorded for each year of the College's existence, except for year 1 (2005) with a loss of €13k

4. Consultation & Background to this Strategic Plan, 2018 - 2020

Consultation with various stakeholders for this Strategic Plan commenced in October 2016, with most consulting activity taking place over 2017. Students, Staff, Advisory Board, and Employers represented some of the Stakeholder groups consulted, through the use of independently facilitated workshops, focus groups, surveys, and meetings. The most pertinent and common feedback received through the Consultation phase is presented in Appendix A, attached.

5. Strategic Vision

Our main strategic vision for CCT over the next three years is to further strengthen the reputation and position of the college as a leading independent higher education provider of Computing, Business and ICT programmes in Ireland. Moreover, we aim to have CCT nationally and internationally recognised as a college leading innovative education while being fully responsive to the changing needs of society.

6. Themes for Strategic Plan 2018 - 2020

The strategy will be delivered by carrying out a set of actions to meet key performance indicators for each strategic objective. Each strategic objective was informed through consultation with all staff members and a representative sample of the student body. The consultation process outcome of ideas and feedback generated, are grouped into six major themes as follows:

- A. Teaching, Learning and Assessment
- B. Innovation and Facilities
- C. Student Services and Experience
- D. Academic Governance and Quality Assurance
- E. Brand Promotion and College Growth
- F. Greater Industry Engagement

7. CCT Strategic Plan (2018 - 2020), Strategic Objectives & Enabling the Strategy

The following Strategic Objectives are the result and adoption of input from stakeholders from the Consultation process for this Strategic Plan. Each strategic objective represents many of the six themes outlined in section 7 above.

Strategic Objective 1 - Maintain and strengthen academic excellence as our highest priority

The pursuit of excellence in teaching, learning and assessment is central to CCT's Vision and Mission. It is the foundation upon which our reputation stands, and students succeed. It is our first priority and takes precedence over all other activities of the College.

Key Performance Indicators in realising this strategic objective

Over the next three years, we will:

- 1.1 *Establish a Centre for Teaching and Learning at CCT* which will promote the development of faculty staff, further facilitate the mutually beneficial integration of faculties and library of CCT, and share and receive best practice in teaching, learning, and assessment across the sector to enhance the learner experience.
- 1.2 *Increase the number of lecturers and teaching assistants* in line with College growth. This is particularly important in early undergraduate years, where large group intakes may be split.
- 1.3 *Increase the use of tested and innovative learning technologies*, including the use of virtual learning platforms, and with CCT investing further in educational technologies to enhance and aid vibrant, interactive and dynamic teaching and learning. This objective also affords the opportunity for blended learning programme offerings at CCT, for flexible education and training.
- 1.4 *Review and refresh our institution-wide Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy*, designed and developed by Faculty, to inform programme specific TLA strategies to ensure dynamic programme offerings.
- 1.5 *Develop curriculum in undergraduate and postgraduate education*, with new programmes particularly focussed at Irish NQF Levels 8 and 9, with flexible mode delivery included to appeal to different profiles of student (full and part time, Irish and International).
- 1.6 *Continually improve retention on all programmes*, through implementing teaching, learning and assessment approaches that positively influence students' decisions to continue with their studies.
- 1.7 *Increase diversity in pedagogic approach and adoption of diverse teaching strategies*, including the adoption of a greater number of teaching techniques at the forefront of pedagogical practice such as contemplative practices, problem-based

learning, negotiated learning, and others. Blended learning, flipped classrooms, and some online learning is all being planned over the next three years.

1.8 *Review continually all teaching and learning and programmes* in line with our QA policies and procedures, to ensure continuous improvement of our academic operation.

Strategic Objective 2 - Enrich and transform our students' lives by equipping them to realise their potential and flourish in 21st Century society

At CCT, we aim to enrich the lives of our students, by providing an excellent learning experience and professional development, combined with a particular focus on personal development. We strive to enable our students to realise their personal potential and to achieve their professional ambitions.

Key Performance Indicators in realising this strategic objective

Over the next three years, we will:

2.1 *Continue to enhance the employability of our graduates* by informing our degree programmes through regular analysis of social, economic, and employer needs, and also through scheduled guest lecturing, and annual careers fairs held at CCT

2.2 *Promote and continue to develop the effective supports* to assist students to manage their mental health particularly during their time at CCT, through the use of meaningful informational workshops on subjects relevant to students in higher education.

2.3 *Continue to develop the Careers Service at the College* in enhancing students' job readiness skills and awareness of industry trends, information, and careers available

2.4 *Expand the wide array of existing student supports and services*, and strive to maintain the personal touch and open-door policy practiced at CCT. In particular, CCT is determined to continuously improve the learning support services available.

2.5 *Continue to develop initiatives which will enrich the lives of our student body*. These will include enhancing a vibrant Clubs and Societies culture, supporting social events for students, and developing further staff/student community and charity based events and initiatives.

2.6 *Improve, on an annual basis, student induction and promote the importance of orientation* to various stages of higher education programmes, in particular the transition of second level to third level, and introduction of international students to Ireland and Irish higher education.

2.7 *Develop further the pastoral care offering for all learners*, in adherence to the QQI published Code of Practice related to the proposed International Education Mark (IEM) of Ireland.

Strategic Objective 3 - Ensure that our physical and organisational infrastructure and governance is effective in supporting delivery of our strategic intent

Our continuous pursuit of excellence in teaching, learning, and innovation requires both organisational structures that are effective in facilitating this vision and appropriate physical infrastructure that supports its achievement.

Key Performance Indicators in realising this strategic objective

Over the next three years, we will:

3.1 *Aim to provide the CCT community with the best possible learning environment, including learning spaces, library, study areas, and ample circulation space.*

3.2 *Continue to enhance the campus of CCT as an ever-evolving digital learning environment, with the provision of cutting edge IT infrastructure.*

3.3 *Continue to promote principles of equality, mutual respect, and embracing diversity.*

3.4 *Ensure a balanced approach to assessing CCT physical, academic, and organisational capacity as the College grows and expands.*

3.5 *Continue to support the professional development of our staff through mentoring, network training initiatives, development opportunities, education events, and career support.*

3.6 *Maintain best practice of corporate governance and organisational development including the constant review of our quality assurance system, quality promotion, human resources management, health and safety, overall college capacity, profitability and internal auditing.*

3.7 *Maintain and review our Quality Assurance system, including a successful Re-engagement process with Quality & Qualifications Ireland (QQI), along with other engagement events throughout our life-cycle with QQI.*

Strategic Objective 4 - Be recognised as a leading independent higher education provider, nationally and internationally, and enhance brand awareness of the College resulting in growth in enrolment numbers and sustainability

CCT recognises the importance of reputation within higher education, and is proud of the good name and brand integrity attributed to the College. However, CCT needs to promote and expand its brand awareness nationally and internationally, and generate additional streams of revenue.

Key Performance Indicators in realising this strategic objective

Over the next three years, we will:

4.1 *Expand the professional education programme offering at CCT, during evening and weekend schedules, utilising flexible modes of delivery.*

4.2 *Invest considerably in the marketing and promotion of CCT, and extending the brand of the College across Ireland (mainly through initiatives linked with school leaver students applying through the CAO, and professional market) and internationally (mainly through relationships and partnerships with educational institutes, agencies, and Irish state activity related to the Education Ireland brand).*

4.3 *Increase student enrolment by approximately 40% to an average enrolment figure at the College of 1,500.*

4.4 *Foster active engagement with industry partners through the establishment of an Industry employer forum / Industry Advisory Board, Guest Lecturing, Field trips, CCT Careers Fair, and proactive scheduled meetings.*

4.5 *Facilitate a lifetime relationship with our Alumni, including enhanced communications and engagements with our Alumni community, and profiling of our Alumni to promote the CCT brand.*

4.6 *Carefully consider linked provision partnership with Irish state aided higher education institution(s) for mutually beneficial educational relations, in addition to our relationship with QQI.*

8. Implementing the Strategy

This strategic plan will be implemented by delivering on the Actions listed above. Delivering on these actions will result in a more developed, innovative and progressive institution. This strategic plan has been approved by the College President and Academic Council. High-level responsibility for achieving the vision of the strategic plan rests with the Academic Council, Senior Management Team, and ultimately with the College President.

Certain actions have been, and will be further, devolved to other senior level staff within CCT to ensure that the actions are achieved while maintaining a high-level management oversight.

In a significant departure from conventional models of strategic planning at higher education institutions including universities, this new CCT Strategic Plan will involve a process of Rolling Planning. A rolling approach to planning provides the College with an opportunity to be flexible and responsive to the dynamic national and global environment. Our strategic planning process will involve continuous assessment of CCT's progress towards its goals, while simultaneously taking account of changes in the environment in which it operates.

Through a range of internal and external analysis tools, CCT will perform an annual review and critical evaluation of the delivery, impact and relevance of its current strategic initiatives. This review will include a detailed analysis of Key Performance Indicators

(KPIs) that characterise our ambitious targets. Where appropriate, these KPIs will be benchmarked regularly against both national and international comparators.

The rolling planning system will enable us to revise and develop our strategic objectives, where necessary, while maintaining a focus on our stated strategic mission, vision and values. The annual 'Review and Renew' process will continue over the period 2018-2020 of this plan. This approach will enable CCT to be responsive to emerging opportunities, and alert to risks and uncertainty in our environment.

It is intended that this Strategic Plan will be maintained as a working document over the duration to the Strategic Plan so that by the end of the period it is expected that the next Strategic Plan will be developed as a rolling 3 or 5-year plan that flows naturally from the current Strategic Plan.

9. Conclusion

A new and completed three year focussed Strategic Plan, enshrined within the Mission of CCT and in accordance with the overall objectives of the college and quality assurance system, is required to give organisational strategic direction and to ensure that the college is going to reach the next level of its development and continue to improve as a provider of high quality education and training. In this context, CCT has as its core interest the education and success of its students and graduates.