



# **University College Dublin**

## **REVIEW GROUP REPORT**

**Periodic Quality Review**

**UCD School of Agriculture and Food Science**

**July 2021**

**Accepted by the UCD Governing Authority at its meeting of 7 October 2021**

## Table of Contents

Key Findings of the Review Group	3
1. Introduction and Context	5
2. Organisation and Management	9
3. Staff and Facilities	11
4. Teaching, Learning and Assessment	12
5. Curriculum Development and Review	14
6. Research Activity	15
7. Management of Quality and Enhancement	17
8. Support Services	18
9. Collaborative Educational Provision	19
10. External Relations	20
Appendix 1: Summary of Commendations and Recommendations	
Appendix 2: UCD School of Agriculture and Food Science Response to the Review Group Report	
Appendix 3: Schedule for Review Remote Site Visit to UCD School of Agriculture and Food Science	

## **Key Findings of the Review Group**

The Review Group (RG) has identified a number of key aspects in relation to areas of good practice operating within the UCD School of Agriculture and Food Science; and also areas which the RG would highlight as requiring improvement. The main section of this Report sets out all the observations, commendations and recommendations of the RG in specific detail. An aggregated list of all commendations and recommendations is set out in Appendix 1.

### **Examples of Good Practice**

The RG identified a number of commendations, in particular:

1. There is an impressive 'Team Spirit' across the School and a supportive working environment among the administrative, technical, faculty and research staff, including the Section Leads and overall School Leadership. (Commendation 2.10)
2. The School received the Athena SWAN Bronze Award in 2019 and has developed a 44-point action plan to achieve gender equality at all levels. (Commendation 3.8)
3. The RG commends the quality of the teaching staff and the emphasis on research-led teaching from all levels of staff, from Assistant Professor to Full Professor. It was also impressed by the high proportion of staff who have a formal teaching qualification and the numbers nominated for teaching awards. (Commendation 4.7)
4. The School is well aligned with the University's strategy 'Rising to the Future' and the high-level vision and strategy of 'One Health' and the involvement in the Institute of Food and Health have the ability to integrate various disciplines and foster interdisciplinarity. (Commendation 6.6)
5. Research performance is excellent, which makes the ambitious goals to be a top global agricultural and food university as put forward in the SAR realistic. (Commendation 6.7)
6. The RG was impressed by the School's strong focus on connections with alumni, including through the Agricultural Science Association, the professional association for graduates of Agricultural Science in Ireland and its involvement in student events, job placements and employer involvement. The RG was also impressed by the strong role played by student-led societies in this regard, in particular the Agricultural Science Society, which was also highly commended by the students themselves. (Commendation 10.7)

## **Prioritised Recommendations for Improvement**

The full list of recommendations is set out in Appendix 1 and the RG would specifically like to suggest that the following be prioritised:

1. The RG recommends that the School ensure that post-doctoral staff in all Sections have opportunities to meet together in order to foster a sense of community and enhance potential for collaboration. Both informal networking and formal support structures for these staff should be considered. The RG recommends that more responsibility for this be undertaken by Principal Investigators (PIs), Section Heads and the School Executive to ensure that engagement is facilitated. (Recommendation 2.14)
2. The RG recommends that, in its planned review of the workload model, the School should consider capturing the teaching input of post-doctoral and other research staff, which is not currently visible. In addition, the RG recommends that the workload model review also consider the introduction of mechanisms to guide the distribution of workload across the School and within the different faculty levels where the load is not evenly distributed. (Recommendation 2.16)
3. To match increased student numbers, academic staff and research activities, the RG recommends the hiring of additional administrative and technical staff, including Chief Technical Officers, who can take on line management responsibilities for technical staff. (Recommendation 3.10)
4. The equipment and facilities at Lyons Farm, Rosemont and in food processing are essential to support research and teaching in the School. There is a great and urgent need for the University to invest in this infrastructure. The RG recommends the University work with the College of Health and Agricultural Sciences, the UCD School of Veterinary Medicine and the UCD School of Agriculture and Food Sciences to develop a financial plan and budget for such work. (Recommendation 3.11)
5. The prioritised research focal points should be made more explicit and go beyond the listing of research themes: the School and its Sections should better communicate their areas of excellence, for instance via the website, and by the identification of research champions or role models. In doing this, attention should be paid to the diversity of research profiles present in the School so that the wide range of research interests continues to be valued. (Recommendation 6.13)

# 1. Introduction and Context

## Introduction

- 1.1 This report presents the findings of a quality review of the School of Agriculture and Food Science, University College Dublin, which was undertaken in March 2021. The School response to the Review Group Report is attached as Appendix 2.

## The Review Framework

- 1.2 Irish Universities have collectively agreed a framework for their quality review and quality improvement systems, which is consistent with both the legislative requirements of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012, and international good practice (e.g. Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area, 2015). Quality reviews are carried out in academic, administrative and support service units.

- 1.3 The purpose of periodic review is to assist the University to assure itself of the quality of each of its constituent units, and to utilise learning from this developmental process in order to effect improvement, including:

- To monitor the quality of the student experience and of teaching and learning.
- To monitor research activity, including: management of research activity; assessing the research performance with regard to: research productivity, research income, and recruiting and supporting doctoral students.
- To identify, encourage and disseminate good practice, and to identify challenges and how to address these.
- To provide an opportunity for units to test the effectiveness of their systems and procedures for monitoring and enhancing quality and standards.
- To encourage the development and enhancement of these systems, in the context of current and emerging provision.
- To inform the University's strategic planning process.
- The output report provides robust evidence for external accreditation bodies.
- The process provides an external benchmark on practice and curriculum.
- To provide public information on the University's capacity to assure the quality and standards of its awards. The University's implementation of its quality procedures

enables it to demonstrate how it discharges its responsibilities for assuring the quality and standards of its awards, as required by the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012.

## **The Review Process**

1.4 Typically, the review model comprises four major elements:

- Preparation of a self-assessment report (SAR)
- A visit by a RG that includes UCD staff and external experts, both national and international. The site visit normally will take place over a two or three day period
- Preparation of a review group report that is made public
- Agreement of an action plan for improvement (quality improvement plan) based on the RG report's recommendations. The University will also monitor progress against the improvement plan

Full details of the review process can be found on the UCD Quality Office website: [www.ucd.ie/quality](http://www.ucd.ie/quality).

## **The Review Group**

1.5 The composition of the RG for the UCD School of Agriculture and Food Science was as follows:

- Professor Eilis Hennessy, School of Psychology, UCD, Chair
- Associate Professor Ivar McGrath, School of History, UCD, Deputy Chair
- Professor Susan Lanham-New, University of Surrey, UK
- Professor Erik Mathijs, KU Leuven, Belgium

1.6 The RG held meetings (via Zoom) with School staff; undergraduate and postgraduate students; graduates, employers, other University staff from 22–25 March 2021. The RG were also given photographs and videos of the School facilities. The schedule is included as Appendix 3.

1.7 In addition to the Self-assessment Report, the RG considered documentation provided by the School and the University during the remote site visit.

1.8 This Report has been read and approved by all members of the Review Group.

## **Preparation of the Self-assessment Report (SAR)**

- 1.9 Following a briefing from the UCD Quality Office, a Self-assessment Report Coordinating Committee (SARCC) was established by the School.
- 1.10 The SAR was prepared in the period January 2020 – November 2020. Despite the challenges of the coronavirus crisis in 2020, all staff were consulted during the process with specific aspects of the report discussed in various fora. The final draft report was developed by the SAR Co-ordinating Committee reflecting the various inputs with individual members taking responsibility for chapters of the report. All staff were given the opportunity to comment on the final draft and to contribute to the final report.
- 1.11 The SAR was clear, well-structured and addressed the main criteria required. Several areas would have benefitted from additional detail or some further specifics, in particular the chapter on Research and Impact, and these are noted in the relevant sections of this report. The explicit engagement with the positive findings of the Staff Survey was appropriate, and the negative findings are also considered though in less depth.

## **The University**

- 1.12 University College Dublin (UCD) is a large and diverse university whose origins date back to 1854. The University is situated on a large modern campus about 4 km to the south of the centre of Dublin.
- 1.13 The University Strategic Plan (2020 to 2024) states that the University’s mission is: “to contribute to the flourishing of Dublin, Ireland, Europe and the world through the excellence and impact of our research and scholarship, the quality of our graduates and our global engagement; providing a supportive community in which every member of the University is enabled to achieve their full potential”.

The University is currently organised into six colleges and 37 schools:

- UCD College of Arts and Humanities
- UCD College of Business
- UCD College of Engineering and Architecture
- UCD College of Health and Agricultural Sciences
- UCD College of Social Sciences and Law
- UCD College of Science

- 1.14 As one of the largest universities on the island of Ireland, UCD supports a broad, deep and rich academic community in Science, Business, Engineering, Health Sciences, Agriculture, Veterinary Medicine, Arts, Law, Celtic Studies and Human Sciences. There are currently more than 26,000 students studying at the UCD campus (approximately 16,300 undergraduates, 7,800 postgraduates and 2,200 Occasional and Adult Education students) and who are registered on over 70 University degree programmes, including over 6,300 international students from more than 121 countries. The University also has over 5,400 students studying UCD degree programmes on campuses overseas.

### **UCD School of Agriculture and Food Science**

- 1.15 The School of Agriculture and Food Science is one of five Schools in the College of Health and Agricultural Sciences, which is the largest College in the University. The College was established in 2015 and brings together all of the sciences associated with human and animal health, and food production. The intention of bringing these Schools together in a single College was to harness synergies which exist across the UCD's 'One Health' spectrum. The College also runs Lyons Farm which is an important teaching and research facility for both the School of Agriculture & Food Science and the School of Veterinary Medicine.
- 1.16 The UCD School of Agriculture and Food Science was formed in September 2011 having been part of the large School of Agriculture, Food Science & Veterinary Medicine since 2005. Prior to that it existed as the Faculty of Agriculture, which was established as part of UCD under the University Education (Agriculture and Dairy Science) Act, 1926. Before that, the School had its roots in the Albert College and the Glasnevin Model Farm dating back to 1838.
- 1.17 The School is one of the largest in the University with a total of 72 Academic staff, 20 Administrative staff, 20 Technical staff, 57 Contract Researchers (Post-doctoral Fellows and Research Assistants) and 29 Adjunct Staff.
- 1.18 The School has two undergraduate Honours Degree (Level 8) pathways leading to Bachelor of Agricultural Science (BAgrSc) or Bachelor of Science (BSc) degrees and 8 taught master's degrees with various specialisms. In recent years, a new bachelor's degree in Food Business with Chinese Studies was introduced in response to market demand and in September 2021 the School will have its first intake of students for a new BAgrSc in Crop Science. The School attracts significant external research income (approx. €14 million in 2019/2020).

## 2. Organisation and Management

### General Comments and Context

- 2.1 The School Plan (2019-2022) sets out a suitably ambitious set of targets in the areas of research and education and clearly articulates the considerable strengths of the School, while recognising that the agriculture and food sectors face considerable challenges in Ireland and internationally. The Plan also articulates the School's values and commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.
- 2.2 The current structure of the School provides the opportunity for research and teaching that spans the complete food chain from production on the farm, through processing facilities to the consumer. Lyons Farm, Rosemount Environmental Research Station, and the Food Processing facilities on the Belfield campus provide the facilities for research and the opportunity for students to get practical experience related to their academic studies.
- 2.3 The Head of School is also the Dean of Agricultural Sciences and is supported in these roles by two key management groups, the School Executive Committee and the Agriculture & Food Science Taught Programmes Board.
- 2.4 School operational and management structures are organised into four sections (Agribusiness & Rural Development; Animal & Crop Science; Environment & Sustainable Resource Management; Food Science & Nutrition) each of which is managed by a Section Head who deals with day-to-day management activities (e.g. teaching allocations) and many of the lines of communication take place within Sections. Because so many day-to-day management decisions happen within Sections it is important that these decision-making structures are clearly articulated.
- 2.5 The SAR noted a need, based on staff feedback, to review how staff communications and research staff located within Sections are integrated with the broader School structures.
- 2.6 Since 2014 the School has operated a workload model for members of academic staff that records data on teaching and research activities. The SAR notes that aggregate data from the workload model are available to staff to benchmark their own activities against that of their peers. However, it was not clear to the RG how the data generated by the model is used to guide the distribution of workload across the School and within the different faculty levels. The model does not provide information on reporting lines and expectations of workload at various grades/positions.
- 2.7 The SAR also notes that the workload model is currently under review and that it does not document the work of research or technical staff. The sample output of the workload model in Appendix 13 of the SAR also suggests that it is not used to gather data on the teaching activities of graduate students or post-doctoral researchers.
- 2.8 The RG note that the differences in university faculty contracts and organisational structures across Europe make it very difficult to compare the workload of staff within the School with those of similar Schools in other European countries.

- 2.9 Currently, the administrative support for the work of the School is divided between a School Office (which focuses on the management of the School) and a Programme Office (which manages the administration related to student learning). Following a recent review, the School's ambition is to reorganise administration in accordance with the SASR Model B structure where the administrative functions of the School Office, Programme Office and Sections will be brought together under the Director of Administration.

### **Commendations**

- 2.10 There is an impressive 'Team Spirit' across the School and a supportive working environment among the administrative, technical, faculty and research staff, including the Section Leads and overall School Leadership.
- 2.11 The RG had meetings with faculty, staff and students from all of the different sections of the School. Feedback was almost unanimously complementary about the overall organisational structure of the School and noted how smoothly it functions.
- 2.12 The School management team has been responsive to changing demands of third level education e.g. responding to the need to recruit more international students by offering joint degrees with third level institutions in China.

### **Recommendations**

- 2.13 The RG recommends that the School review and document the Section-level structures and processes in order both to ensure that these are clearly communicated to staff and to facilitate coherent organisational practices across sections.
- 2.14 The RG recommends that the School ensure that post-doctoral staff in all Sections have opportunities to meet together in order to foster a sense of community and enhance potential for collaboration. Both informal networking and formal support structures for these staff should be considered. The RG recommends that more responsibility for this be undertaken by PIs, Section Heads and the School Executive to ensure that engagement is facilitated.
- 2.15 The SAR notes that the School has a large number of functional committees (22) and that committee work can take up a lot of time for faculty and staff. The RG recommends that the School review these committees to determine whether there is potential to rationalise and reduce the administrative burden.
- 2.16 The RG recommends that, in its planned review of the workload model, the School should consider capturing the teaching input of post-doctoral and other research staff, which is not currently visible. In addition, the RG recommends that the workload model review also consider the introduction of mechanisms to guide the distribution of workload across the School and within the different faculty levels where the load is not evenly distributed.

### **3. Staff and Facilities**

#### **General Comments and Context**

- 3.1 The School is experiencing an increase in student numbers and academic staff since the last review (from 55 to 72). However, these increases remain insufficient to keep pace with the increasing number of students, resulting in a relatively high student/faculty ratio (21:1). In addition, the increase in academic staff numbers has resulted in increased research activity and a growth in demand for administrative and technical support for that research.
- 3.2 With staff retirements, the age profile has changed significantly and also the gender balance has improved. However, there are still significant differences in gender across academic grades, with a lack of females in senior staff roles.
- 3.3 While promotions progress well for academic staff (81% of applicants were promoted between 2016 and 2020), promotions are much more challenging for administrative and technical staff.
- 3.4 The SAR reports a good uptake of continuing professional development by staff however, low uptake of induction training by new academic staff was also noted. The absence of a formal mentoring programme for new academic staff in the past may have fed into this low take-up of induction training for new staff.
- 3.5 The School operates over multiple locations. While it was not possible to visit the School in-person due to covid restrictions, both the material provided in the SAR, video material and meetings with staff, highlighted the diversity of the conditions of the School's facilities. For example, its food processing facilities and Lyons's Farm (see also 8.2 below).
- 3.6 There are long-term plans to invest in facilities at Lyons Farm and replace the Agriculture & Food Science Centre, however funds have not yet been secured. The RG strongly supports the SAR's call for investment in research infrastructure, such as Lyons farm, the Rosemount Environmental Research Station and the food processing facilities, to match the current status and ambitions of the School as a globally leading agricultural university.

#### **Commendations**

- 3.7 Discussions with staff confirmed that the School's administrative and technical staff are of high quality, operating very efficiently over multiple locations. This is highly supported by staff's good motivation to engage in continuing professional development.
- 3.8 The School received the Athena SWAN Bronze Award in 2019 and has developed a 44-point action plan to achieve gender equality at all levels.

## **Recommendations**

- 3.9 Mandatory mentorships for all new staff, including technical, is recommended. Mentoring for existing technical staff, if they so desire, should also be implemented. This has real benefits for better integration into the School and the University, improved job satisfaction, clearer understanding of career advancement and more.
- 3.10 To match increased student numbers, academic staff and research activities, the RG recommends the hiring of additional administrative and technical staff, including Chief Technical Officers, who can take on line management responsibilities for technical staff.
- 3.11 The equipment and facilities at Lyons Farm, Rosemont and in food processing are essential to support research and teaching in the School. There is a great and urgent need for the University to invest in this infrastructure. The RG recommends the University work with the College of Health and Agricultural Sciences, the UCD School of Veterinary Medicine and the UCD School of Agriculture and Food Sciences to develop a financial plan and budget for such work.
- 3.12 The School's staff have demonstrated enthusiasm for undertaking continuing professional development as evidenced by participation rates and the RG recommend that they continue to be offered the opportunity to undertake training in leadership and management skills, for example, project management. These skills can also facilitate management of the grant application and operation processes.

## **4. Teaching, Learning and Assessment**

### **General Comments and Context**

- 4.1 Academic staff teach an average of 3.6 modules per year each, with variation between staff at different grades. Associate Professors have the highest teaching load with an average of 4.5 modules per year. Lecturers (assistant professors) and professors have lower teaching loads with averages of 3.4 and 3.2 modules, respectively. Despite these relatively small average differences, discussion with staff indicated that there remains considerable inequity in individual teaching loads, particularly amongst junior staff. A point particularly noted by the RG was the observation in the SAR that Associate Professors do the majority of teaching.
- 4.2 The SAR noted some issues with the availability of teaching spaces of appropriate size and layout. Based on the video and photographs supplied to the RG and on discussions with staff and students, it was evident that certain teaching facilities need modernisation and too many 'static' teaching rooms that do not facilitate collaborative teaching and learning pedagogies.

- 4.3 The SAR details a variety of ways in which feedback on modules is sought from students. Although it is noted that the great majority of modules in the School have data available from the University's online, anonymous student feedback system, this data was not presented in the SAR. Whilst we accept that response rates are low, this data is still of great importance and it was not clear to the RG what actions are taken if a module receives poor student ratings.
- 4.4 In discussion with staff and students and in reviewing the SAR, there does not seem to be clear and transparent guidance with respect to the expectations for Post-Graduates/Early Career Researchers to undertake teaching (at either undergraduate or postgraduate level) and to carry out marking (coursework or examinations). At present, as noted in section 2 above, the workload model does not capture this information so it is not possible for Post-Graduates or Researchers to compare their teaching activities to those of their peers.
- 4.5 Although the SAR provided information concerning the teaching responsibilities of staff, it was not clear to the RG from speaking with staff during the online meetings what the specific expectations of faculty at each level of seniority are to contribute to the teaching and administration of programmes (including module organisation, teaching and marking).
- 4.6 Given the School's commitment to research, teaching and learning, it is critically important to ensure that students have an opportunity to learn from the School's research leaders.

### **Commendations**

- 4.7 The RG commends the quality of the teaching staff and the emphasis on research-led teaching from all levels of staff, from Assistant Professor to Full Professor. It was also impressed by the high proportion of staff who have a formal teaching qualification and the numbers nominated for teaching awards.
- 4.8 The School had the foresight to recruit a dedicated full-time Educational Technologist in 2019, to lead and support all staff in developing skills and resources needed to support blended and online teaching and learning.
- 4.9 The RG commends the high quality undergraduate and postgraduate students (as evidenced by the high grades of students on entry to the Degree programmes), with a great appreciation of the exceptional, long-established standards of teaching at UCD.

### **Recommendations**

- 4.10 The RG recommends that the School provide comprehensive guidance for staff and students concerning the requirements for Post-Graduate Researchers (PGRs) and Early Career Researchers (ECRs) to undertake teaching and marking at undergraduate and postgraduate level and clarify what specific opportunities there will be for training for PGRs and ECRs wishing to pursue these teaching-related activities.

- 4.11 In order to address issues noted in the SAR with the availability of teaching spaces of appropriate size and layout, the University should commit to additional investment in its teaching spaces and equipment to enable innovations in third level teaching pedagogy and technology to be fully realised. In the interim, the School should continue to work with the University's timetabling team to ensure that modules are allocated to classrooms that meet their requirements.
- 4.12 The RG recommends that the School should engage fully with the University's online student feedback system, firstly by continuing to encourage students to make use of the opportunity to provide feedback in order to maximise response rates and secondly, by outlining how the School will implement changes based on student feedback.
- 4.13 The RG recommends that the School clarify the system of oversight of the feedback received from students and how it addresses and seeks to improve student learning experiences in modules with poor ratings.
- 4.14 The School's plan for teaching in the post-COVID teaching environment should look to maximise the value of having an Educational Technologist, with continuing focus on the advances already made in the use of education technology in the School and building upon the benefits arising from the increased level of engagement by staff with the educational technologist during the COVID pandemic.
- 4.15 The School should ensure that its Teaching and Learning objectives are fully realised post-COVID-19 and maximise the learning from online teaching and assessment that took place during lockdown. In order to make best use of technology within programmes of the School, as set out in the School Plan.

## **5. Curriculum Development and Review**

### **General Comments and Context**

- 5.1 The School of Agriculture and Food Science offers two undergraduate Honours Degree pathways leading to a Bachelor of Agricultural Science (BAgrSc) or Bachelor of Science (BSc), each with a range of different specialisms. In addition the School offers three BSc programmes in China (Guangzhou Dublin International College) in Biological Science, Food Quality and Safety, and Horticulture.
- 5.2 The early stages of the undergraduate degree programmes establish students' basic scientific understanding and are delivered by Schools in the UCD College of Science. This scientific training prepares students for later modules taught by the UCD School of Agricultural Science and also gives an early multidisciplinary experience to students in the School.

- 5.3 At graduate level, the School offers eight taught masters' degrees in a range of specialist areas as well as research masters and PhD programmes.
- 5.4 The SAR gives a detailed summary of the different taught postgraduate programmes which are offered by the School in a range of areas of professional specialism. The RG noted the masters' programmes do not appear to capitalise on the School's potential to offer multi-disciplinary degrees at this level.
- 5.5 The School's Executive Education programmes are designed for professionals and focus on a wide range of topics relevant to agriculture, food, nutrition, forestry, and the environment.

### **Commendations**

- 5.6 The School is to be commended for the outstanding breadth, depth and detailed rigour of the science in the undergraduate and postgraduate degrees taught within the School.
- 5.7 The RG commend the unique strength of the School's undergraduate programmes which combine scientific training with practical skills and which is very much valued by the School's external stakeholders.

### **Recommendations**

- 5.8 The RG recommends that the School undertake a full strategic review of their offering of taught postgraduate degrees to ensure that the School is fully capitalising on the potential for cross-disciplinary programme offerings.

## **6. Research Activity**

### **General Comments and Context**

- 6.1 The School aligns itself with the University's Strategy for Research, Innovation & Impact and particularly with the 'One Health' strategy and aims to be a top agricultural university globally.
- 6.2 Benchmarking with 12 peer institutions demonstrated the School's excellent performance in terms of field-weighted citation impact and citations per publication. However, output per staff varies considerably.
- 6.3 In the 2015-2020 period, almost 60 million euro of research income has been realised. Income however is very variable from year to year and relies primarily on Irish sources. Income per faculty member also varies considerably.

- 6.4 Discussions with staff highlighted the low uptake of sabbatical leave which also reflects the finding in the Staff Survey that almost half of respondents were unaware of School supports for staff research leave. This suggests that the School may not be engaging as fully as it could with the University's sabbatical leave policy.
- 6.5 Discussions with staff also clarified that an important factor underlying the variation in research performance relates to the legacy of teaching appointments as it appears that many staff have a high teaching load, as noted in Section 4 above.

### **Commendations**

- 6.6 The School is well aligned with the University's strategy 'Rising to the Future' and the high-level vision of 'One Health' and the involvement in the Institute of Food and Health have the ability to integrate various disciplines and foster interdisciplinarity.
- 6.7 Research performance is excellent, which makes the ambitious goals to be a top global agricultural and food university as put forward in the SAR realistic.
- 6.8 Outstanding research support is offered by both the School and the University leading to an excellent supportive environment.
- 6.9 The School has good relations with industry and government, including Teagasc, making it very successful in attracting national funding.

### **Recommendations**

- 6.10 The RG acknowledges the challenges identified in the SAR in maintaining a supportive environment for research and particularly in investment in research infrastructure (such as Lyons Farm, Rosemount and the Food Processing Facility) and technical staff. As noted in Section 3 above, such investments need to be made as soon as possible in order for the School to realise its ambitions.
- 6.11 The RG recommends that the School consider setting up more elaborate strategic partnerships with key players such as Teagasc, in order to develop innovative research platforms. Closer collaboration with the UCD School of Biosystems and Food Engineering is also recommended, as these competences are usually integrated into comparable institutions worldwide.
- 6.12 Given its unique focus on research in the areas of animal-based and pasture-based agriculture and its key assets (UCD School of Veterinary Medicine, Teagasc), the RG recommends that the School consider making those ambitions more specific in their strategic planning, e.g. to be a top university in animal-based and pasture-based agri-food systems and select peer institutions with similar profiles to benchmark and collaborate with.
- 6.13 The prioritised research focal points should be made more explicit and go beyond the listing of research themes: the School and its Sections should better communicate their areas of excellence, for instance via the website, and by the identification of research champions or role models. In doing this, attention should be paid to the diversity of research profiles present in the School so that the wide range of research interests continues to be valued.

- 6.14 The RG recommends that the School pay particular attention to documenting and communicating the impact of its research. As stated by UCD Research and Innovation, impacts are changes in society that result from outputs and outcomes. The School undoubtedly has an impact in society but should better document and communicate its impacts. The RG recommends more direct engagement with the UCD Research and Innovation, including the new online Research Impact Toolkit, and the annual Research Impact Case Study Competition.
- 6.15 The SAR acknowledges the importance of increasing research income from EU sources. Discussions with stakeholders highlighted the need for the School's PIs to take a leadership role in attracting and even coordinating EU grants. A mentorship programme (as recommended in Section 3 above) may be a good step forward, and the School should also consider setting up a mechanism for offering substantive support in addition to the excellent administrative support.
- 6.16 The School and its Sections are recommended to apply a more consistent sabbatical leave policy, in line with UCD's Research Sabbatical Leave policy, emphasizing that sabbatical leave can be organized in various ways (e.g. there is no requirement for travel abroad).

## **7. Management of Quality and Enhancement**

### **General Comments and Context**

- 7.1 Quality of teaching and learning is monitored using a number of mechanisms including reviews of reports submitted by external examiners, student evaluations of teaching and regular review of grade distributions at the end of each examining period.
- 7.2 The School Teaching & Learning Committee plays a key role in the enhancement process and regularly organises events to highlight innovative practices in teaching and learning in the School.
- 7.3 Management of research quality relies on support provided for early career researchers (informal mentoring and financial support) and the evaluation of research metrics such as grant capture, number/quality of papers published, number of patents generated.

### **Commendations**

- 7.4 Members of faculty are very committed to enhancing the quality of their own teaching with over half of respondents in the survey indicating that they are in the process of undertaking or have undertaken a teaching qualification. Three quarters have had peer review or other assessment of their teaching practice in the last three years.

## **Recommendations**

- 7.5 The SAR notes that an informal mentorship programme has operated within the School with senior members of staff with experience of successful grant capture, offering mentoring to early career colleagues. With the introduction of a formal mentoring programme (see Section 3 above) within the School, the RG recommends that research mentoring should be a central pillar of that process to ensure that all early career staff are encouraged to focus on the development of their research programmes.
- 7.6 Several recommendations are made in Section 6 above in relation to research activities in the School. The RG strongly recommends that any changes introduced to enhance the quality and impact of research should not be at the expense of the quality of teaching and learning in the School and should not diminish the strong professional orientation of the taught programmes, which are highly valued by the School's external stakeholders.

## **8. Support Services**

### **General Comments and Context**

- 8.1 The School makes good use of the support services provided by the University and has a good relationship with the various entities involved.
- 8.2 A major factor in the continued successful functioning of the School relates to space and facilities. The need to refurbish older buildings and to provide more dedicated space for postgraduate students and contract researchers/postdoctoral fellows is acknowledged in the School Plan and SAR. In particular, there is urgent need for University investment in Lyons Farm, the Food Science annex, and Rosemount. The Food processing facilities have been described as not fit for purpose. It is to be noted that external stakeholders also described Lyons farm as desperately in need of investment, with buildings out of date, and student facilities and offices not up to standard. (see also 3.5 above)
- 8.3 Other areas of concern include Forestry, where there is a need for equipment maintenance and renewal and engagement with the current reliance on Coillte for access to facilities.
- 8.4 As already noted in earlier discussions in this report, there is a need for investment in the maintenance of equipment across the School. Labs and related facilities are adequate, but not realistic for attainment of stated targets for improvement and growth. However, at the moment it appears there are no plans at University level for the required upgrades or investment.

### **Commendations**

- 8.5 The RG commend the use being made of the writing centre in the library by students, with positive results.
- 8.6 As noted in Section 3 above, the RG was impressed by the enthusiastic take-up by staff of the CPD opportunities on offer both within UCD and outside the institution. The motivations of staff for doing so with regard to both career development and personal interest also reflect well upon the School.
- 8.7 It was evident to the RG that many staff within the School think highly of, and avail of, the supports available from UCD Research and Innovation for preparing grant applications.

### **Recommendations**

- 8.8 The RG recommends the School look to build upon the work already being done to improve student engagement with the Writing Centre and the Maths Support Centre, in order to improve graduate oral and written communication skills and statistical and data skills. These are skill areas that external stakeholders regard as critical to success in their industries and they emphasised the importance of continuing to produce graduates who are proficient in these skill areas.

## **9. Collaborative Educational Provision**

### **General Comments and Context**

- 9.1 The School has an impressive range of collaborative education programmes and links in place. The need to increase student uptake of Erasmus exchanges is acknowledged as a challenge in the SAR.
- 9.2 A particular strength of the School lies in the relationship with Teagasc which has facilitated the development of taught graduate programmes as well as a wide range of research opportunities. The School has also begun to develop relationships with a range of other organisations, notably through its involvement with the Network on Humanitarian Action.
- 9.3 The School has worked hard on developing strong educational links with China, for both undergraduate and postgraduate education. The School is conscious of challenges and has plans in place for managed growth of its various undertakings in that regard, especially for the Guangzhou-Dublin International College.

## **Commendations**

- 9.4 The RG commend the School's plans for expanding outward student mobility, including uptake on Erasmus.
- 9.5 The RG is impressed by the array of joint national and international education programmes that the School is actively involved in. These include the BAgrSc Dairy Business and MSc (Agr) Agriculture Extension & Innovation with Teagasc, the full time online MSc Food Regulatory Affairs with Ulster University, and the MSc Humanitarian Action with universities in seven different European countries.

## **Recommendations**

- 9.6 The RG recommend that the School closely monitor and nurture the recent upsurge in student interest in exchange /Erasmus activities. While this may be a reaction to COVID-19 lockdowns, it is also an opportunity to build capacity in the area for future years.

## **10. External Relations**

### **General Comments and Context**

- 10.1 The School has a wide range of external relations with a diverse range of organisations, industries and groups. It is clear that these activities are both important to, and valued by the School, and that a lot of energy and work is put into maintaining these.
- 10.2 The external stakeholders have a very high regard for the School, its staff, its programmes, and its students (undergraduates and postgraduates). It is clear that the external stakeholders greatly value their working relationships with the School and its staff and students. These relationships are important as the stakeholder groups are the main employers of the School's graduates, postgraduates and contract researchers.
- 10.3 The RG was concerned at the apparent absence of strategy or a clear formal structure within the School for the ongoing maintenance and development of relationships with external stakeholders. The external stakeholders also raised this matter, noting that while various Memoranda of Understanding exist, there was no permanent group or body comprised of members of the School and stakeholders for that purpose.
- 10.4 The School's developments in relation to Executive Education and support for continuing professional development in the industry has great potential to foster even stronger links with industry partners and accrediting bodies.
- 10.5 The School's increased focus on public outreach activities, including the Research Seminar Series, developing Social Media usage, and podcasts will also further grow its external relationships.

## **Commendations**

- 10.6 The RG noted the excellent and diverse areas of Community engagement by the School, in particular the videos for school students owing to COVID-19 preventing public visits to Lyons Farm, activities at Rosemount Environmental Research Station and the apiary. The wide variety of research, and outreach activities at Lyons Farm is of particular note also.
- 10.7 The RG was impressed by the School's strong focus on connections with alumni, including through the Agricultural Science Association, the professional association for graduates of Agricultural Science in Ireland and its involvement in student events, job placements and employer involvement. The RG was also impressed by the strong role played by student-led societies, in particular the Agricultural Science Society, which was also highly commended by the students themselves.

## **Recommendations**

- 10.8 The RG recommends that the School put in place a group to oversee the strategic development and maintenance of agreements with external stakeholders. The groups should include members of the School and external stakeholders.
- 10.9 The RG recommends that the School maintain its focus on encouraging staff to further engage with new forms of public engagement via electronic social media platforms, which should include the provision of training for staff and graduate students where needed.

### UCD School of Agriculture and Food Science – Full List of Commendations and Recommendations

This Appendix contains a full list of commendations and recommendations made by the Review Group for the UCD School of Agriculture and Food Science and should be read in conjunction with the specific chapter above. *(Please note that the paragraph references below refer to the relevant paragraphs in the report text)*

#### 2. Organisation and Management

##### Commendations

- 2.10 There is an impressive ‘Team Spirit’ across the School and a supportive working environment among the administrative, technical, faculty and research staff, including the Section Leads and overall School Leadership.
- 2.11 The RG had meetings with faculty, staff and students from all of the different sections of the School. Feedback was almost unanimously complementary about the overall organisational structure of the School and noted how smoothly it functions.
- 2.12 The School management team has been responsive to changing demands of third level education e.g. responding to the need to recruit more international students by offering joint degrees with third level institutions in China.

##### Recommendations

- 2.13 The RG recommends that the School review and document the Section-level structures and processes in order both to ensure that these are clearly communicated to staff and to facilitate coherent organisational practices across sections.
- 2.14 The RG recommends that the School ensure that post-doctoral staff in all Sections have opportunities to meet together in order to foster a sense of community and enhance potential for collaboration. Both informal networking and formal support structures for these staff should be considered. The RG recommends that more responsibility for this be undertaken by PIs, Section Heads and the School Executive to ensure that engagement is facilitated.
- 2.15 The SAR notes that the School has a large number of functional committees (22) and that committee work can take up a lot of time for faculty and staff. The RG recommends that the School review these committees to determine whether there is potential to rationalise and reduce the administrative burden.

- 2.16 The RG recommends that, in its planned review of the workload model, the School should consider capturing the teaching input of post-doctoral and other research staff, which is not currently visible. In addition, the RG recommends that the workload model review also consider the introduction of mechanisms to guide the distribution of workload across the School and within the different faculty levels where the load is not evenly distributed.

### **3. Staff and Facilities**

#### **Commendations**

- 3.7 Discussions with staff confirmed that the School's administrative and technical staff are of high quality, operating very efficiently over multiple locations. This is highly supported by staff's good motivation to engage in continuing professional development.
- 3.8 The School received the Athena SWAN Bronze Award in 2019 and has developed a 44-point action plan to achieve gender equality at all levels.

#### **Recommendations**

- 3.9 Mandatory mentorships for all new staff, including technical, is recommended. Mentoring for existing technical staff, if they so desire, should also be implemented. This has real benefits for better integration into the School and University, improved job satisfaction, clearer understanding of career advancement and more.
- 3.10 To match increased student numbers, academic staff and research activities, the RG recommends the hiring of additional administrative and technical staff, including Chief Technical Officers, who can take on line management responsibilities for technical staff.
- 3.11 The equipment and facilities at Lyons Farm, Rosemont and in food processing are essential to support research and teaching in the School. There is a great and urgent need for the University to invest in this infrastructure. The RG recommends the University work with the College of Health and Agricultural Sciences, the School of Veterinary Medicine and the School of Agriculture and Food Sciences to develop a financial plan and budget for such work.
- 3.12 The School's staff have demonstrated enthusiasm for undertaking professional development and the RG recommend that they continue to be offered the opportunity to undertake training in leadership and management skills such as project management or time management. These skills can also facilitate management of the grant application and operation processes.

### **4. Teaching, Learning and Assessment**

#### **Commendations**

- 4.7 The RG commends the quality of the teaching staff and the emphasis on research-led teaching from all levels of staff, from Assistant Professor to Full Professor. It was also impressed by the high proportion of staff who have a formal teaching qualification and the numbers nominated for teaching awards.

- 4.8 The School had the foresight to recruit a dedicated full-time Educational Technologist in 2019, to lead and support all staff in developing skills and resources needed to support blended and online teaching and learning.
- 4.9 The RG commends the high quality undergraduate and postgraduate students (as evidenced by the high grades of students on entry to the Degree programmes), with a great appreciation of the exceptional, long-established standards of teaching at UCD.

### **Recommendations**

- 4.10 The RG recommends that the School provide comprehensive guidance for staff and students concerning the requirements for Postgraduate Researchers (PGRs) and Early Career Researchers (ECRs) to undertake teaching and marking at undergraduate and postgraduate level and clarify what specific opportunities there will be for training for PGRs and ECRs wishing to pursue these teaching-related activities.
- 4.11 In order to address issues noted in the SAR with the availability of teaching spaces of appropriate size and layout, the University should commit to additional investment in its teaching spaces and equipment to enable innovations in third level teaching pedagogy and technology to be fully realised. In the interim, the School should continue to work with the University's timetabling team to ensure that modules are allocated to classrooms that meet their requirements.
- 4.12 The RG recommends that the School should engage fully with the University's online student feedback system, firstly by continuing to encourage students to make use of the opportunity to provide feedback in order to maximise response rates and secondly, by outlining how the School will implement changes based on student feedback.
- 4.13 The RG recommends that the School clarify the system of oversight of the feedback received from students and how it addresses and seeks to improve student learning experiences in modules with poor ratings.
- 4.14 The School's plan for teaching in the post-COVID teaching environment should look to maximise the value of having an Educational Technologist, with continuing focus on the advances already made in the use of education technology in the School and building upon the benefits arising from the increased level of engagement by staff with the educational technologist during the COVID pandemic.
- 4.15 The School should ensure that its Teaching and Learning objectives are fully realised post-COVID-19 and maximise the learning from online teaching and assessment that took place during lockdown. In order to make best use of technology within programmes of the School, as set out in the School Plan.

## **5. Curriculum Development and Review**

### **Commendations**

- 5.6 The School is to be commended for the outstanding breadth, depth and detailed rigour of the science in the undergraduate and postgraduate degrees taught within the School.
- 5.7 The RG commend the unique strength of the School's undergraduate programmes which combine scientific training with practical skills and which is very much valued by the School's external stakeholders.

### **Recommendations**

- 5.8 The RG recommends that the School undertake a full strategic review of their offering of taught postgraduate degrees to ensure that the School is fully capitalising on the potential for cross-disciplinary programme offerings.

## **6. Research Activity**

### **Commendations**

- 6.6 The School is well aligned with the University's strategy 'Rising to the Future' and the high-level vision of 'One Health' and the involvement in the Institute of Food and Health have the ability to integrate various disciplines and foster interdisciplinarity.
- 6.7 Research performance is excellent, which makes the ambitious goals to be a top global agricultural and food university as put forward in the SAR realistic.
- 6.8 Outstanding research support is offered by both the School and the University leading to an excellent supportive environment.
- 6.9 The School has good relations with industry and government, including Teagasc, making it very successful in attracting national funding.

### **Recommendations**

- 6.10 The RG acknowledges the challenges identified in the SAR in maintaining a supportive environment for research and particularly in investment in research infrastructure (such as Lyons Farm, Rosemount and the Food Processing Facility) and technical staff. As noted in section 3 above, such investments need to be made as soon as possible in order for the School to realise its ambitions.
- 6.11 The RG recommends that the School consider setting up more elaborate strategic partnerships with key players such as Teagasc in order to develop innovative research platforms. Closer collaboration with the School of Biosystems and Food Engineering is also recommended, as these competences are usually integrated into comparable institutions worldwide.

- 6.12 Given its unique focus on research in the areas of animal-based and pasture-based agriculture and its key assets (UCD School of Veterinary medicine, Teagasc), the RG recommends that the School consider making those ambitions more specific in their strategic planning, e.g. to be a top university in animal-based and pasture-based agri-food systems and select peer institutions with similar profiles to benchmark and collaborate with.
- 6.13 The prioritised research focal points should be made more explicit and go beyond the listing of research themes: the School and its Sections should better communicate their areas of excellence, for instance via the website, and by the identification of research champions or role models. In doing this, attention should be paid to the diversity of research profiles present in the School so that the wide range of research interests continues to be valued.
- 6.14 The RG recommends that the School pay particular attention to documenting and communicating the impact of its research. As stated by UCD Research and Innovation, impacts are changes in society that result from outputs and outcomes. The School undoubtedly has impact in society but should better document and communicate its impacts. The RG recommend more direct engagement with the UCD Research and Innovation, including the new online Research Impact Toolkit, and the annual Research Impact Case Study Competition.
- 6.15 The SAR acknowledges the importance of increasing research income from EU sources. Discussions with stakeholders highlighted the need for the School's PIs to take a leadership role in attracting and even coordinating EU grants. A mentorship programme (as recommended in Section 3 above) may be a good step forward, and the School should also consider setting up a mechanism for offering substantive support in addition to the excellent administrative support.
- 6.16 The School and its Sections are recommended to organise a more active sabbatical leave policy, in line with UCD's Research Sabbatical Leave policy, emphasizing that sabbatical leave can be organized in various ways (e.g. there is no requirement for travel abroad).

## **7. Management of Quality and Enhancement**

### **Commendations**

- 7.4 Members of faculty are very committed to enhancing the quality of their own teaching with over half of respondents in the survey indicating that they are in the process of undertaking or had undertaken a teaching qualification. Three quarters have had peer review or other assessment of their teaching practice in the last three years.

## **Recommendations**

- 7.5 The SAR notes that an informal mentorship programme has operated within the School with senior members of staff with experience of successful grant capture, offering mentoring to early career colleagues. With the introduction of a formal mentoring programme (see section 3 above) within the School, the RG recommends that research mentoring should be a central pillar of that process to ensure that all early career staff are encouraged to focus on the development of their research programmes.
- 7.6 Several recommendations are made in section 6 above in relation to research activities in the School. The RG strongly recommends that any changes introduced to enhance the quality and impact of research should not be at the expense of the quality of teaching and learning in the School and should not diminish the strong professional orientation of the taught programmes, which are highly valued by the School's external stakeholders.

## **8. Support Services**

### **Commendations**

- 8.5 The RG commend the use being made of the writing centre in the library by students, with positive results.
- 8.6 As noted in section 3 above, the RG was impressed by the enthusiastic take-up by staff of the CPD opportunities on offer both within UCD and outside the institution. The motivations of staff for doing so with regard to both career development and personal interest also reflect well upon the School.
- 8.7 It was evident to the RG that many staff within the School think highly of, and avail of, the supports available from UCD Research for preparing grant applications.

### **Recommendations**

- 8.8 The RG recommends the School look to build upon the work already being done to improve student engagement with the Writing Centre and the Maths Support Centre, in order to improve graduate oral and written communication skills and statistical and data skills. These are skill areas that external stakeholders regard as critical to success in their industries and they emphasised the importance of continuing to produce graduates who are proficient in these skill areas.

## 9. Collaborative Educational Provision

### Commendations

- 9.4 The RG commend the School's plans for expanding outward student mobility, including uptake on Erasmus.
- 9.5 The RG is impressed by the array of joint national and international education programmes that the School is actively involved in. These include the BAgrSc Dairy Business and MSc (Agr) Agriculture Extension & Innovation with Teagasc, the full time online MSc Food Regulatory Affairs with Ulster University, and the MSc Humanitarian Action with Universities in seven different European countries.

### Recommendations

- 9.6 The RG recommends that the School closely monitor and nurture the recent upsurge in student interest in exchange /Erasmus activities. While this may be a reaction to COVID-19 lockdowns, it is also an opportunity to build capacity in the area for future years.

## 10. External Relations

### Commendations

- 10.6 The RG noted the excellent and diverse areas of Community engagement by the School, in particular the videos for school students owing to COVID-19 preventing visits to Lyons Farm, Rosemount ERS, and Apiary. The wide variety of research and outreach activities at Lyons Farm is of particular note also.
- 10.7 The RG was impressed by the School's strong focus on connections with alumni, including through the Agricultural Science Association, the professional association for graduates of Agricultural Science in Ireland and its involvement in student events, job placements and employer involvement. The RG was also impressed by the strong role played by student-led societies, in particular the Agricultural Science Society, which was also highly commended by the students themselves.

### Recommendations

- 10.8 The RG recommends that the School put in place a group to oversee the strategic development and maintenance of agreements with external stakeholders. The groups should include members of the School and external stakeholders.
- 10.9 The RG recommends that the School maintain its focus on encouraging staff to further engage with new forms of public engagement via electronic social media platforms, which should include the provision of training for staff and graduate students where needed.

## **UCD School of Agriculture and Food Science Response to The Review Group Report**

The task of developing the Self-Assessment Report was a valuable reflective exercise, which enabled the School to review its position from several different perspectives, highlight and confirm our strengths and opportunities, identify areas of good practice, and evaluate our weaknesses and challenges in a systematic way. The Review Group Virtual Site Visit was a positive and constructive experience. We welcome the endorsement of the Review Group for our activities through commendations and will carefully consider the recommendations during the Quality Improvement Planning process.

There was a high level of engagement from all staff categories and from the student community, both in compiling the Self-Assessment Report and in interacting with the Review Group during the site visit. The School wishes to thank the Review Group for their time, expertise, and constructive comments, both at the visit and in their helpful report.

The Review Group report has arrived at an important juncture in the School's planning cycle. The 5-year term of the new Head of School will begin in September 2021 and the next School strategic plan will begin development in early 2022. The recommendations from the Review Group will provide an important input into this planning process and the implementation of the new strategic plan will provide the School with an opportunity to action many of these recommendations.

We were heartened to see that the Review Group commended several activities and practices within the school that have long been part of the School's core culture and values and have been explicitly supported in the current and previous strategic plans. These include the impressive 'Team Spirit' across the School and a supportive working environment among administrative, technical, faculty and research staff, the awarding of the Athena SWAN Bronze Award and the action plan to achieve gender equality, the quality of the teaching staff and the emphasis on research led teaching, the research performance of staff and the ambition of the school to be a top global school of agriculture and food science, the alignment of the School's strategy with that of the University, the strong connection with alumni and the role played by students and students societies in the life of the School.

We will formulate a plan to address the recommendations in the Quality Review Report, and indeed several actions are already underway. These include reviewing the number and composition of school committees, the establishment of a mentorship programme as part of our EDI work programme, the creation of a budget to support the recruitment of additional administrative and technical staff over the next five years, the launch of the Agri-Matters podcast to help communicate the impact of our research and raise the profile of the research staff involved, and the implementation of a programme to encourage more students to avail of exchange/Erasmus opportunities. These changes will significantly benefit the School and its outputs over the next few years.

With specific reference to the prioritised recommendations identified by the Review Group, the School's initial responses are outlined below:

- (i) *Recommendation A: The Review Group recommends that the school ensure that post-doctoral staff in all Sections have both formal and informal opportunities to meet to foster a sense of community and enhance potential for collaboration.*

Response: The School will review the existing structures and engage with post-doctoral staff to understand better how to foster a greater sense of community and to enhance the potential for collaboration as intended. Once this has been completed existing structures will be enhanced, modified, or replaced to meet the needs of this important cohort of staff.

- (ii) *Recommendation B: The Review Group recommends that the planned review of the workload model should consider capturing the teaching input of post-doctoral and other research staff, which is not currently visible and consider the introduction of mechanisms to guide the distribution of workload across the school and within the different faculty levels where the load is not evenly distributed.*

Response: The workload model review group will consider the recommendations of the Review Group and consider how they could best be implemented. The workload model review group is due to reconvene in September once there is a return to normal working conditions.

- (iii) *Recommendation C: The Review Group recommends the hiring of additional administrative and technical staff, including Chief Technical Officers, who can take responsibility for the management of technical staff to match increased student numbers, academic staff, and research activities.*

Response: The School has planned for the recruitment of two additional administrative and two technical staff (including a CTO) over the next five years in its financial plans starting in 2021/22. This plan has recently been accepted and approved by the University.

- (iv) *Recommendation D: The Review Group highlighted the urgent need for the University to invest in the equipment and facilities at Lyons Farm, Rosemont, and the food processing facility, which are essential to support research and teaching in the school and recommended that the University work with the College of Health and Agricultural Sciences, the UCD School of Veterinary Medicine and the UCD School of Agriculture and Food Sciences to develop a financial plan and budget for this work.*

Response: The School has completed a plan for the development of the facilities on the Lyons Farm and is currently working with the UCD Foundation to develop a strategy to fund this development. The funding proposal will require financial support from philanthropy and the University. Similar plans will need to be developed for both Rosemount and the food processing facility.

(v) *Recommendation E: The Review Group recommended that the school's research priorities should be much more explicit and that the School and its Sections should better communicate their areas of excellence and identify research champions or role models for the different research areas. Attention should also be paid to the diversity of research undertaken in the school so that the wide range of research interests delivered continues to be valued.*

Response: The School's research priorities are reviewed as part of the School's strategic planning process. The next School strategic plan will begin development in early 2022 and a complete review of our research priorities will be undertaken as part of process. Work is already underway to promote research champions for our using the Agri-Matter's podcast series and will continue and be extended through all the School's media platforms.

The School thanked the Review Group again for some very gracious commendations and many excellent recommendations for improvement that we will engage with wholeheartedly.



**UCD School of Agriculture and Food Science**

**Quality Review Remote Site Visit: 18, 22-25 March 2021**

<b>Thursday 18 March 2021</b>	
<b>Review Group Meeting with Registrar, College Principal and Head of School</b>	
<b>Organisation/Management of Resources/Strategy</b>	
<i>All times are local Dublin time</i>	
09.45	Virtual Room opened - UCD Quality Office
10.00-10.30	Private meeting of Review Group
10.30-11.30	Registrar & Deputy President Areas for discussion with the Registrar arising from the Planning Meeting
11.30-12.00	Review Group only – Key observations & break
12.00-13.00	College Principal, UCD College of Health and Agricultural Sciences
13.00-13.15	Review Group only – Key observations & break
13.15-14.00	Lunch
14.00-14.30	Private meeting of Review Group prep for afternoon
14.30-15.30	Head of School, UCD School of Agriculture and Food Science
15.30-15.50	Review Group only – Key observations & break
15.50-16.20	Finance - Strategy and Development(Director of Finance, Strategy & Development Manager, School of Agriculture and Food Science
16.20-16.30	Review Group only – Key observations and wrap up

<b>Monday 22 March 2021</b>	
<b>Senior Team, Support Services &amp; External Stakeholders</b>	
08.45	Virtual Room opened
09.00-09.45	Sections Heads (Management Function) / Heads of Section
09.45-10.15	Review Group only – Key observations /break
10.15-11.00	Associate Deans (Strategic Function):
	Research, Innovation & Impact
	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
	Teaching & Learning support
	International Programmes
11.00-11.30	Review Group only – Key observations /break
11.30-12.30	School support service representatives (HR, Estates, Library
12.30-13.00	Review Group only – Key observations /break
13.00-14.00	Representative Group of External Stakeholders
14.00-14.30	Review Group only – Key observations /break

<b>Tuesday 23 March 2021</b>	
<b>School Staff Sessions</b>	
10.00	Virtual Room opened - UCD Quality Office
10.15-10.45	Private meeting of Review Group
10.45-11.30	Representative Group of Academic Staff
11.30-12.00	Review Group only – Key observations
12.00-12.45	Administrative Staff
12.45-13.45	Review Group only – Key observations & lunch
13.45-14.00	Prep for afternoon
14.00-14.30	Representative group of Technical Staff (6-8)
14.30-15.00	Review Group only – Key observations & break
15.00-15.30	Research Funded Staff
15.30-16.00	Review Group only – Key observations
16.00-16.30	Occasional/Tutors/Demonstrators staff
16.30-16.45	Review Group only – Key observations

<b>Wednesday 24 March 2021</b> <b>Students and School Committees</b>	
09.45	Virtual Room opened - UCD Quality Office
10.00-10.30	Private meeting of Review Group
10.30-11.00	School T&L Committee (6-8)
11.00-11.30	Review Group only - Key observations & break
11.30-12.00	School Graduate Studies Committee (6)
12.00-12.30	Review Group only - Key observations & break
12.30-13.00	School Research, Innovation & Impact Committee (6-8)
13.00-14.00	Review Group only - Key observations & lunch
14.00-14.15	Review Group only - Prep for afternoon sessions
14.15-14.45	Undergraduate Students (6-8)
14.45-15.15	Review Group only – Key observations & break
15.15-15.45	Postgraduates (Research and Taught) – recent grads (Alumni) (6-8)
15.45-16.45	Review Group only - Key observations and discussion of key points of commendation and recommendations for the exit
	Review Group (option for group to work offline)

<b>Thursday 25 March 2021</b> <b>Review Key Findings</b>	
09.45	Virtual Room opened - UCD Quality Office
11.45-12.00	Review Group break
10.00-11.45	Review Group agree approach and prepare first draft of Review Group Report and extract key points of commendation and recommendations for exit presentation
12.00-14.00	Review Group continue to prepare first draft of <b>Review Group Report</b> and extract key points of commendation and recommendations for exit presentation and break for lunch
14.00-14.30	final preparation for exit presentation
14.30-14.50	Head of School; and UCD Director of Quality College Principal, and UCD Director of Quality Review Group feedback initial outline commendations and findings
14.50-15.00	Review Group break
15.00-15.30	College Principal, Head of School, all School staff, UCD Director of Quality Exit Presentation
15.30-16.00	Review Group only – Remote Site Visit close out and next steps