



ULLINKS

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UL50

Reflecting
Connecting
Transforming

Through the looking glass: Remembering the past
as University of Limerick looks to the future



UNIVERSITY OF
LIMERICK
OLLSCOIL LUIMNIGH

AUTUMN 2022

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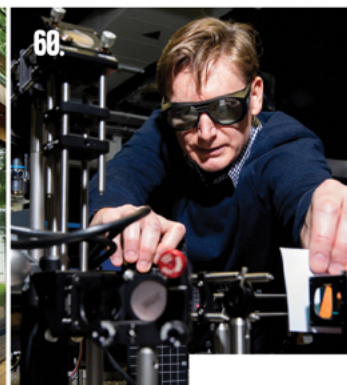
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Research and learning for a ‘thriveable world’

University of Limerick President Professor Kerstin Mey writes about the importance of having viable long-term plans that will help us achieve lasting change



Professor Kerstin Mey

“ It is imperative we reconsider the value base on which decisions are made, ensuring that plans are designed and actions taken to engender a thriveable world

AS I write, autumn is upon us again and at last we have a full return to campus for the coming academic year. When you read this, our first years will have joined us, swelling our community of students beyond 18,000 for the first time. It is a relief that students are back fully face to face so that they can experience that ‘whole of learning’ again.

That is not to say that we won’t face challenges and we must take the learnings of the last two and a half years and apply them. We are also aware of pandemic legacy issues and we have used an enhanced orientation process this year to welcome our new and returning students.

I am very cognisant also of the challenges facing students be it accommodation, commuting, illness and self-isolation – and the stresses of everyday life experienced across the campus community and beyond. A full range of support services are there to assist our students and staff and we are reviewing the support offer to ensure they meet the needs of our growing and diversifying campus community.



There will be many milestones during the year, particularly as we celebrate the 50th anniversary of this institution that we love and cherish. We look to our heritage in order to carve a course for the future. We are committed to get more activity into our City Campus this year and there are many developments in train as they relate to the campus – but the chief motivation and central to our planning is how we can cultivate and protect the environment around us as we shape for the next 50 years.

Radical and accelerated scientific and technological developments affect all professional fields and change occupational patterns. They influence society at large, shaping cultural traditions, behaviours and underlying values. The last few years have crystallised the many urgent global challenges we face: climate change and planetary health; a war in Europe adding to the ongoing military conflicts worldwide and with the real threat of exploding into a global conflagration. As a result, we see increased mass migration while being exposed to the growing challenges associated with energy, food and water security, which have been badly impacted by disrupted supply chains. Overproduction and -consumption in parts of the world, the plastic pollution of the oceans and a mounting global waste problem, which, when teamed with the extinction of many wildlife and plant species, clearly signal that we simply cannot be passive about our future – thinking five to 10 years ahead is too short-sighted. It is not easy or comfortable to fully envisage the worst-case scenario future and feel like we are operating under a threat but as a university community and as society we have no choice. We need viable long-term plans and the ability to learn and pivot as we turning plans into concrete actions with impact.

It is imperative we reconsider the value base on which decisions and interventions are made, ensuring that plans are designed and actions taken to engender a thriveable world. A thriveable world means a world that enables the harmonious co-evolution of humankind and all life on earth. I believe there are three interlinked dimensions to the required shift in values, attitudes and behaviours to catalyse lasting change. Fundamentally, a radical change in focus from an individualistic and human-centric paradigm towards an understanding of the interconnectedness and mutuality of human existence within complex eco-systems. Secondly, while rational thought and evidence-based approaches are crucial in understanding the macro-, meso- and micro-aspects

of our world and ourselves, they represent only one dimension of grasping reality. Our senses, our body and our intuition provide other, sadly increasingly underrated and underutilised ways of relating, comprehending and knowing. Thirdly, instead of structures and approaches that cement the compartmentalisation and fragmentation of knowledge and domain expertise, the emphasis has to shift towards meta-cognition, systems thinking in aid of holistic and integrative approaches.

As university leaders, educators and researchers we have to ask ourselves, our partners, our students and communities what knowledge and skills, abilities and experiences are required now and in the longer term to drive sustainability and ensure that the next generations can thrive and prosper too. What can we do to not only avoid the worst case scenario future, 'build back better' and create a resilient and more just world. Universities' raison d'etre lies in proactive knowledge-making, in experimenting and modelling, inventing and innovating including the probing and propositioning of models of value and practice.

As such, academia needs to take risks and challenge the status quo by scrutinizing the paradigms on which our future is being anticipated including the dominant position of rational thought based on the Cartesian split between mind and body, uncritical support for technology and belief in the power of algorithms

“ As university leaders, educators and researchers we have to ask ourselves, our partners, our students and communities what knowledge and skills, abilities and experiences are required now and in the longer term to drive sustainability and ensure that the next generations can thrive and prosper too

“ Together we can move forward towards a positive future for this university, for our communities and for this region

as well as established economic growth models. At a time when we are confronted with the exponential increase in data, information and knowledge, we have to hone our ability to critically conceptualise and contextualise, analyse and evaluate to gain insights and understanding and arm ourselves against the proliferation of half-truths and fake news.

We need to be sharper in our awareness of planetary needs as well as the interdependencies that exist. Therefore, it remains crucial to promote the role of sensory and embodied experiences. A balancing of rational cognition, sense perception, experiential knowledge and intuition, paired with holistic and systemic approaches to societal challenges are key in order to develop viable foresight and conceive of alternative futures. Universities have a responsibility to foster inquisitiveness, imagination and the capabilities for systems thinking and human-centred design as key ingredients for addressing wicked problems in sustainable ways.

To condition mindsets for self-determined learning, critical engagement and respectful collaboration, a spatial re-organisation of the university is required that opens up departmental/disciplinary, research and functional silos and creates spaces conducive for cross-disciplinary and cross-functional exchange and co-creation. The traditional learning environment: the seminar room, lecture theatre and laboratory space has to be reimaged. We need flexible spaces equipped to accommodate a diversity of modes of engagement and practices: physical, augmented and virtual. The 'living lab' methodology is gaining traction as an effective set-up for participatory and cross-sectoral inquiry and co-creation by which solutions for complex challenges are devised, prototyped and tested in multi-faceted real-life environments. It deeply resonates with the move towards mission-oriented research and education that foreground urgency, purpose and intent, and centre on authenticity and value, connecting the individual researcher/student with communal needs and perspectives, and the local and global dimensions in addressing complex societal issues.

In developing our teaching methods and designing the curriculum, we have to support a diversity of learner needs, foster resilience and promote intelligent risk taking. With a focus on concept, context and challenge-based learning, we need to be mindful of how those methods contribute to the enhancement of learners' ability to deal with ambiguity and uncertainty, to embrace complexity and adaptation. This requires a shift away from preferencing output, product and summative assessments. Instead, we need to appreciate the value of process, formative assessment and learning from failure. Co-creation with our partners in industry, communities and government as well as with our students can open up new ways of facilitating learning and inquiry. Together we need to ensure that the education and research opportunities created contribute toward shaping a thriveable future.

A university should lead the way forward, enable change, shape the future, inspire and stimulate through the art of making of questions, the art of making solutions, the art of making networks.

We take this responsibility very seriously at UL. By putting sustainability at the core of our thinking, we can harness the strength of our institution, our staff, our students, our 118,000 graduates and our surrounding community to affect real change with real impact.

Together we can make this happen.

Together we can move forward towards a positive future for this university, for our communities and for this region.

Together we can make UL Ireland's most sustainable university.

Together we can have that impact – because what happens if we don't?



Generating new ways of teaching and learning



University of Limerick Provost and Deputy President Professor Shane Kilcommins writes about the innovative developments and changes happening in university curricula

UNIVERSITIES have travelled a long way from the earliest days in Padua and Bologna, seminal moments including, the establishment of Oxford and Cambridge, the publication of Cardinal Newman's *magnus opus*, *The Idea of a University*, and the introduction of the Bryce Constitution for Owens College in Manchester in 1880, creating the organisational structure of a court, a council, a senate, faculty boards and departments, which has since been replicated – in one form or other – in all public universities. They all operate according to principles of good teaching, research and public service, fostering a community of teachers and students (*universitas magistrorum et scholarium*) in a specialist enclave. Since the mid to late nineteenth century, we have seen a proliferation in these enclaves where learning in higher education should take place.

Though generalisation is not without its challenges, most of the institutions that emerged share a number of common traits. There has been a tendency to 'partition' knowledge, academic barons (and baronesses) rooting discourse and dissemination through the conduit of the relevant discipline. Knowledge and learning therefore was compartmentalised, a phenomenon facilitated by fidelity to tradition, the autonomy of disciplines, teaching terms, and organisational and programme logistics. The institutions themselves existed, for the most part, in monopolistic isolation, with the professor



reified as the 'exemplary master' of the subject discipline, and students often seen as objective and 'docile' subjects. Learning in many instances equated with knowledge certification, with summative assessment as the final (often exclusive) arbiter. Once a student passed through this portal, they were 'inoculated for life'. More recently, many of these assumptions and commitments have come under increased scrutiny. Do universities have a monopoly on learning? Does learning need to take place in the 'specialist

enclave' or can more 'zones of openness' be created? Is it enough that the lecturer is a 'subject expert'? Do problems in industry, communities and society present in silo format? Should students be passive learners? Is there an 'essential' category of student, to whom all lecturing should be directed? Is disciplinary knowledge enough? Should we nurture learning rather than certify knowledge? When should we stop learning? Do we need the boundaries/restrictions of programmes of study?

All of these questions are generating new ways of doing teaching and learning. It is evident in new modes of delivery (hybrid, blended), the creation of new domains of expertise (particularly practitioner expertise), an increased emphasis on the student at the centre of the learning experience, and new pedagogies

“ Higher education is becoming more of a fluid, lifelong experience

focusing, for example on Problem-Based Learning (PBL) and Universal Design for Learning (UDL). Academic scholars are increasingly required to evidence their expertise in pedagogy and in teaching students for understanding – in addition to demonstrating scholarly acumen in their discipline areas. Curriculum development

and innovation is also evolving. There is a far greater emphasis and engagement with industrial/public/community ecosystems. Integrative learning and intersectoral mobility are, inter alia, moving us in the direction of new assessment types - capstones, experiential engagements, portfolios, reflective journaling and so on. Higher education is becoming more of a fluid, lifelong experience, one which encompasses skills, competencies and values in addition to substantive knowledge. Universities can no longer perceive themselves as monopolistic, isolated providers of learning. They increasingly must also act as collaborators and facilitators, co-creating and co-teaching, developing inter-institutional engagements and multiple pathways through the learning life course. This momentum is, to some extent, reflected in the National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 where it was noted:

“Higher education institutions should have open engagement with their community and wider society and this should infuse every aspect of their mission. Outward-facing systems and structures should be embedded into institutional activity, so that there are inward and outward flows of knowledge, staff, students and ideas between each institution and its external community.”

Many of these developments can be hung on a ‘connection’ throughline –where engagement with students, communities, industry, society, disciplines and institutions, together with the changing nature of the individual life course, offers potential for universities to create opportunities for learning that are both responsive and relevant. Aside from such connections, new curriculum design and development also reminds us as academics that we do not need to carve our working





lives in to teaching, research and leadership silos. These siloes are often set against each other, creating tensions and existential disturbances about identity and purpose. Rather than setting up the rules of the game in this way, we should perhaps view inspiring teaching and curriculum design as one way of helping to nurture scholarship, facilitating, as Boyer extols, 'discovery, integration, application, and representation'.

We see many examples of pioneering work of this kind at the University of Limerick. The outstanding new Immersive Software Engineering Programme is a computer science degree where students 'learn by doing'. It is an integrated Bachelors/Masters qualification, where students learn on campus in a research-driven environment, in studios, working on projects, in teams, undergoing continuous assessment instead of end of term exams. This is scaffolded by learning through residencies, where students solve challenging problems in leading companies.

UL@Work is another brilliant new initiative offering a range of digital led programmes, which are co-designed with industry, and which enable upskilling and reskilling through combining education and work in areas such as data analytics, ICT, human

resource management, natural language processing, cybersecurity, robotics, climate action, transversal skills, digital leadership, law and technology and future studies. Central to this initiative is the formalisation of partnerships between Education, Industry and Technology to support the future of work, generating new design frameworks and pathways including the use of microcredentials, co-located programmes and apprenticeships, professional diplomas, top-up degrees, and professional masters. All of this is helping to advance lifelong learning and professional growth in a digital age. This close partnership with industry is also reflected in UL's leadership in the development of new Consortium Led Apprenticeships. Seven programmes have been developed and more than 200 apprentices registered at UL to date, including 152 on Masters level programmes and 12 on a Level 10 Principal Engineer apprenticeship

At a more bespoke level, the School of Law offers a microcredential module on Policing and Human Rights. It is a co-created with An Garda Síochána. It is co-taught, involving a university teaching team, and a Garda teaching team (including judges, psychiatrists and other stakeholders). To date, 2,000 or

so members of An Garda Síochána are or have taken the module, commencing with its most senior members. It provides an excellent example of how professional communities of scholarship and practice can interact in a learning space. It is fully online, facilitating aspects in every corner of the country, and includes a bespoke induction and mass online registration system.

“ UL@Work is another brilliant new initiative offering a range of digital led programmes

Aside from their innovative and pioneering qualities, these examples also speak to the democratisation of knowledge, and the integration of that knowledge with Sustainable Development Goals, values and graduate attributes. They help, in part, to realise Newman's interpretation of what he understood by the term 'education' at third level, as something broad and eclectic, not formulaic or a 'treadmill', and certainly not confined to 'formal moments' in an institutional setting.

UL community makes sporting impact at All Ireland final level

University of Limerick President Professor Kerstin Mey hails the ‘very best’ of the sporting community who had a glorious All Ireland summer

In all, there were more than 70 members of the UL community – students and alumni – involved in All Ireland finals at senior, intermediate and U21 level across hurling, football and camogie.

There was no less than 38 UL students and alumni involved in the men’s All-Ireland Hurling and Football finals featuring Limerick and Kilkenny and Kerry and Galway respectively. And there was a 20 strong representation from UL among the ranks of the All-Ireland Women’s Football and Camogie finals featuring Meath and Kerry and Kilkenny and Cork respectively. In addition, there was 14 members of the UL community who took part in the U21s Men’s Hurling final in May.

Both man of the match awards at the men’s hurling and football finals went to UL graduates - Gearoid Hegarty (Hurling) and David Clifford (Football). Both also made eight-point contributions in their respective finals, Hegarty with 1-5 and Clifford with 0-8. Professor Mey said: “To say that we are proud of our representation in All-Ireland finals this summer is an understatement. To have had some of the very best young hurlers, footballers and camogie players who are students and graduates of UL participate in what were incredible sporting spectacles illustrates the role the University has played in the development of not just great athletes but great leaders.

“Helping young men and women to become their very best is something we are extremely proud and not just in a sporting context of course. But UL is Ireland’s sporting campus and many of the players previously wore the UL jersey with pride in competitions like the Sigerson and Fitzgibbon cups, while our female athletes had just as large a representation on both the Ladies Football and the Camogie squads and we are so proud of them all.

“They spent some key development years with us here and we have no doubt that the very best facilities and coaching available to them at UL helped them along their amazing journeys and we will continue to do so.”



Limerick hurlers and UL graduates Gearoid Hegarty and Kyle Hayes

“ Helping young men and women to become their very best is something we are extremely proud [of]



David Clifford, who graduated from UL with a Masters in PE Teaching in August



Hurling:

Limerick

Michael Casey, Colin Coughlan, Rory Duff, Adam English, Sean Finn, Declan Hannon, Kyle Hayes, Gearoid Hegarty, Michael Houlihan, David McCarthy, Dan Morrissey, Tom Morrissey, Barry Murphy, Barry Nash, Aidan O Connor, William O Donoghue, Brian O Grady, Cathal O Neill, Oisín O Reilly, Mark Quinlan.

Kilkenny

Michael Carey, Conor Fogarty, Martin "Mossy" Keoghan, Richie Leahy, Dean Mason, Alan Murphy, Pádraig Walsh

Football:

Kerry

David Clifford, David Moran, Paul Murphy, Brian O Beaglaioch, Joe O Connor, Donal O Sullivan, Stefan Okunbor, Pa Warren, Gavin White.

Galway

Conor Flaherty, Jack Glynn.

Camogie:

Kilkenny

Aoife Prendergast – Senior

Cork

Aoife Hurley – Senior

Galway

Jennifer Hughes, Caoimhe Starr, Aisling Donnellan – Intermediate

Full total:

- All-Ireland Men's Hurling Final - 27 UL community members
- All-Ireland Men's Football Final - 11 UL community members
- All-Ireland Women's Football Final - 15 UL community members
- All-Ireland Women's Camogie Final - 5 UL community members
- All Ireland U21 Men's Hurling final - 14 UL community members

UL 50: A year of celebration marks a historic milestone

By Dr David Fleming and Eoin Brady

A year of celebrations marking the 50th anniversary of University of Limerick are well and truly underway. The institution is marking the very significant milestone with a series of events - beginning with a community Picnic on the Plaza which took place in May. The University's vision for what a sustainable campus could look like was detailed by UL President Professor Kerstin Mey at her gala dinner - also in May - which featured the launch of an inspiring video that further envisioned UL's Past, Present and Future. Work is well underway to realise this vision, building on UL's reputation as the home of firsts and a foundation rooted in the idea of wisdom for action. Learning from the past while looking to the future, encapsulated in the anniversary's themes of reflecting, connecting and transforming, inspire the on-going events and projects celebrating five decades of learning, scholarship and enterprise at the university.

“ Moments of celebration are also times to connect or re-connect



Reflecting

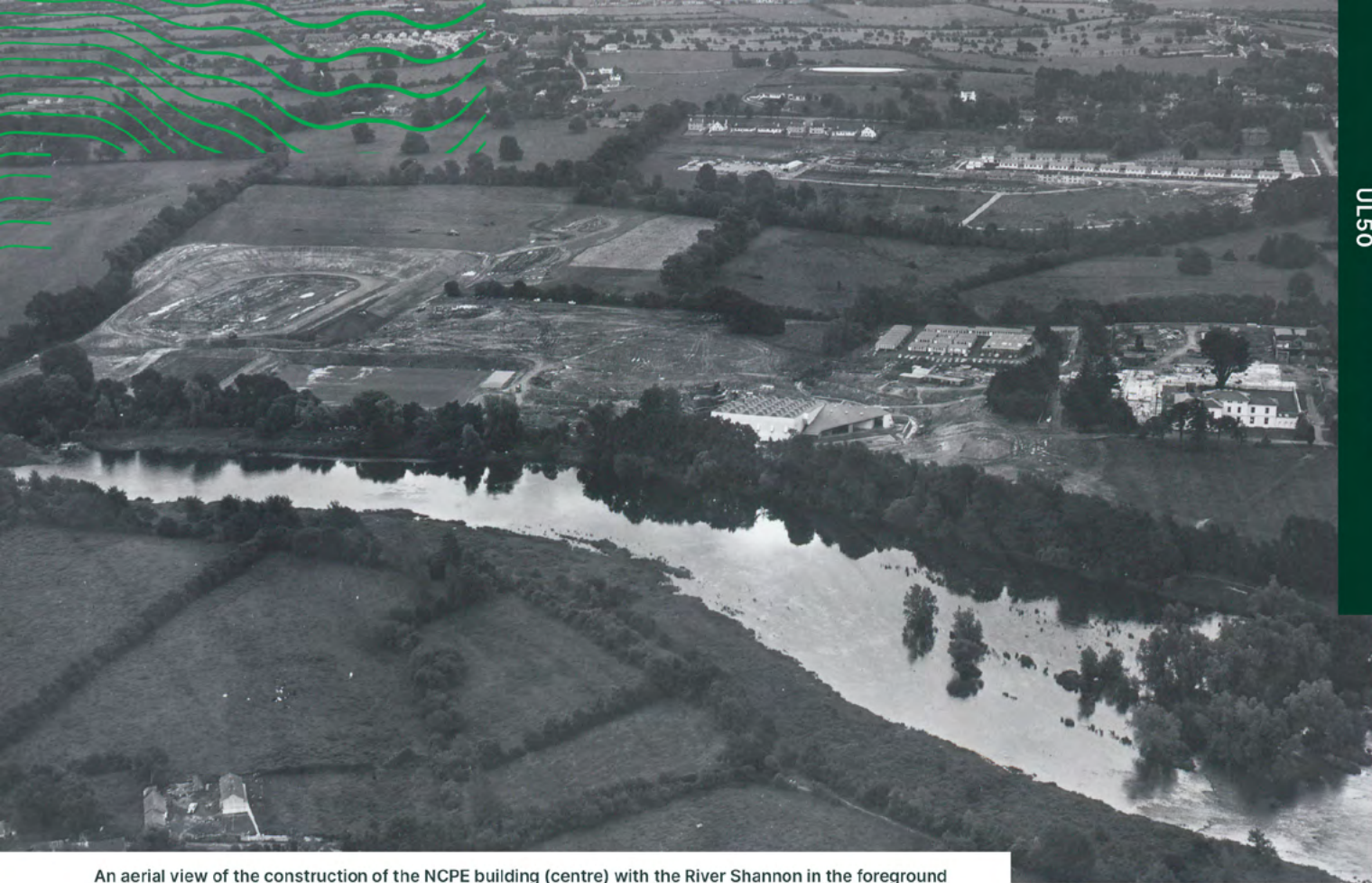
During the anniversary year, many of our 118,000 alumni may take the opportunity to recall their time in Plassey, reflecting on the highs and lows of their educational experience, the formative moments when their thinking or lives changed, the contribution they might have made to clubs, societies or the community, to the friends they met along the way. You can share your reflections using the online form on the UL50 website, which will contribute to the University's archive. The University welcomes all alumni to engage in the celebrations, whether students of the University of Limerick since 1989, or its predecessor the National Institute for Higher Education, Limerick, as well as those from the National College of Physical Education and, since 1976, Thomond College of Education. Today the University draws its rich legacy in teaching, learning and research from these institutions.

Just as alumni will reflect on their experiences, so too will current and retired staff, many of whom will remember the challenging times of the early 1970s when the institutions were established. To learn more about the campaign that led to University of Limerick, why not visit A University of Our Time: University of Limerick 1972-2022, an exhibition on the UL campus, which opens on 27 September or watch some of the 50Voices/50Years videos on the website.

Two other exhibitions explore the role women have played in the development of higher education at Plassey, and the sporting life of the campus. Many of the voices of the last fifty years will be recalled in a special publication drawing on testimonies collected over the last ten years by the UL Oral History Project and a new catalogue the University's vast archive of photographic images. Anniversaries are special times to take stock and reflect so it is fitting that next spring as part of UL50, a specially designed memorial garden for deceased staff and students will be opened.

Connecting

Moments of celebration are also times to connect or re-connect. UL has long-established relationships with businesses, charities, non-governmental organisations, schools and the public service who join us every year to provide opportunities to students to learn within a work-based environment. The University's co-operative education programme remains one of most important elements of every UL undergraduate's experience.

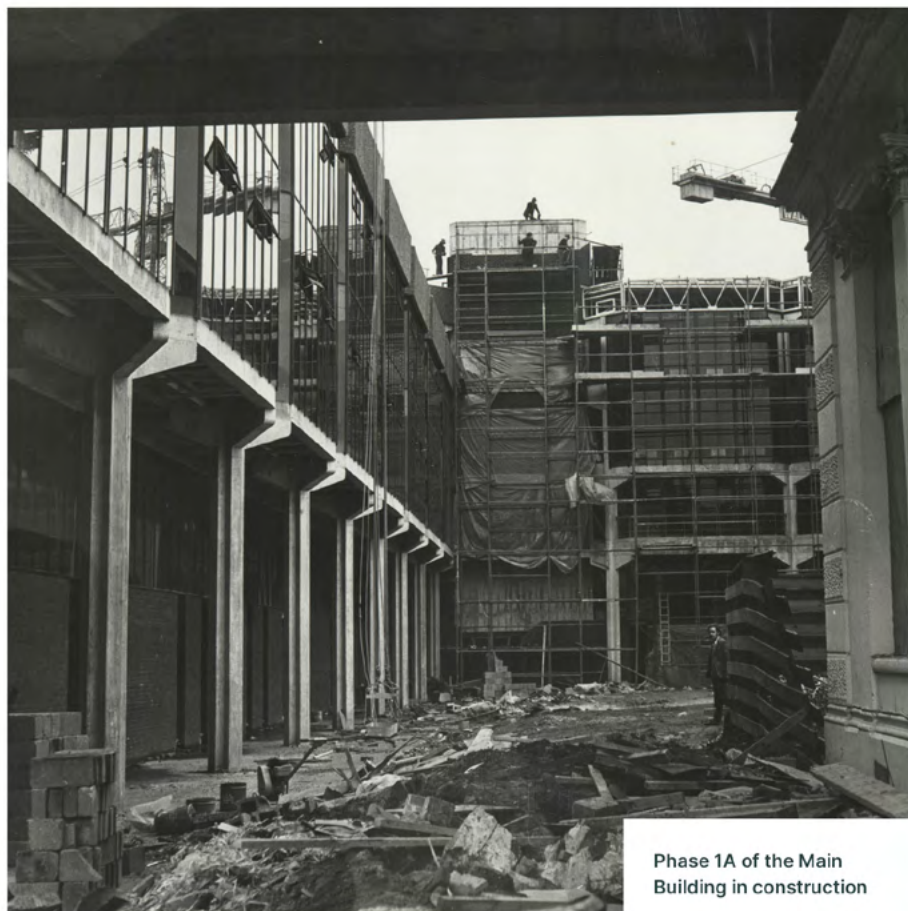


An aerial view of the construction of the NCPE building (centre) with the River Shannon in the foreground

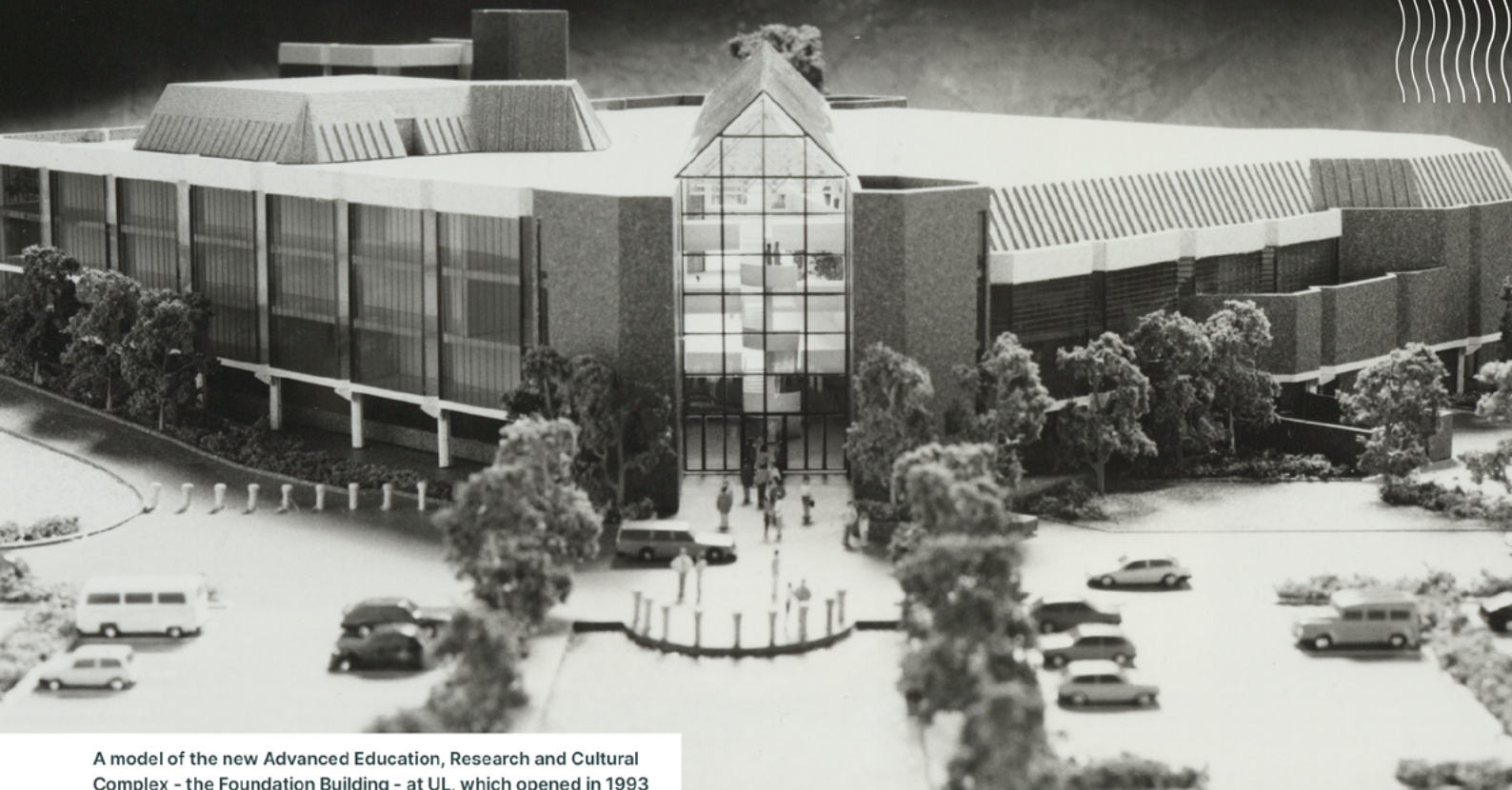
In June our Global Partners week and a national symposium on The European Dimension in Irish Education celebrated our international connections while in July, UL50 marked Bastille Day with the French embassy and in partnership with the University of Nantes as part of the Wild Geese Festival concert in King John's Castle. Until May 2023, events are being held in Limerick and across Ireland and beyond, to allow us meet with old friends and colleagues and make new connections with these valued partners.

An Anniversary Gala week in November will be the highlight of UL50 when a number of alumni will receive special recognition for their contribution to culture, business and society. Around this time, the first of fifty trees will be planted to enhance one of Ireland's most beautiful university campuses.

On Thursday of that week, a Celebration of Music in UL concert takes place in the University Concert Hall, featuring the Irish Chamber Orchestra, Muireann Nic Amhlaobh, students and internationally known and critically acclaimed guest musicians from the Irish World Academy



Phase 1A of the Main Building in construction



A model of the new Advanced Education, Research and Cultural Complex - the Foundation Building - at UL, which opened in 1993

of Music and Dance. The performance will include the premiere of a new jubilee anthem for UL, co-commissioned by the University and RTÉ lyric fm, *Beatha an Scoláire*, written by alumnus and Hollywood composer Patrick Cassidy.

The University will also celebrate its connection with Limerick and the wider region by hosting a number of internationally renowned speakers as part of the President's Jubilee Lecture Series.

Transforming

Universities have always been places where minds are shaped, and knowledge is formed and disseminated. The University of Limerick prides itself on the transformative learning and research it has been involved in for five decades, and is excited to reveal plans for how the University will continue to offer new ways of learning and how it will contribute to the local and global challenges that face us. Imagining and anticipating what the next fifty years holds for learners, researchers and our society more broadly is at the heart of the University's sustainable and regenerative futures initiative, which will be discussed and unveiled during the anniversary year.

In responding to the United Nations call for a more sustainable world, in 2022 the University launched a Challenge to students to find technological, commercial and behavioural solutions to tackle the global climate crisis and ensure a more viable future. The Challenge offers an opportunity not only to identify solutions but also to put them into action with the help of partners across the region and country.

“ Universities have always been places where minds are shaped, and knowledge is formed and disseminated

Part of our commitment to the future is also investing in talent and facilitating access to the university from all parts of society. Supported by the UL Foundation through the generous donations of alumni, businesses and supporters, the 50forFifty Initiative will award scholarships to students from diverse backgrounds and across all disciplines to allow them to achieve their educational ambitions. To date, 37 scholarships have been created with commitments totalling €900,000. To discover how you can get involved, go to the UL Foundation website www.ulfoundation.com.

Reflect, connect and join us on the next transformative chapter in the story of University of Limerick. Learn more about what is happening in the following pages and bookmark www.ul.ie/50 to stay up to date with events throughout the year.

“ Part of our commitment to the future is also investing in talent and facilitating access to the university from all parts of society



Plassey House shortly before the first students arrived in 1972



The main entrance and lodge at Plassey House pictured in 1970

Memories of a University

FOR twelve months and since May 2022, University of Limerick celebrates fifty significant years of learning and teaching, research with impact, enterprise and engagement.

Founded to meet the educational challenges of modern Ireland, University of Limerick is proud of its five decades of achievement and success in promoting new types of inquiry and learning, in forming pioneering partnerships and knowledge exchange initiatives and in ensuring that our graduates are knowledgeable and engaged citizens who enrich the communities in which they study, live and work. Today, over 118,000 of our alumni lead and shape business, culture and society worldwide.

UL continues to transform higher education and research in Ireland, providing innovative and sustainable solutions to local and global problems; that revitalise and create connections with internal and external partners; and that reflect our values and history as a university.

As part of our celebration, we asked our past students to recollect their memories throughout the years and here is a snapshot of them.

Colman Byrne

NIHE – 1979 to 1983

BEng Electronics

Recollections:

I was in the first BEng cohort that started as a BSc so we had to do an extra term in the last summer to get the BEng.

I remember us being the only students on campus with the lecturers and playing pranks on the lecturers who joined in.

One specific one was the Airplane in trouble story in the Canteen which was just an excuse to douse one lecturer in water from all angles!

Playing frisbee on the central lawn before the full square was built and Ed Walsh shouting out the window to go somewhere else as we were making too much noise.

Reena Cole

University of Limerick – 1991 to 2001
as a student and still here!

BEng Mechanical Engineering (1996),
PHD (2001)

Recollections:

Too many memories - but one that stands out is back in around 1992/1993 walking to a lecture in the SR building, walking past the Canoe store, there was an open area, on this snowy morning there was a fully-fledged snowball fight. Now I work in the Lonsdale Building, built on that snowball battlefield!

“ My first recollection was the sheer size of the facility

Seamus Mc Dermott

NIHE - 1985 to 1989

BTech in Manufacturing Technology

Recollections:

My first recollection of NIHE was the sheer size of the facility....when you move from a secondary school, it was little intimidating trying to get your bearings during the first few weeks. Once I found the relevant lecture theatres and the canteen, everything else was easy. Our course was the first year of the Degree course in Manufacturing Technology and our course head was the great Dr Michael Hillery....he was a great guy....he was incredibly helpful throughout the four years and his door was always open to us.

Meeting new and now lifelong friends is the main thing that I have taken from my experience in NIHE. Days and nights in the Hurlers and later the Stables... exams in EG010... day trip to an Engineering equipment fair in the RDS in Dublin... celebrating the news that NIHE was to become UL... the day we received our Degrees in Sept 1989... we were the first students to receive University degrees... that was a bit special. It was a bit sad when we all went our separate ways after graduation, but I am glad to say that I have stayed close to five classmates and we love to meet up and look back on our days in UL with great fun and fondness.

“ Our course was the first year of the Degree course in Manufacturing Technology and our course head was the great Dr Michael Hillery ...



Taoiseach Charles Haughey unveiling the stone to mark the inauguration of University of Limerick in September 1989 with Mary O'Rourke, Minister for Education, and UL President Dr Ed Walsh

Terry Adams

NIHE – 1975 to 1979 and 1979 to 1980

European Studies 1975-1879 and Graduate Diploma in Computing 1979-1980

Recollections:

1975 Funeral Procession

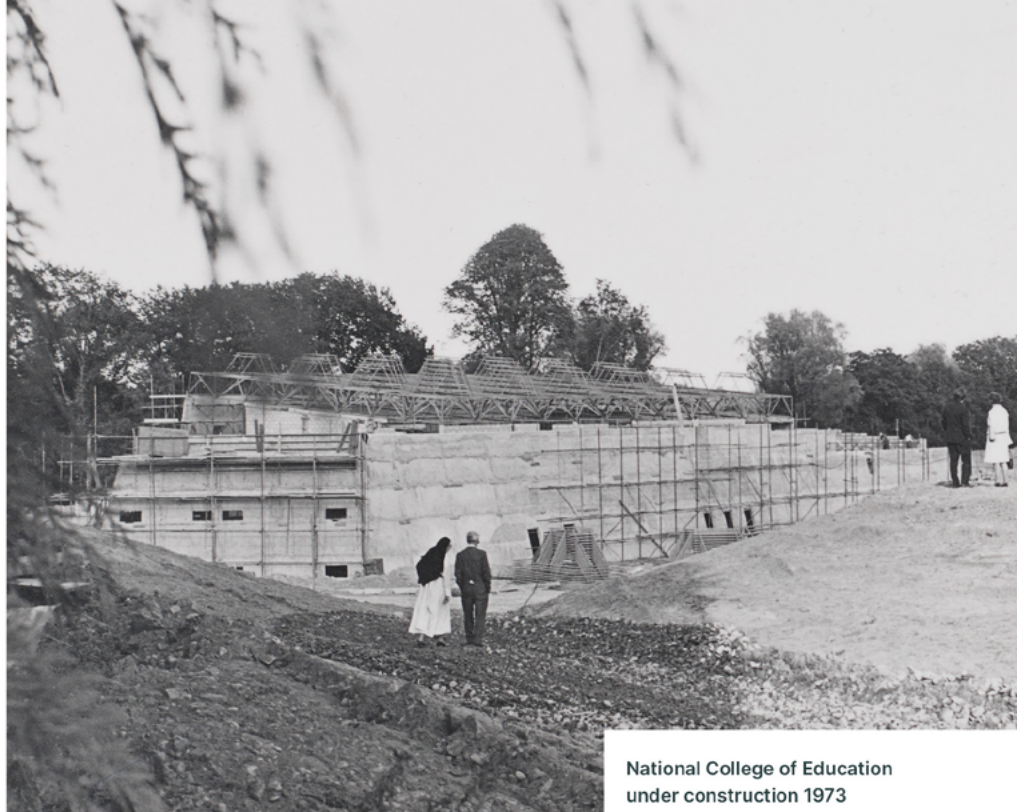
I was part of the fourth year in to the NIHE in September 1975. There was great uncertainty as to what status we would have, who would award our degrees, if we would even get degrees. We bounced from being under NUI Galway to NUI Cork to the National Council for Educational Awards, NCEA. It seemed every week there were demonstrations. We staged a long picket at the Department of Education in Dublin with groups of students rotated.

We bussed to Dublin for marches to the Leinster House. We had a night's occupation of the East Room, then the administration hub of the college. After some particularly bad news it was decided we would have a funeral procession from the college into, I think, the Council offices in the city. This was to mark the symbolic death of the independent college. A mock coffin was created and we all walked slowly, and solemnly, behind it towards town. It was dark and rain was on the wind. In 1975 the total student body numbered only four or five hundred and some of those would have been out on Co-op. Our coffin and demeanour must have been convincing. Soon we noticed bystanders blessing themselves as we passed. We had to stifle our laughter and proceed as before. The things we did to secure our degrees and the degrees for all who came after us.

1976 The Hand of Ed

One afternoon myself and my good friend Donagh O'Brien went up to the third floor to one of the many unused rooms to study. At that time, many rooms in the third and fourth floors were unused. When we got to the room we had used before, we found a nearly finished canvas with a large painting of the Governing Body sitting on an easel.

We decided to stay and study, not expecting any painter to come along at that time of the afternoon. Around 4 o'clock the door opened and a man in a pair of dungarees entered. We thought we



National College of Education under construction 1973

were in for a different sort of lecture than the one we had finished earlier, but the man, the painter, made us feel at ease. He asked if he could see our right hands and a somewhat perplexed Donagh showed him his hand, but it did not measure up. I showed him mine and he asked if I could sit and let him paint my hand. He was completing his painting and needed to paint Dr Ed Walsh's right hand. He asked if I would sit and let my hand rest pointing downward along the side of the chair while holding a folded sheet of paper.

“The things we did to secure our degrees

The resulting painting hung for many years in pride of place down in Plassey House, I think on the right of the stairs leading down to the East Room. Some years ago, it was moved and now rests particularly under the stairs of another building whose name, or function, I do not know. I'm proud to have left my mark in the old N.I.H.E. and to think I was paid a full pound for my troubles. Putting myself through college, without grants, I can assure you one full pound was a very welcome addition.

1976 Mural in the old canteen

In late July 1976, on my way back from a family holiday in Kerry, I persuaded my older brother to stop into the NIHE to check

if my results were out. I took himself and his wife around a little tour of the building (only one building in use back then) and we ended up in the canteen. A mural had appeared on one of the walls since I had last been there two months previous. While we stood admiring the artwork and wondering what it stood for a voice startled us. An older man, in overalls, was leaning back into a wall and we had not noticed him. He asked if we wanted the mural explained, as he was the painter. He then proceeded to explain it from top to bottom and side to side.

It was fascinating to listen to him. He told us the main theme was the Irish connections to the continent, the old monks, the wild geese, the four province flags, three carried by men and one, the red hand of Ulster, waving in the background. He ended with young scholars, complete with books, looking towards their future. All this with majestic King John's castle in the background. The three of us were captivated. I believe the artist's name was Fr Buckley and, unfortunately, he died some years later. Every time thereafter I ventured into the canteen I admired the mural and thought of our personal introduction to it by its originator. I am glad to report that it was still there the last time I had the chance to visit the campus.

“ I am so proud that my daughter started her first year in UL recently

Francis Reilly

NIHE - 1986 to 1990

BSc Industrial Chemistry

Recollections:

I frequented college during the “transition” years; enrolling as a student of the NIHE and graduating from University of Limerick. The beginning of my third level experience was, to put it mildly, interesting. As I quietly joined the queue on enrolment day I got into conversation with a young man beside me who has also selected Industrial chemistry as his course of choice.

As we exchanged pleasantries and discussed, as is common amongst younger students, our recent performance at the Leaving Cert, he quietly, and in a most modest fashion, told me that he had won the gold medal in physics (highest result in the leaving cert for all of Ireland). He also told me that his girlfriend, also enrolling at NIHE, held the gold medal for mathematics!

That start was intimidating. There were numerous brilliant individuals at Limerick, which was obviously able to attract talented students. There is no doubt about it that my studies at University were a

hard slog. This was interrupted by a nine-month work experience in Cork that remains a fundamental pillar in my career.

Personally, I feel I was overly focused on my studies, which meant that I did not actively participate in clubs or societies. However, a fantastic group of colleagues compensated this; it was very competitive, we were known to work hard but we also knew how to have a party. I feel that I was part of a great class of individuals and that the University pushed us hard, but we had our fun and rewards.

University of Limerick, as I know it, is a place to be recommended. Work hard, take a hands-on approach and take initiative and life will reward you but... remember to enjoy yourself on the way!

Patrick Stack O Neill

NIHE - 1973 to 1977

Business

Recollections:

Seeing Red!

In my final year, 1976 the first ever Student Art Exhibition was organised on the basement of Plassey House. The basement housed the Library, reading areas and the Cafeteria. The exhibition received some funding from the Students Union that paid for a wine and cheese reception. I decided to submit a large pen and ink drawing of Baals Bridge, Limerick, it was one of my first drawings. On the opening night, there was a great buzz about the place and after a while, I was walking around viewing the other pieces of art, I noticed a sticker on my painting. I asked the organiser what that meant he said it has been sold. I forgot what price I put on it. He reminded me it was 150 Irish pounds. That was a lot of money in 1976 having struggled through college on a tight budget. Later I thought I'd ask who bought it, he replied “Ed”.

“Dr Walsh”, yes he said. He bought it for the NIHE Art Collection that he was developing. I could not wait to tell my parents. It remains one of my proudest achievements. Today it still hangs in the UL. I return to the campus in 1996 to set up the Irish Centre for Business Excellence, ICBE. To mark the occasion of my new role the artwork was moved to my office in the Foundation Building.

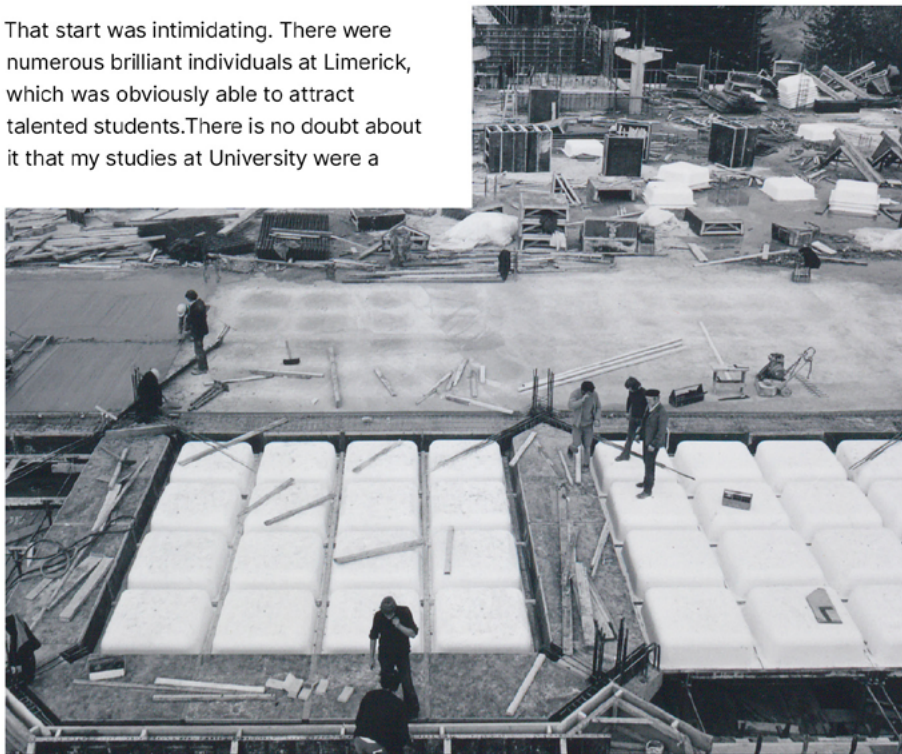
Sonja Kennedy

NIHE - 1987 to 1991

European studies

Recollections:

I remember the day it was announced that NIHE had achieved university status. There was much jubilation around the (considerably smaller then) campus. At one point, President Ed Walsh came into a packed canteen to receive a standing ovation, from atop a table, from the collective student body. Everyone was so proud. He gave UL the fantastic



Construction of buildings as part of Phase 1A construction, with Plassey House in rear



start that it had with his vision and it has continued to grow. I am so proud that my daughter started her first year in UL recently. I have so many brilliant memories from my time there and made some of my best lifelong friends.

Nicole Seidler

**University of Limerick Years –
2008 to 2012**

BA New media and English

Recollections:

Great four years spent in UL. Fond memories of my first year living in Dromroe campus. Was part of the group of students who set up ULFM! Was proud to be a part of something so special.

Aidan Collins

NIHE- 1980 to 1983

Mechanical Engineering

Recollections:

We were the first graduating class of Mech Eng. 28 of us. An amazing group. So many fond memories - and some of them related to academics! Ted Little's impossible lab assignments, the cafeteria at 10am, the Hurlers of course, hard work followed by hard play.

Long live the Foundation!

A rigorous academic education that prepared me for the many challenges ahead and made grad school in the US seem easy! I owe a major debt to NIHE/UL.

Liam Ryan

University of Limerick 2002 to 2006

Bachelor of Arts in History, Politics and Social Studies

Recollections:

UL has always been a huge part of my life. My father worked there since 1973, long before I was born. I remember visiting the Stables back in the early 90's and getting lost in the main building as a child. Clubs and Societies were a part of my life, even back then. I vividly remember the UL Windsurfing Club hosting the Intervarsity's in Dromineer in 1990. It seemed like such a fun, inclusive environment to be a part of. Dad was heavily involved with the Sailing and Windsurfing clubs and was very

**“ Great four years spent in UL.
Fond memories of my first year
living in Dromroe campus.**



Construction of the Glucksman Library

passionate about getting students involved and empowered. When I joined UL myself in 2002, one of the first things I did was attend the Clubs and Societies recruitment event.

I had an interest in American Football so signed up with the UL Vikings. To be honest it was a bit of a motley crew in the early years with the first few years producing winless seasons.

However, because it wasn't a hugely established club, it allowed it's (few) members autonomy and space to learn and grow how to play, manage, coach, fundraise, promote and everything else that goes with running a club. In 2006 (my final year as a student) we finally developed the club to the point where we got to the All Ireland Final of American Football, The Shamrock Bowl. We were slaughtered, but watching the highlights back on Sky Sports in the Stables the following week, we were

delighted as a group and felt like we had made it. The next year, we took on the big task of hosting the Shamrock Bowl in UL and finally won the thing!

Three National championships in a row and a European Championship followed. Even more positive was the group of lifelong friends that we all made, we picked up valuable life skills (probably more from the Vikings than my degree, truth be told) and I even met my now wife. I am hugely indebted to UL as an institution for creating the culture where that is possible. Students are given support, funds and freedom to create and realise their ambitions, no matter what they might be. Being part of the UL Vikings taught me that with hard work, perseverance and a good team you can achieve anything you set your mind to, and that it is possible to enjoy yourself while you do it.

Clare O Neill

University of Limerick - 2000 to 2003

Environmental Science

Recollections:

I grew up in the parish where the University is and as a child my parents would take myself and my siblings walking on the banks of the Shannon. On one occasion we had our dog with us, a small white and black terrier called Juno. Juno liked to run off, and on this occasion he went too far and we couldn't find him, despite searching for hours. My parents eventually decided to call off the search when it got dark and it became evident that we weren't going to find our dog. We were devastated as Juno was one of the family. We made posters and made our Dad stick them up around the campus. Dad went out and searched every evening after work to try and find our dog. After two weeks he gave up and we resigned ourselves to never seeing Juno again. About three weeks after Juno went

missing we got a call from NIHE/Thomond College, telling us that our dog had been found. Prior to the science labs being built in the materials science building, there had been several prefabs which were being used as labs/classes for teaching. Our dog had chased a rabbit under the prefabs and then couldn't get back out. The students had been listening to scrapping and whining for three weeks until they figured out where it was coming from. They lifted the floorboards and found Juno trapped underneath. One of the students remembered our hand made fliers and called my Dad. Who then picked up our very excited pup. I don't think any dog was ever so pampered after that. Juno lived for many years after that. Despite being a student at UL for several years myself and having many wonderful memories of my time there, that will always be my most enduring memory of the University.

Niamh Coleman (nee Burke)

NIHE

European studies (languages)

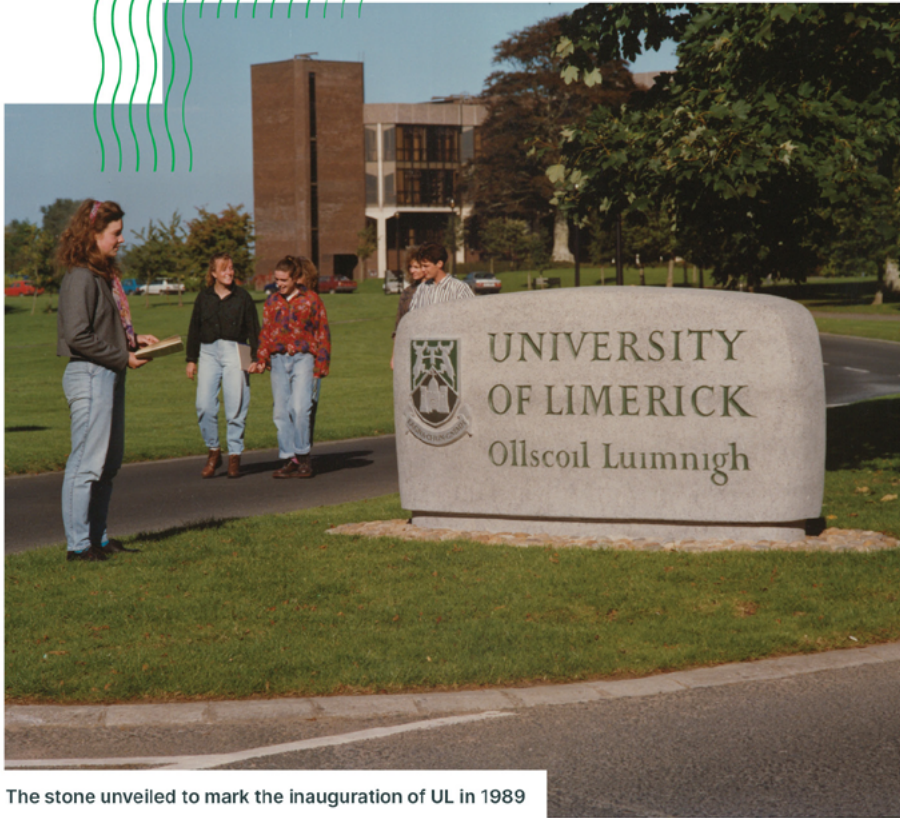
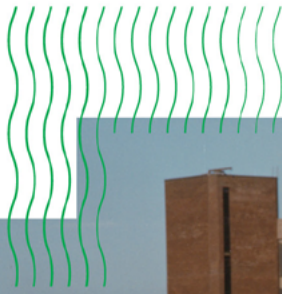
Recollections:

I remember the protest at the front gates of the university around the fact that we wanted status. It happened during rag week in 1988!

And I recall it being cold and having too many beers beforehand. I got to attend NIHE and UL as we got status that year!

“ Even more positive was the group of lifelong friends that we all made, we picked up valuable life skills





The stone unveiled to mark the inauguration of UL in 1989

“ UL you shaped me into the person I am today, thank you for everything

Michael O’Donoghue

NIHE – 1977 to 1982

Bachelor of Business Studies/Human Resource Management

Recollections:

The long walk from Castletroy up to NIHE. The huge lecture halls. Having Pat Cox, Willie O’Dea, Devi Jankowicz as lecturers in Economics, Law and Psychology, respectively.

Being on the European Elections Count with Limerick City Council during my first CoOp Placement and seeing Pat Cox keeping a close eye on the count.

The flexibility to transfer from a successful National Diploma to pursue an Honours Degree after stumbling academically through my Leaving Cert in a stifled Secondary School system. Friendships and colleagues over the years resulting in chance networking later in New York City.

Academic success giving me the confidence to be selective about life’s onward journey from initial employment in my chosen field to moving overseas to 2 other continents, eventual self-employment and early retirement at 47.

Negative experiences put in perspective with a young college in the 70s having a mix of headline lecturers and “green” overseas recruits dealing with their own adjustment to the foreign land by the Shannon. Co Op placement was a newish concept and mundane work did not match inspired theory in those early years.

I graduated in 1982 and had a broad range of employment experiences in Ireland, Australia and USA, finally settling in Australia second time round. Have a successful 50 in 22.

David Fogarty

University of Limerick - 1995 to 2005

Bachelor in Aeronautical Engineering, PhD in Aeronautical Engineering

Recollections:

Without my time at UL I would never be where I am today. UL brought me to The NASA Langley Research Center in Hampton, VA. Moving on from there, I currently work at one of the top NASCAR teams in the US as an aerodynamics engineer. I remember the long hours and days spent in the library studying and learning pages of theorems, and going to the Paddocks or Stables for lunch. I remember cycling my bike home in the rain to the many houses we stayed at. Working at the UL Arena, going to the gym there, and making so many friends. I remember doing exams in EGO10, I remember attending lectures in The Foundation Building in 1995 and how memorized I was at the whole place! I remember my first walk to UL on my very first morning and how nervous I was. As I write this, the memories come flooding back in an overwhelming stream

of happiness and emotion. I remember my parents (both RIP) bringing me food on Sundays and going to lunch with them. My fondest and most treasured memory of all is meeting my wife in The Stables. I remember that night like it was yesterday (well almost)!! Without UL, I would never have met her and who knows where we would all have ended up. UL you shaped me into the person I am today, thank you for everything.

Nora O Mahony

NIHE – 1986 to 1990

European Studies/Law

Recollections:

Excellent lecturers to include Professor Paul McCutcheon among others. Took part in a moot court & placed in Nancy, France for my co-op in 2nd year (1986).

Stand out memory - party night in 1989 celebrating university status with lecturers, Ber Angley, fireworks etc on campus. A defining moment/night I felt for the institution that was transitioning from NIHE to UL.

MaryRose Kelleher

Thomond College

Recollections:

Back in 1987, a student science teacher from Thomond College spent a week in my primary school a few miles away from Plassey teaching us science. I was hooked and I have had a long academic and industrial scientific career since then and I think it all started that week back in 1987 when I was given a broad bean seed to 'grow' overnight in the fridge. I knew it would not grow! 'I'm going to make things work' I thought to myself and I've been interested in making things work ever since.

My primary school local to Plassey also availed of swimming lessons in the mid-eighties in the old Thomond College swimming pool, the one before the Arena, the one with the big glass wall you could see into the pool from outside. Another time my class (fifth?) got to go into the sports halls and we were asked to participate as extras for the filming of 'Anything Goes' with Aenghus MacAnally. For having had 'nothing' back in the Eighties, Limerick provided more than 'something' to us with Thomond College.

Ann

University of Limerick – 2009 to 2013

Ph.D.

Recollections:

When I made the very difficult decision to transition from male to female, I expected there would be many losses but did not expect to lose my old career. When I lost my career (and home, family, and friends), I became rudderless. My identity was gone and with it, my sense of who I was in the world. However, despite the many losses I had experienced, and many times where I felt the weight of my decision to transition suffocating, the decision to return to full-time education and pursue a Ph.D. at UL was the decision that ultimately saved my life. In UL, I found an environment that not only fed my intellectual curiosity but also protected and nurtured me during my rebirth of sorts. I know that without the safety, support and encouragement of UL, I simply would not have made it. I will always remember with fondness and deep humility the impact academic staff at UL had on me.

They made me the academic I am today. Thank you John (accounting), Helena (economics), Mike (management),

Amanda (sociology), & Christine (OB), I owe you a debt of gratitude I could never repay. Mostly, thank you UL for giving me a home when I needed it more than I realised.

Becca Yount

University of Limerick - Autumn 2013

Study abroad term

Recollections:

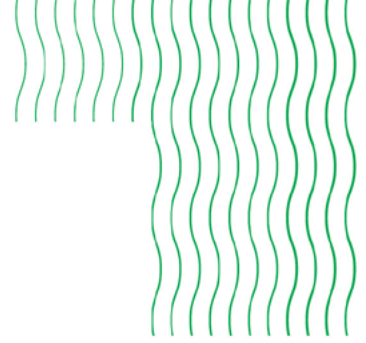
I loved my time in UL, even though it was short. I took courses in Irish Language, Irish Folklore, Celtic Civilizations and Irish Traditional Music, none of which would have been possible at my university in the United States. I feel a connection to Ireland that I never would have had without my time at UL.

“ I know that without the safety, support and encouragement of UL, I simply would not have made it



Laying foundations of the Glucksman Library

The 'Upstart' who founded a university



Founding president of University of Limerick
Dr Ed Walsh with exhibition curator Dr Zara Power

Founding president of University of Limerick Dr Ed Walsh hands over a 'vital archive' of his papers

Alan Owens

ALMOST exactly 50 years to the day and the hour since then Taoiseach Jack Lynch performed the official opening of the National Institute of Higher Education, founding president of University of Limerick Dr Ed Walsh returned to his old stomping ground for a different kind of ceremony. The inimitable retired president – who served from NIHE opening in 1972 to 1998 – was in UL on September 27 to hand over a 'vital archive' from that time. The main component of the papers presented to UL President Professor Kerstin Mey and the Glucksman Library comprised of 28 and a half years of Dr Walsh's diaries – over 300 in all in 26 boxes – which recount significant events from his stint as head of the institution.

Taking place also was the exhibition launch of 'A University of Our Time: University of Limerick, 1972–2022', a year-long public exhibition, one of the many events to mark the anniversary of the establishment of the University. Dr Walsh noted that he and UL President Professor Kerstin Mey were due to speak at the ceremony "precisely 50 years to the hour from the time the Taoiseach performed the official opening in 1972".

"I used to have a diary in my wallet and when anything that I thought was of significance was happening – good or bad – I wrote it down. In the early days I was very conscious that, if we succeeded in what we were trying to do, it would be seen in hindsight as quite significant," Dr Walsh explained. "I took quite a lot of notes almost hourly in the early days – buying the site, trying to encourage the minister to increase the budget from £5,000 for the first year, trying to get a telephone. In fact, we purchased the campus site here within weeks of I starting (in the job) but I still hadn't a telephone," he laughed.

President Mey thanked Dr Walsh for the "treasure trove" of papers he was handing over and hailed "the importance of his leadership for the foundation and establishment of the University, and the importance and excitement that he has handed his papers to UL. "The resulting archive is vital for our organisational history and our organisational future, for generations to come to understand how hard the region fought for higher education and the transformative impact it has had already and will have going forward," said Professor Mey.

Speaking for 20 minutes, assisted by a Power Point presentation with pictures from the time, Dr Walsh held the room captivated with evocative stories of the sheer determination to deliver a university for Limerick – which it finally was in 1989, a testament to the many people who sought to forge a new beginning for Limerick with a recognised third level institution. Dr Walsh catalogued the diaries meticulously when writing his autobiography 'Upstart: Friends, Foes & Founding a University' – and the resulting database was handed to Professor Mey as his family, friends, former colleagues and members of the original class of 1972 watched on. "I was on the job for 28 and a half years, so there are some over 300 different diaries," he explained. "I spent a long time going through each page and writing down a summary on an excel spreadsheet, with a keyword. I am giving two discs to the President – one that has a chronological sequence of events for 28 and a half years, and the other is based on topics. People frequently contact me (to ask) 'are you sure about this or that,' and I go to this database and I discover very often the answers."

Asked about his memories of September 27, 1972 – he said: "What caught the fancy of the community – apart from the Taoiseach (being present) – was the fact that the religious ceremony, which at the time would normally just be performed by the Catholic priest or bishop, I said we are going to invite the protestant bishop too, it is going to be an ecumenical ceremony. And one of the

faculty members – Peter Ward – said, well I am Jewish, what about the chief rabbi? So, I said 'Peter, you are in charge of the religious ceremony and if you can get the two bishops and the rabbi to participate, that is wonderful', and he did. "It was most emotional that he participated and I think it symbolised in 1972 our determination to break with bad traditions and to start new ones and to build bridges."

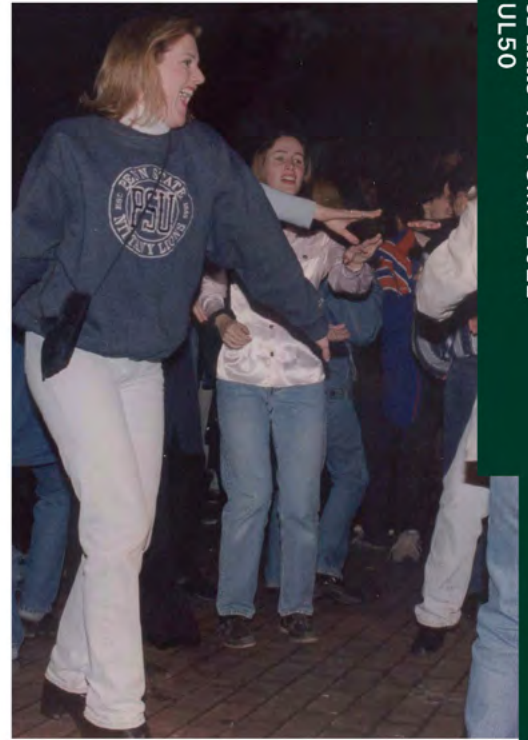
Following the presentation, Dr Walsh, Professor Mey and Mayor of Limerick City and County Cllr Francis Foley cut the ribbon on the exhibition in the Millstream Building, which is open to the public and explores the origins and development of the University and the institutions that went before it. The exhibition, curated by Dr Zara Power of UL's Department of History, is a "wonderful immersion in the journey taken through the first steps of establishing our founding institution", Professor Mey said.

Drawing on a range of objects, images, documents, oral histories, and video footage, the multimedia exhibition looks at the campaign for a university, the establishment of the NIHE and the National College of Physical Education, and Thomond College of Education, the attainment of university status and the part played by students, staff, donors, and others in establishing a community of scholars and students at Plassey. It is open Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm. For more, see www.ul.ie/50.

Mayor of Limerick City and County Cllr Francis Foley with Dr Walsh and President Kerstin Mey







Viewing the University through the lens of an Oral History Project



2022 is a milestone year for the University of Limerick. In September 1972, the National Institute of Higher Education (NIHE), as it was then called, opened its doors for the first time. The opening of the college came after a decade-long campaign by the people of Limerick most notably by the Limerick University Project Committee (LUPC) and the Limerick Student University Project Committee (LSPUC) for a university for the city.

While the outcome of that campaign was not quite what they had sought it was, nevertheless, it was a start at righting the educational wrongs in Limerick. Prior to the opening of the NIHE leaving certificate students in the Limerick region had to travel to Cork, Dublin, or Galway if they wanted to continue onto third level. And that was contingent on their parents being able to afford the expense associated with living away from home - not everybody

was able to get a grant. This meant that many of the brightest minds in the region could not compete for the new jobs coming on stream as the Irish economy expanded in the 1960s because they did not have the necessary qualifications. As a result of the shakeup in the Irish education sector in the 1960s a new teacher training college was also established in Limerick at this time. The National College of Physical Education-later Thomond College – opened its doors to students in September 1972. While the two colleges shared the same campus space, they largely worked independently of each other and had separate ideologies and educational commitments. In 1989 NIHE gained university status and in 1991 Thomond College was subsumed into the new university. Over the past 50 years staff and students at University of Limerick have become a community with shared goals and aspirations that have made the college what it is today.

While the contribution of retired staff and those who studied in the college have not been forgotten; very often their memories and experiences were lost only to be rekindled at alumni or staff reunions. It was for this reason that a decision was made in 2008 to capture and permanently archive the oral testimonies of those that have contributed to the development of the university since its inception in 1972.

Thus, the Oral History Project was established ahead of the fortieth anniversary of the university in 2012. Spearheaded by the then Vice President Academic and Registrar Professor Paul McCutcheon and Professor Bernadette Whelan Department of History, the first Project Officer was Dr Catherine O'Connor while the project is currently led by Dr David Fleming, Head of the Department of History, and the Project Officer and lead interviewer is Dr Martin Walsh.

"Initially the project sought to record the oral testimonies of those that campaigned for a university for Limerick or who had worked or studied at NIHE in its early years. Since then, the project has been extended to include those who worked or studied at the National College of Physical Education, Thomond College, and the University of Limerick", Dr Walsh explained. At the time of writing there are almost 40 interviews completed that can be viewed on the dedicated webpage of the Digital Library, Glucksman Library. (<https://digitallibrary.ul.ie/index.php/university-limerick-oral-history-project-ulohp>)

Last year the decision was made to include a dedicated student page where past alumni could provide a snapshot of their experience as a student at NIHE, the National College of Physical Education, Thomond College, and the University of Limerick. Together with the oral history project, they provide a rich and vibrant account of those that have worked and studied at the university. For those that have participated in the project it has afforded them the opportunity to reflect on their time at the university and it has also allowed them to leave a legacy not only for those that come after them at the University of Limerick but also for their families.



Maura Adshead, SU President, raises the flag at the inauguration of the University

“ For those that have participated in the project, it has afforded them the opportunity to reflect on their time at the University

The continued gathering and preservation of these oral testimonies is also an acknowledgment by the University of Limerick of the contribution of so many to the development of the college over the last 50 years.

As part of UL50 Dr Martin Walsh is currently writing a book based on the oral testimonies that have been gathered over

the past 14 years that will provide a social history of the University of Limerick since its foundation in 1972.

The book will be launched in early 2023. The oral history project continues to encourage retired staff and alumni to get involved in this worthwhile project that is continuing to build a lasting legacy for the University of Limerick.

From NCPE to PESS:

A short history of the Department of Physical Education and Sport Sciences

Professor Giles Warrington, head of department at UL's Physical Education and Sport Sciences (PESS) writes a short history of one of the oldest departments in the University, charting its origins, evolution and some of the more recent achievements

By Prof Giles Warrington (HoD, PESS) with historical input from Dr David Fleming (HoD, Department of History)

THE origins of the Department of Physical Education and Sports Sciences (PESS) date back to the founding of the National College of Physical Education (NCPE) in 1971 to meet the national need to prepare physical education students to teach in schools at post primary level. A decision was taken by the government at this time to locate the NCPE at Plassey, where the emerging National Institute for Higher Education (NIHE) was established in 1972. The original cohort of Physical Education students to come out of Limerick commenced their education at the Brandon Hotel in Tralee in January 1973 and after Easter of that year transferred to Plassey to complete their studies where they were accommodated in what was a futuristic if not somewhat unconventional building, now referred to as the 'PESS Building'.

At that time the only two buildings on the campus were Plassey House and the PESS Building. Due to its expanded curriculum, the Oireachtas transformed the NCPE into Thomond College of Education in 1976, where it continued to build a strong reputation in physical education teacher education attracting many high profile athletes who come to train as physical education teachers. With the founding of the University of Limerick in 1989, Thomond College was integrated into the new University structures in 1991 and through this merger ultimately led to the establishment of the PESS Department under the leadership of Liam Dugdale. Building on this legacy, the range of degree programmes pioneered by Thomond College continues to evolve today under the guidance of the School of Education (SoE) and PESS, producing highly skilled graduates in a range of teaching subjects that continue to meet national needs.

In 1992 PESS appointed the very first Professor of Sport and Exercise Science in Ireland, the world renowned Scottish Exercise Physiologist and Sports Scientist Professor Craig Sharp. The following year UL became the first institution in Ireland to offer an undergraduate degree in Sport and Exercise Science. Building on its long tradition of sport related academic programmes, today PESS offers a suite of high quality taught undergraduate and postgraduate courses as well as research Masters and PhD (structured and traditional) research programmes which are housed in the modernised PESS Building was re-developed in 2012. Aside from the practical teaching areas and research laboratories located in the PESS Building, we have also benefitted tremendously from access to the world class sport facilities and sporting infrastructure available on campus through UL Sport.



The original Thomond College dating back to the 1970's

The current PESS Building
which was re-developed in 2012



“ Since its inception as NCPE, the past 50 years has witnessed tremendous change in the life of PESS

In addition to our two flagship undergraduate programmes in Physical Education and Sport and Exercise Sciences PESS has recently introduced a BSc in Exercise and Health Fitness Management. Our expanding portfolio of taught postgraduate courses includes a Masters in Physical Education; MSc in Sport Exercise and Performance Psychology (Accredited pathway); MSc in Mental Skills Mental Health in Sport and Exercise (non-accredited pathway); MSc in Applied Sports Coaching; MSc in Sports Performance and this year new Professional Doctorate in Human Performance and Innovation which is a part-time online programme focused at the industry practitioner.

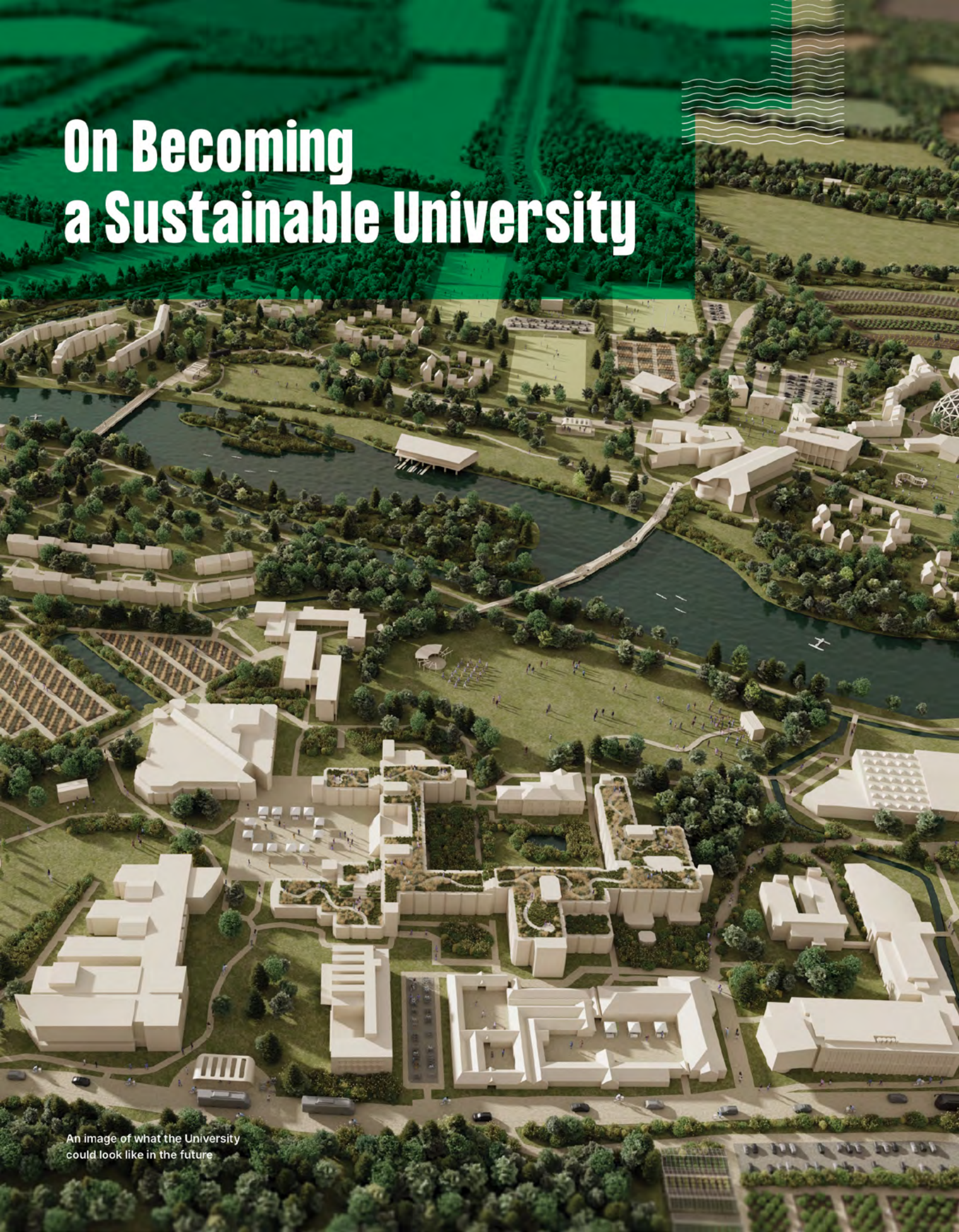
PESS is a highly research active department comprising of four research themes: Food and Health, Physical Activity for Health, Sport and Human Performance and Sport Pedagogy. The levels of research productivity and output in PESS are reflected, when assessing key research metric by Department at a University level, where despite its relative size, PESS was ranked 4th in terms of research publications from 2015-2020 and 7th for research contract awards greater than €100, 000 between 2017-2020.

In recognition of our national and international reputation, PESS was recently ranked in the top 50 (48th) 'Sport Science Schools and Departments' in the 2021 Shanghai Global Ranking which is the highest ranked subject area in UL. This

achievement does not happen by accident and is a reflection and acknowledgment of the quality of all our staff (academic, research, technical and administrative); our undergraduate and postgraduate students, our academic programmes; our research output and research funding; our extensive national and international collaborations and outreach activity.

Since its inception as NCPE in 1971, the past 50 years has witnessed tremendous change in the life of PESS as well as marking a period of major growth and development. Building on our previous achievements and successes, we look forward to being a key element of the University of Limerick for the next 50 years and the academic face of Ireland's sporting campus.

On Becoming a Sustainable University



An image of what the University
could look like in the future

“ We must think and behave in a way that protects the planet and helps life to flourish

Andrea Deverell, Futures and Foresight Lead, Sustainable and Regenerative Futures at University of Limerick, writes about the journey the University is undertaking as it looks to a new future

WE have overstepped our planetary boundaries, the limits past which our planet cannot rejuvenate. We are facing ozone depletion and with it increased loss of biodiversity and extinctions. Chemical pollution has potentially irreversible effects on living organisms; Our planet is getting steadily hotter. We are passing 390 ppmv CO2 in the atmosphere. We are losing polar sea-ice. Around a quarter of the CO2 that humanity emits into the atmosphere is dissolved in the oceans making them hostile to living organisms; we have converted more and more land to human use all over the planet: forests, grasslands, wetlands have been converted to agriculture driving reductions in biodiversity and impacts on water flows; atmospheric aerosol loading – atmospheric pollution and land use change releases dust and pollutants into the air, inhaling highly polluted air causes roughly 800,000 people to die prematurely each year.

“The global economy is an engine that uses energy from extracted carbon to generate wealth governments seek to redistribute from rich to poor. The capitalist system is the greatest wealth creator because it is based, fundamentally, on extraction and accumulation. The last two centuries have witnessed the greatest expansion of lives, via population growth, and living standards in our history as a species. These expansions have taken place alongside vast increases in greenhouse gases which now threaten our success as a species. Economies are embedded in societies spatially determined by the patterns of

extraction, accumulation, consumption and distribution, culturally determined by a system of power relations which takes perpetual growth in living standards as a given, and featuring increasing inequalities of income and wealth within countries. These are unsustainable processes. What is unsustainable will, eventually, stop.”

“We have to stop and unlearn these behaviours. We must think and behave in a way that protects the planet and helps life to flourish. We need to co-create a way of life, a way for each of us to live sustainably, all the time, as far as we possibly can.

“The United Nations have developed a series of Sustainable Development Goals. These are the world’s collective efforts to meet some of these challenges. There are 17 goals, each of which has a series of targets to be achieved by 2030. Ireland is still a long way off achieving many of these goals. Here in UL we have made inroads towards solving these complex challenges. Two UL sustainability reports capture some of the sustainable work here on campus.

Little by Little / Quiet Heroes

“If you’ve met John Breen, retired from UL, you’ll know about his lifelong passion for bees, insects and all flying things. His deep expertise, interest and concern for the future of bees is rooted in his knowledge and love of the outdoors, and his understanding of the role that bees and other insects play in maintaining a health ecosystem. Bees are the unsung

heroes of our natural world. They are under constant threat. Every time we use pesticides to control weeds, whenever we destroy natural habitats or the flora that support them we threaten bees and the ecosystem they sustain. **#SDGs 15, 17.**

“Take a short stroll around campus and you will likely bump into John O’Sullivan, Grounds Manager at UL. John understands the implications of natural habitat loss. He is eager to see more rewilding across campus. He is committed to work alongside nature, sourcing native species for the UL campus. We cannot take our wonderful campus for granted, we each must work to protect it, ultimately, we need to relearn how our ancestors lived in harmony with nature. **#SDGs 15, 14, 13.**

“Maybe you are aware of the dedication of the buildings and estates team to sustainability. A conversation with Chris Fogarty, is very enlightening and demonstrates what can be achieved when we tackle issues head on. Chris, together with the Buildings and Estates team is actively measuring our energy usage patterns across campus, making sure all new buildings are energy efficient and beginning the mammoth task of retrofitting older buildings to bring them up to standard, which will require substantive investment. Chris is acutely aware that changing buildings isn’t enough. Chris sees the need for a huge behavioural shift on campus to reduce and offset our carbon footprint. Chris would like to see us less reliant on fossil fuels at UL. **#SDGs 13, 12, 11, 7, 17.**



The Living Bridge at University of Limerick - a 350m-long steel pedestrian bridge which opened in 2007

"JJ Leahy, might not seem like the obvious TV star, but in his own unassuming way he has shared his engineering knowledge with families across the country looking to reduce and offset carbon in their own homes. In an RTE documentary, he encouraged families to consider a range of actions to counteract our impact. #SDGs 13, 12, 11, 7, 17.

"It's hard not to be inspired by the work of Luuk van Der Wielen from the Bernal Institute. Luuk, along with a large group of scientists, engineers and students from multiple faculties, is working hard to address many of the UN SDGs. Luuk's ambition is to see more renewable energy generated and used locally to decarbonise main emitting Irish sectors (transport and storage of data, goods and people, materials' circularity, and 'low carbon' food & feed). The aim is to make us less reliant on international fossil fuels, a topic that is particularly pointed at present. #SDGs 6, 3, 17."

"If you've met Maura Adshead, you've probably had the pleasure of meeting her extended community-based team. Each of this group is working to bridge the gap between UL and the community around UL. A project that is particularly inspiring is HAPPEE which facilitates inter-professional placements for UL students from the School of Allied Health and Music Therapy in local schools. A relative newcomer to UL, Sean Redmond's work is already having

impact nationally and locally, engaging with multiple external stakeholders to identify the challenges faced by young offenders who are often marginalised in society. As one of the most important challenges in addressing youth violence, he emphasises the need for positive role models. #SDGs 3, 16, 17.

primary Initial Teacher Education programmes. The Network is led by Deirdre Hogan and supported by Joanne O'Flaherty. This national network of teacher educators, NGOs, governmental and non-governmental stakeholders has contributed to an increased presence of Global Citizenship Education (GCE) and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in education curriculum and policy. Challenges remain, however, particularly in terms of mainstreaming and scaling-up such approaches to education in a manner that promotes increased critical engagement and an action orientation. #SDGs 4, 17.

"If you've met Clodagh Guerin, a master's student at UL, online or in person, you will know of her limitless energy, and her ability to get things done. You may have heard her speak recently at the UL President's Volunteer Award ceremony. Her story is inspiring and begins with an insight that there are young women on campus at UL, who cannot afford period products. She was so deeply stuck by this injustice, that she decided to do something to help, enrolling the help of others as she began a national campaign to end period poverty. The initiative now sits under Enactus UL, where over 30 volunteers work for period justice on campus and beyond. Whilst they have made tremendous progress there is still a lot to do in UL to reduce poverty related inequalities. #SDGs 1, 5, 3, 17.



"In 2006, the Ubuntu Network was established in the School of Education, UL, in association with partner HEIs, with a focus on building a collegial and collaborative community of teacher educators that promote and integrate equality and sustainability into post-

“ If you’ve met Clodagh Guerin, a master’s student at UL, online or in person, you will know of her limitless energy, and her ability to get things done.



“If you’ve met Amanda Haynes and Jennifer Schweppe you will know about their work which, among other things, sets out to challenge the ongoing issue of homophobia, biphobia and transphobia. Their campaign ‘Call it out’ resulted in 40 media items with a reach of 1 million, 1 million video views and 5 million impressions. The campaign also won the Silver Award in the “Best in Government and Not for Profit” category at the 2020 Digital Media Awards. At the LGBT+ Awards (the GALAs) the HHRG and the Call it Out campaign were shortlisted for two awards: Best Event and Digital Changemaker. The pair work tirelessly to raise awareness within UL and beyond to breakdown boundaries and build a more connected society within UL and beyond. #SDGs 5, 12.

“The urgency to commit to a SDG focused culture at UL, motivated us to seek out all that was happening around campus so that we could learn from, expand on and make those efforts cohesive and aligned. These stories are not exhaustive examples. These are just a flavour of the kinds of people that are already hard at work. They are already aware of the implications of doing nothing.

“It is impossible to call out all the individuals and groups who are working hard to make our way of life at UL sustainable and regenerative. We were excited to learn that so many sustainable initiatives were underway at UL. Now we need to facilitate a paradigm shift to a fully sustainable culture: a cohesive, systems-wide, collective approach and way of being day in, day out across the whole UL community.

A Moment of Confluence

“Preparing for the UL50 celebrations gave us an opportunity to stand at the crossroads between UL’s past achievements and what we could be and do in the next 10 years. With a new president at the helm, we are fully cognisant of the urgent need to lead in a local, national and global paradigm shift to a collective culture of sustainability in line with the SDGs. We reached out to individuals from right across UL all of whom have one thing in common: a commitment to sustainability as a way of life, not just as an abstract or theoretical concept. We invited them to come together to be part of a working group that would explore, drive and model sustainability at UL. We have come together at UL to reimagine UL as a Sustainable University.

“The group which became known as the UL Sustainable University Working Group, felt different from the start. It was a group with palpable energy, drive and a willingness to engage. We collectively set some basic ground rules: we did not want to be part of a committee, we wanted to get work done, we did not

want to record minutes, but instead lists of actions, we wanted everything produced to be open and transparent, we wanted anything we worked on to be underpinned by a systems-wide approach, we would engage in no tokenism or green washing and finally the door would always be open for anyone new to join and engage. This led to several interesting outcomes:

Systems-wide Perspective

“We split ourselves into four working groups to ensure a systems wide approach. Maura Adshead kindly coordinated the efforts of the Partnership, Society and Engagement group, Jennifer McMahon coordinated the efforts of the Leadership, Staff and Governance group, Anca Minescu coordinated the efforts of the Learning, Research and Students group and Chris Fogarty coordinated the efforts of the Campus community and Operations Group. Each group played a fundamental role in unearthing the challenges, starting points and work already on the go in UL.

‘Workathons’

“The group coined the term ‘workathon’ which came to mean four-hour working sessions. These ‘workathons’ took place online, we created a large digital board, which enabled us to see our work unfold over time and everyone to comment, critique and share insights. We did this by leveraging tools like Miro and Teams. When we came together it was to complete a task, often with coffee in hand and always with a critical and open perspective. Our first workathon focused on attempting to unpack and imagine what a sustainable university was or could be. The group arrived at several core insights: a sustainable university is a university that walks the talk - a role model for society. To be sustainable meant putting sustainability at the centre of every decision and action at every level and across every function of a university. We worked to identify the important areas that needed to be considered, using the UN SDGs as a jumping off point.

‘Check-ins’

‘Check-ins’ were designed to enable the entire group to come together for a short stand-up meeting once a month. This enabled us to make sure that we could see the connections across our four working groups.

Open Door Policy

“From the onset, we decided that the Sustainable University Working Group would have an open-door policy, it was not to be an exclusive group of individuals. Starting out with 12 individuals it has continued to grow with people reaching out to join us continuously. The group is currently well over 60 individuals strong.

So, what did we learn about collaboration in the act of collectively shaping a vision for UL?

“We learnt that it takes time and patience to listen actively to someone from another discipline or background. We often noticed that we were talking past each other. We had to slow down to understand each other. We reminded ourselves of the importance of the UL community, the glue that holds us together, something that I think everyone had missed during the covid pandemic. We had continued discussion on the scale and scope of our ambition, how bold we could be. We realised that for us to be successful and really bring about the kind of vision we were aiming for, we need everyone to get involved.

“We discussed the importance of sustainable governance and the role of procurement in ensuring that we source products and services that are sustainable. We discussed local produce, and producers and how to reduce air miles. We talked about sub-suppliers on campus and the kind of active roles they could play in the future. We were all acutely aware of the need for a radical mindset shift at UL to

unlearn some of our inbuilt behaviours and learn new behaviours and ways of being. We discussed our relationships with the community and industry and how we could more actively engage and build bridges to enable increased collaboration across the SDGs. We discussed the UL campus as a fundamental starting point: Our collective space where sustainability should be seen, felt and experienced. We considered our approaches to education and our curriculum, discussing how we could engage more meaningfully with sustainable development. We talked about the central role of research and how it connects with sustainability and how we can actively encourage a deeper campus wide focus and a series of north star projects to drive future activity.

“We also reminded ourselves frequently that we have scarce resources: people’s energy, space and funds. This required us to think creatively and build a new kind of engine to enable collaboration on campus. To achieve what we have set out will require us to navigate all the above and so much more. Requiring us to build on each other’s work, to connect meaningfully around challenges while leveraging diverse perspectives, practices and disciplines and by welcoming many cross sectoral voices to the table.

So, what is it we are setting out to do?

“A sustainable world will not happen without determined effort – our actions today determine the future we manifest. The gravity of this responsibility necessitates that we do not drift along with the tides of change. Instead, we are called intentionally to open our mind, heart, and hands to the possibilities that can only be revealed by moving bravely into the unknown. If we become trapped by dogma and incremental innovation, we will find ourselves sustaining a world characterised by the faults of the present. The success of our collective transition will largely depend on the degree to which HEIs claim a role in advancing the critical gaps in our knowledge and nurturing the vital shifts in our culture. To fully leverage the potential for change that HEIs hold, this role must play out across all aspects of our institutions: from boardrooms, to lecture halls, and campus grounds alike.

“To become a Sustainable University, we must start by acknowledging that true sustainability will require permanent adaptive responsiveness to on-going change. The prerequisite of adaptability and responsiveness is embodiment. It ensures ideas and intentions are rooted in action. Consequently, embodiment can be seen as the central characteristic of a Sustainable University; a title for institutions that go beyond traditional curricula and research programmes, and actively explore change within their own ethos, practices and operations.

A vision of what the Mission Lab could look like at UL



“ A sustainable world will not happen without determined effort – our actions today determine the future we manifest

The steps we took...

STEP ONE

"We identified four high-level challenges associated with our four working groups: governance, the economy, society and the planet.

Governance – Stewarding the Transition

"As a leading HEI, it is UL's duty to be a steward of higher education's sustainability transition. This role requires the adoption of new approaches to leadership and governance. By embracing transformative innovation and interdisciplinary collaboration, we can reimagine the structures, policies, rules and metrics that will guide the action necessary for UL to become a Sustainable University.

Economy – Cosmopolitan Localism

"As a regional university with deep international ties, UL is primed to embrace a 'cosmo-local' approach to social innovation, this means starting locally and engaging internationally. Doing so will encourage the development of an ecosystem of sustainable communities, achieved through the sharing of ideas, skills, technology, culture and resources. Ultimately, adopting this approach will allow UL to cultivate a creative and reciprocal relationship between the local and the global.

Society – Thriving Communities

"As a university with a diverse and growing campus community, UL has the opportunity to pioneer approaches to co-creating 'thriving communities'. We acknowledge that the interdependence between humans and natural ecosystems is the basis for sustainable living. UL will aspire to foster a deep sense of belonging and to provide equitable access to meaningful opportunity, sustainable accommodation, active mobility, healthy food, and quality education and learning.

Planet – Resilient Bio Region

"As a university renowned for its natural beauty, UL has the responsibility to ensure its physical presence does not negatively impact the health of the surrounding Shannon bioregion. We understand that our ecological systems act as the bedrock for the flourishing of all life on earth. Their safekeeping requires UL to take on the role of custodian; restoring the local natural environment to optimal health and protecting it from any future damage.

So, how would we act on these challenges?

STEP TWO

"We identified a set of missions inspired by our four grand challenges. 21 bold ambitious missions that will serve as our starting point for guiding action. Importantly, the missions we have shaped are still malleable, they will require campus wide engagement, ownership and leadership. Each of our UL missions are underpinned by a set of declarations. These declarations are where we hope to be in 2030. Some are very ambitious while others build on work that is already going on in UL. We will learn as we go, shaping and reshaping our missions. Inevitably, some will fail, some will succeed.

STEP THREE

"We designed an engine that will propel us forward. A mission engine. The purpose of this engine is to enable deep cross-disciplinary, cross-sectoral collaboration, while helping to define and support the missions. An agile engine that will enable experimentation, drive investment and support us in achieving our vision to become a sustainable university.

- On 23 March 2022 Executive Committee approved our vision for UL as a Sustainable University.
- On 28 March 2022 Governing Authority approved our vision for UL as a Sustainable University.
- During October 2022, we will launch the UL sustainability framework

So, where do we start?

"Over the coming months we will work with the campus community to further develop each of our missions. Some will be prioritised to start immediately, others will be launched over the coming years. We will be looking for people to come forward to help us lead the various missions, to help us build educational programs, and connect research to support our mission based approach enabling faculty, students and our community of professionals to engage directly across the portfolio of missions.

"As a first step, we have dared to imagine what UL could be like in 2030 (See Speculative Visual UL 2030). What would it feel like to work and learn at UL? How would we experience our campus? Walking through large rewilded spaces, welcoming nature into our buildings, protecting natural habitats, celebrating our community, producing energy, with a radically reduced carbon footprint and therefore ensuring equality and diversity in the workplace and universal access to education. Working in partnership with local communities and companies towards a world that we would be happy for our children to inhabit?

If not me, then who?

If not now, then when?

Generating pathways for sustainable entrepreneurial ambition and social consciousness

UNIVERSITY of Limerick has long recognised the social and economic transformative power of entrepreneurial activity and over the last year, this recognition has expanded to create greater inclusivity, according to Dr Briga Hynes who says that making entrepreneurial ambition more accessible and realisable is a key goal for the student experience.

The Kemmy Business School at UL, in partnership with Nexus Innovation Centre, the Consulting and Entrepreneurship Society (ULCES) and Enactus have collaborated to enable and empower students and local businesses through a more connected pathway of the entrepreneurial and innovative processes expanding UL's entrepreneurial support ecosystem.

Dr Hynes says that the accessibility to entrepreneurial expertise across all age cohorts and disciplines, researchers and externally to regional communities has been achieved through a number of additions to the UL entrepreneurial ecosystem this year. "In addition to the existing entrepreneurship, innovation and social enterprise modules across the disciplines, the From Research to Spin Out – The Role of Entrepreneurial and Innovative Thinking Programme for researchers and post docs was launched and therefore allowed students to enable their entrepreneurial mind-set.

"Additionally, a range of workshops and seminars in topics such as EntreSTEM – merging Entrepreneurial thinking to STEM to solve real-world problems workshop,



Participants from the transition year boot camps

Mindset & Negotiation Development, and How to Attract Funding obtained very positive feedback from students, facilitators, and external stakeholders and raised the international reputation and collaborations for the KBS and student societies. In a bid to showcase, reward and celebrate, UL students had the opportunity to win over €35,000 in various competitions such as UL Foundation Enterprise and Innovation Awards; ULCES Consulting Case Club, ULCES Innov8 Hackathon, ULCES 52Start, University Sparks, Student Inc., Irish Student Entrepreneurship Forum.

"The All-Ireland EntreprenEIREship summit brought students and industry-leaders, social and commercial entrepreneurs, graduate entrepreneurs, and students from around Ireland providing an open forum for inspiration, motivation, and discussion whilst addressing the needs of the current

economic and industrial ecosystems and challenges of 2022 and beyond."The first Student-Led Entrepreneurial space on campus 'Innospace' provided informal space for students to host talks, workshops and displays creating an important networking and peer learning space for all-things entrepreneurship both social and commercial.

"The year finished with the University of Limerick Foundation Entrepreneurship and Innovation Awards 2022 sponsored by Platt Reilly and Ingenium where students pitched for awards across two categories of Best Commercial Idea and the Best Social Innovation.

The business ideas pitched portrayed the considerable breadth and diversity of industry sectors representing Ireland's entrepreneurial landscape across commercial and social enterprises. Dr

“ Networking, transforming and enabling communities is also key to broadening entrepreneurial thinking



At the launch of the Entrepreneurial and Creative Thinking for Researchers programme - the first of its type offered by UL as part of a collaboration with Nexus, the Technology Transfer Office and the KBS. Pictured are Paul Dillion, Director, Technology Transfer Office, Gert O'Rourke Manager Nexus, Dr Briga Hynes KBS, Prof Finbarr Murphy, Dean KBS

Hynes adds that networking, transforming and enabling communities is also key to broadening entrepreneurial thinking.

“Combining the power of entrepreneurial thinking to solve social and broader SDG challenges has been central to the initiatives transforming lives in disadvantaged communities locally and internationally. “We hosted Entrepreneurship and Creativity Boot camps for Transition Year students where KBS and Nexus collaborated with UL Access Office to deliver an Entrepreneurship and Creativity immersive bootcamp to over 20 students from DEISS schools. The programme taught students the fundamentals of entrepreneurial and creative action.

“ULCES assisted a non-Profit NGO called Youth4Jobs to empower disabled youths

across India and Bangladesh to work for large multinationals like Amazon by creating Social Impact Strategy and Social Impact KPIs through a collaboration with CSRN, Deloitte, and Accenture using best-practice industry models for social innovation and scaling

“KBS hosted the Global Student Entrepreneur Awards and EULab, the latter being a new sustainable-driven Erasmus+ funded programme between UL, Audencia Business School, University of Oulu, and Universidad de León focusing on circular economy, sustainable urban development, and transformative cross-disciplinary and university design-thinking collaborations

“Finally, KBS works with Social Impact Ireland on research, training and competency development supports for social entrepreneurs. This collaboration

was also a central theme of the EntreprenEIREship Summit, as Nicole Ryan spoke about her journey with Alex’s Adventures – giving a first-hand account of how social enterprises can be self-sustaining yet incredibly impactful to so many stakeholders.

Dr Hynes says that at the end of an exciting entrepreneurial active year, the results of these initiatives demonstrate the benefits of developing and nurturing creative, entrepreneurial, and innovative talent amongst students, researchers, and the local community. “Our impact drives positive change personally and sustainably transforming the lives of community and wider society making entrepreneurial ambition accessible for all: as we are stronger together/ ní neart go cur le chéile.”

Seeking student solutions to the grand challenges of our time

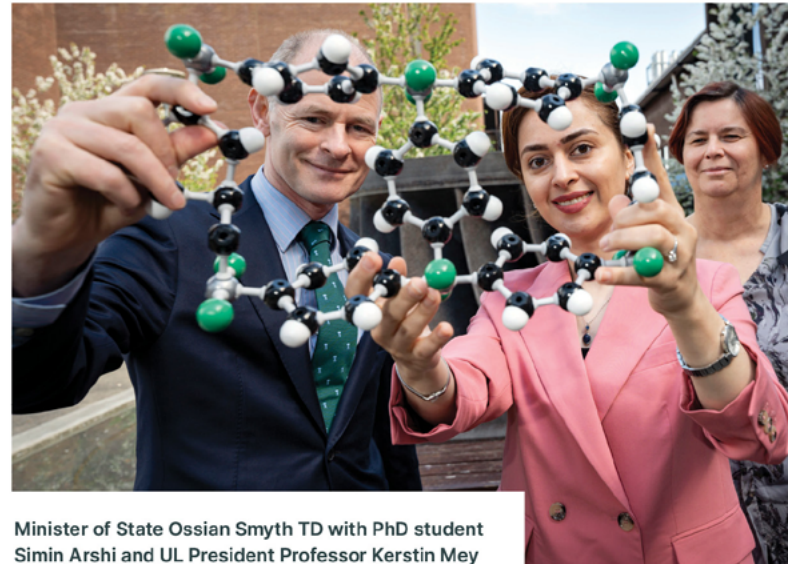
UNIVERSITY of Limerick students have been empowered and encouraged to contribute to sustainable development through a competition aimed at addressing the grand challenges of our time. Earlier this year, Minister of State with responsibility for Public Procurement, eGovernment and Circular Economy Ossian Smyth TD launched a University of Limerick competition that seeks to tackle climate challenges. The competition sought ambitious proposals from students at the University to attempt to solve climate issues.

The concept of the Sustainability Challenge evolved from a partnership between the Bernal Institute, Kemmy Business School and Buildings and Estates department at UL to empower and encourage students to contribute to sustainable development. The Challenge seeks ambitious proposals from undergraduate and postgraduate student teams at UL to tackle climate change, with ideas or proposals to be applicable to either the campus, the city or wider Mid-West region or even further afield.

“Circularity of materials, renewable energy and emission reductions in transport and agri-food chain are likely career paths for our graduates

Speaking at the launch of the challenge at UL, Minister Smyth said: “Achieving a circular economy requires a radical break with our current ‘take-make-waste’ model. New materials and products designed to maximise re-use within a close-loop system will play a vital role in this transition. So I am delighted to be part of the launch of the Sustainability Challenge today and will be looking forward to hearing more about the successful proposals.”

Professor Luuk van der Wielen, Director of the Bernal Institute at UL, said: “Circularity of materials, renewable energy and emission reductions in transport and agri-food chain are likely career paths for our graduates. Innovative solutions will benefit from diversity and multidisciplinary. “We encourage diversity across the participating teams which will benefit quality of submissions and also prepare students really well for later careers. We are very happy with the initial support among the faculties to enable students to integrate the challenge in their programs, where appropriate.”



Minister of State Ossian Smyth TD with PhD student Simin Arshi and UL President Professor Kerstin Mey

Dr Rita Buckley, Lecturer in Economics at the Kemmy Business School, said: “We are challenging students to find innovative solutions that aim to create positive, environmental, social and economic impacts. “Taking part in the competition exposes students to challenges that will require research and entrepreneurial thinking by offering precise and concrete solutions to implement good environmental practices. It also a unique opportunity to develop important skills that employers value, such as teamwork, communication, presentation skills, creativity and problem solving.”

The challenge is part of a programme of events taking place this year to mark the 50th Anniversary of the University of Limerick. Submissions are expected to inspire and guide future investments in the Castletroy and city campuses, or can be drawn on as ideas for further development.

An independent expert panel comprising representatives from industry and academia will select five finalist teams. The five most promising project proposals will be shortlisted, each will receive support, and up to €10,000 to prepare and deliver a working pilot or demonstration of their proposal by March 2023. The outcome will be evaluated on the basis of targets, feasibility plan, societal impact and delivery. The winning team will be announced in April 2023.

Transforming bio-pharmaceutical manufacturing processes

SSPC the Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) Research Centre for Pharmaceuticals at University of Limerick is working in partnership with national and international industry partners to advance pharmaceutical manufacturing processes and ultimately improve the quality of medicines. In a unique bid for the Centre, Dr Sarah Hudson, Chemical Science and SSPC materials theme lead, is heading up a project with five of the world's leading bio-pharmaceutical companies, Pfizer, Eli Lilly, Janssen, BMS and MSD. The rising need for early diagnosis of chronic diseases, coupled with growing demand for drugs, specifically proteins called antibodies, is largely responsible for the growth of the protein A resin market.



Aisling Arthur (L) and Dr Sarah Hudson (R)

“ This is a unique project that has come from a very open collaboration between the five industrial biopharmaceutical partners and UL

This has led to a global shortage of protein A resin which is used to purify antibodies. There is no clear regulation on the practice of reusing protein A resins with different antibody products and without the option to reuse this substance, this process is expensive and produces a lot of waste. The SSPC team under the direction of Dr Hudson and using state of the art research instrumentation located in the Bernal Institute, will explore the possibility and feasibility of reusing resins, making the production of antibody medicines, faster, cheaper and more sustainable.

“This is a unique project that has come from a very open collaboration between the five industrial biopharmaceutical partners and UL,” noted Dr Hudson who added that, “SSPC is delighted to be able to provide a platform through which multiple industry partners can engage and collaborate to achieve a common goal. The project is expected to build confidence that will challenge current regulatory thinking around the multi-product reuse of resins in specific circumstances.” To date, SSPC has an excellent track-record in delivering industry-led projects over the years and under the stewardship of Aisling Arthur, the Centre’s Industry Engagement Manager, who has built a strong foundation of trust with partners which fosters further collaborations. The Centre currently collaborates with over 30 leading pharmaceutical companies both nationally and internationally.

“Due to the breadth of expertise available within the Centre, SSPC supports projects from early-stage phase 1 clinical trials through to scale-up and manufacturing in both small and large molecule research. This multi-industry party project is

significant as it demonstrates the value of SFI research Centres in connecting industry with academia to transform and advance best practice approaches to manufacturing,” said Ms Arthur.

In addition to the Irish manufacturing sites, this project consortium, through UL, has agreed a memorandum of understanding to facilitate further international collaboration with industry leaders in the BioPhorum Group (BPOG). BioPhorum is a community of practice comprising 6000 industry experts that come together “to create future visions, create partnerships that enable change and provide the quickest route to implementation, so that the industry shares, learns and builds the best solutions together”, according to Tony White, founder of Biophorum. This is a very exciting time for SSPC, over the past two years they have extended the international reach of the Centre and currently lead numerous research projects with partner sites based in eight European countries and across the US.





Kara O'Brien, PhD Candidate; Dr Sandra Joyce, Interim Executive Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences; Dr Ciara Thompson

Keeping the singing tradition alive via Zoom

The Limerick Singing Session, founded by three students from the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance, was forced online during the pandemic – but flourished nonetheless and became a global event

It was late 2019 when three students at the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance at University of Limerick noticed a lack of places for singers to perform in the city. Keenly aware of the vibrant local traditional music scene, the trio of Ciara Thompson, Kara O'Brien, and Lizzy Hewitt spied an opportunity to establish a regular traditional singing session to enjoy their craft and foster a local singing community in the heart of the city.

Aided by the rich environment for traditional song in the Irish World Academy and the Academy's Traditional Song as Intangible Cultural Heritage research cluster and, with the welcome and enthusiastic support of Ger Callanan, proprietor of the Glen Tavern, the Limerick Singing Session was born. Before long, the Session was meeting

weekly in the cosy back corner of the Glen Tavern and, as word spread, locals and students attended regularly, and guests began to drop in from Wexford, Dublin, Galway, and more.

"We always try to have a friendly, welcoming atmosphere," said Ciara Thompson, who graduated with her PhD from UL in 2021 and is now a lecturer in the Irish World Academy. "No matter the size of the turnout, we want it to be a fun and interesting evening of song; a place where you can, sing, laugh, and learn, and that you will want to return to." However, after just six months, the pandemic intervened and, with classes moving online, the singing session did too. "I think at first we were almost just trying to hold onto some sort of normality," says Kara O'Brien, a PhD student in her fourth year at the Irish World Academy.

“With so many things suddenly coming to an end, and nobody knowing what would happen next, keeping the session going seemed like one way to hold on to something in all the chaos. Because traditional singing is unaccompanied and generally solo, it works well online, so it was mostly a matter of figuring out whether anyone would be interested in sitting at home and singing to a screen.” The answer was unambiguously yes and as attendances grew, the virtual nature meant that people could embrace it from abroad. Co-founder Lizzy Hewitt explained the session “became quite popular among Irish traditional singers and international singers alike”.

Michael O’Leary, a singer and session host from Gloucester, Massachusetts, said it was a “silver lining in the dark Covid cloud for me. It’s been wonderful to meet so many singers steeped in the tradition and to hear so many new songs, which never would’ve happened without the pandemic. It’s intimate, low key and relaxed, with space for banter and craic, which I really appreciate. I feel like I’m going to Ireland every Monday to meet up with new friends for a masterclass in traditional song.”

This educational aspect of the session grew very organically and rather surprised the hosts. Seamus Brogan, a renowned Wexford singer and long-time singing adjudicator for Comhaltas Ceoltóirí

Éireann, said: “The Limerick Singers Zoom session is probably the most educational and important singing session online since the start of the pandemic. It is unique in the fact that the singers research all of the songs and they are explained to the rest of the participants, which mostly does not happen at live sessions because of pressure of trying to let everyone singing. There’s a huge variety of songs sung every week from Ireland, Britain, Europe and USA and occasionally from other parts of the world.”

Family members joined in, and global connections were made and, as society slowly returned to normality, the founders have looked to the future of the session. “Of course, we are really looking forward to getting back to our corner in the Glen Tavern,” said Ciara, “but we would hate to lose the amazing community we’ve built up online.” With every Monday evening for the past 15 months ending with an out-of-sync and laughter filled round of ‘Here’s a Health to the Company’, virtual singing has certainly left an endearing mark on the Limerick Singing Session’s hosts and attendees. “We’re really still feeling out the future,” Kara added, “we never really expected this to be more than a temporary fix for the pandemic, but it is clear that we have something really special here that probably has a future of its own.”



“ No matter the size of the turnout, we want it to be a fun and interesting evening of song; a place where you can, sing, laugh, and learn, and that you will want to return to.

Liam Moggan with his family outside Plassey House before the ceremony



‘The closing of a circle’

UL alumni Brigid Laffan and Liam Moggan were among the latest recipients of the highest honour the University can bestow

Alan Owens



“ The recipients of these honorary doctorates are great role models for all of us who show us how purpose can be built and how change can be engendered



Brigid Laffan with her daughter Roisin and son Diarmuid

STANDING outside Plassey House on the grounds of University of Limerick on a warm August day, one of the founding members of the first class of 1972 reflected on a 50-year journey. World-leading academic and political scientist Professor Brigid Laffan, who was one of the very first students to attend UL – then the National Institute of Higher Education – was asked to give some thoughts on her receiving an honorary doctorate from the University. She said: “This means everything because my entire life was determined by my decision to do European Studies at NIHE. I met my future husband here and also began my entire career – so to be honest it is the closing of a circle.”

For Professor Laffan and fellow alumnus Liam Moggan – who was among the earliest groups of students at the former National College of Physical Education – and was also receiving an honorary doctorate, it was a ‘day that means a lot’. The ‘Godfather of Coaching’, as he is widely regarded in Irish sporting circles, said receiving the honour was “huge – it is the connection to all the people that helped get me here. But I have a very strong link to the early days of the campus here, I was student from 1974 to 78 – met my wife, and my children are all here today.

“I loved that at that stage, this (place) was a springboard for new thinking, for transforming the way sport and PE was done. I have gone on to see it in many other ways – music, medicine, engineering and so forth. “I came back to work on campus, so to be honoured in this way, here, it is huge – hard to put exact words on it,” he added.

Joining the UL alumni on the day and also receiving doctorates were tireless social activist Sr Stanislaus Kennedy and world-renowned physicist Professor Margaret Murnane – all of whom were celebrated as ‘outstanding’ candidates.

“The bestowing of a UL honorary doctorate represents the opportunity to honour those who have inspired and worked tirelessly to make great contributions in their fields of endeavour,” said University of Limerick President Professor Kerstin Mey. “We honour four such individuals who have made unique and powerful contributions to history, charity, sport and science in this country.

“Indeed, the recipients of these honorary doctorates are great role models for all of us who show us how purpose can be built and how change can be engendered. They embody the art of making questions, the art of making solutions, and the art of making networks, key ingredients for thinking sustainably and acting with conviction and courage,” Professor Mey added.

Asked to give advice to her fellow UL graduates and now also alumni, Professor Laffan said: “My advice to the graduating class of 2022 would be: search for your purpose. “What suits you? You tend to do what suits you better than anything else. I would also say to be engaged. It is really important, given the kinds of problems that the world has today, for the future. There are tremendous problems like the climate crisis and that will require this generation to really innovate, be creative and I would also say invest in your friends, invest in your networks, invest in your relationships.”

Lifting spirits and building community: Music Therapy at UL



Singing for therapy: A choir in full voice at the IWA

SINCE 1998 the MA Music Therapy programme at UL has established over 20 ongoing relationships with hospitals, nursing homes, voluntary organisations, social care, and health services throughout Ireland. Students attend placements throughout their course, working on-site with people from our local community and in national organisations. Since Dr Hilary Moss joined UL as Course Director in 2016, several formal community engaged research relationships have been established.

In 2018, Corpus Christi School, Moyross, engaged a music therapist from the faculty, Dr Jess O'Donoghue, to develop a therapeutic choir for parents of children at the school. This community engaged research project has been formally adopted as a community engagement activity of the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance and was recently showcased as a UL Engaged Research project. MA students from the music therapy programme at UL support children and parents, while three PhD students have undertaken collaborative research with participants. As well as bringing choir participants to UL and other venues to perform in public, research outputs include journal publications and a research impact film, created with UL Engage

This community engagement project was guided by the principles of Community Music Therapy, an approach rooted in social change that endeavours to empower individuals, create space for self-expression through active music making, and reduce social isolation. The project seeks to explore the emotional, social, and practical impacts of group singing for women from a regeneration area and to support these women through an arts-based social, community resource. On evaluation of this project (now in its 4th year), participants cited loneliness as an impetus for joining the group and described key benefits of the programme as 'Lifting spirits and building community'. "They all understand. We have a voice. We have an opinion."

In 2017, Dr Hilary Moss established a research and practice relationship with Prof Dominic Harmon, Consultant Anaesthetist, UHL. Together with Ms Katie Fitzpatrick, Music Therapy PhD student, they established an international expert centre on music for people living with chronic pain. They offer individual and group music therapy to adults living with chronic pain and deliver livestreamed events to share information, raise awareness, and train clinicians. Dr Moss chairs an international special interest group on music and chronic pain as part of the International Association

of Music and Medicine. The team strive to develop music therapy services that are useful and practical for people living with pain, and to be an international leader in research in this area. This is one of very few European programmes in existence exploring how music and music therapy can assist people living with chronic pain living in the community, to improve health and well-being.

Combining UL expertise in Music and Health research with insights and advice from organisations and individuals affected by chronic pain, we have established ourselves as a major centre for music therapy and pain research in Ireland and Europe. Service users from Chronic Pain Ireland (CPI) are continually engaged to ensure research is relevant.

Key values of Dr Moss' research include; Involving service users and other clinicians in every aspect of the research; an openness to quantitative and qualitative research methods, especially exploring how creativity and arts-based research can illuminate the experience of living with chronic pain alongside more traditional mixed method research in this area; producing practical, helpful recommendations for practice, for music therapists working in this field, people living with chronic pain and clinicians as well as interdisciplinary research.

The UL music therapy department is a world leader in community engaged music/health research and is contributing original, internationally significant research in the field of music and health. These two projects connect with some of the most disadvantaged members of our local community, as well as people affected by ill health and social isolation internationally. Unique music traditions and songs are at the heart of our work, giving people compromised by ill health a voice, a form of expression and support through the arts.

‘The Constitution should reflect the importance of carers in our society’



Dr Laura Cahillane

A University of Limerick researcher has told the Oireachtas that the importance of carers to our society needs to be reflected in our constitution and a referendum next year should allow for an avenue of redress for those who are not receiving enough support from the State.

Dr Laura Cahillane, a senior lecturer at University of Limerick, School of Law, said that after she carried out pioneering research into Article 41.2 – commonly referred to as the ‘Woman in the Home’ provision – she has been engaged with Citizens’ Assembly offering them expert advice on the changes needed to the constitution.

The UL researcher said that her research has been looking at the origins and intentions of the provision as well as its impact on case law. “The research highlighted some misunderstandings which had developed around the provision and illustrated both how the provision could have functioned as well as how judicial interpretation of the provision through case law has effectively nullified any potential effect.

“Having published this research, I was then asked to address the Joint Oireachtas Committee on this issue in relation to the possibility of holding a referendum.

“The issue was then sent to a Citizens’ Assembly and I was asked to be the Assembly expert for this issue where I gave a presentation and answered questions from members.”

Dr Cahillane’s expertise in the area was used to work with the Assembly on the wording of their ballot paper, advising the Chairperson – Catherine Day – on the implications of various constitutional wording options.

“ The research highlighted some misunderstandings which had developed around the provision and illustrated both how the provision could have functioned as well as how judicial interpretation of the provision through case law has effectively nullified any potential effect

“Ultimately, our work and my contributions led to helping to construct a wording which received the support of 80.9% of the Assembly members – an overwhelming majority. This sent a strong message to Government about the need to replace the current wording and about the form of replacement necessary.

“The Assembly’s report was then sent to be considered by the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Gender Equality and I was consulted by the Committee and held in-depth discussions about the possibilities for constitutional change not only on Article 41.2, but also on two further provisions which had formed part of the Assembly’s report. As a widely published and cited author, Dr Cahillane was requested to provide a report on possible wording options for amendment of Article 40.1, Article 41 and Article 41.2 of the Constitution.

“The Committee’s report was published in July, adopting the recommendations I made on amending the various provisions, including the specific wording I recommended on Article 41.2 and it is planned to put this to a referendum in the next year.” Citing the importance of the work, Dr Cahillane said that the provision currently reflects an outdated version of Irish society that does not sit well within the Constitution.

“The constitution has mostly stood the test of time and has been updated in other areas to be more reflective of Irish society today. It is therefore important that this provision is removed from the Constitution and that if it is to be replaced, that the wording will carefully represent the importance of carers to our society as well as potentially providing an avenue for redress if carers are not receiving sufficient support from the State.”



New programme will train intermediaries to support vulnerable people giving evidence in court

A new qualification programme, the first of its kind in Ireland, has been launched at University of Limerick where training will be given to Intermediaries who will help vulnerable people, including sexual abuse victims and children, when giving evidence in the justice system. The programme will equip professionals, usually with a background in speech and language therapy or a cognate discipline, with the skills and expertise necessary to assist witnesses who have communication difficulties in providing evidence. On successful completion of the Professional Diploma in Intermediary Studies, a part-time course running over one year, graduates will be eligible to be placed on a panel to work within the Irish justice system. The Registered Intermediary's role will be to assist in the communication process, whether between lawyers and witnesses during trial or, earlier, during Garda interviews.

“The values of the programme are aligned closely with the core values of all we do at UL in producing ethical graduates who are social reformers, motivated to contribute to a fairer society”

Minister McEntee said: “The O'Malley Review, which looked at what reforms might be introduced to protect victims of sexual violence during the investigation and prosecution of sexual offences, recommended that appropriately qualified intermediaries should be recruited and registered. “I am delighted that my Department has been able to collaborate with the University of Limerick to provide a suitable course to train intermediaries to the required standard. “Once qualified, they will have an essential role in assessing the communication needs of vulnerable witnesses and to advise An Garda Síochána, advocates and the court on the steps needed to assist such witnesses to give their best evidence,” Minister McEntee added. The diploma is an interfaculty postgraduate training programme that will qualify CORU-registered health and social care practitioners to work as registered intermediaries in the Irish justice system.

Following best international guidelines, the programme has been designed to include four modules and a combination of online and face-to-face tutorials, delivered across the School of Law and the School of Allied Health at UL. The practical skills-based



component will ensure those who qualify have the competencies to provide intermediary interventions as part of all aspects of the legal process as provided for under Irish law. The project team who designed the programme include Dr Aoife Gallagher, Dr Aine Kearns, Dr Alan Cusack and Professor Sean Redmond. The team believe that graduates of the programme will have a significant and enduring impact in promoting and safeguarding equal access to justice for all persons as mandated by both UN Sustainable Development Goal 16 and Article 13 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The programme builds on a series of related, ongoing, research projects within UL which collectively stand to greatly inform national policy with regard to the treatment of vulnerable persons in the Irish criminal process, including the rollout of Disability Awareness Training for members An Garda Síochána, the design of an Easy-Read Notice of Rights and a Review of Risk Assessment Custody Practices. Dr Aoife Gallagher, who led on the project at UL, said: “We are delighted to have been successful in applying to work with the Department of Justice on designing and delivering this unique interfaculty programme between the School of Allied Health and the School of Law in addressing national policy needs.

“The values of the programme are aligned closely with the core values of all we do at UL in producing ethical graduates who are social reformers, motivated to contribute to a fairer society. We believe that the collaboration places UL at the forefront of national efforts to secure effective and meaningful participation for vulnerable individuals when engaging with the Irish justice system.” Places for academic year 2022/2023 are fully funded by the Department of Justice. Entry requirements include a minimum of a second-class honours primary degree (2.2) and three full years practice experience as a CORU-registered Speech and Language Therapist, Occupational Therapist or Social Worker in Ireland.

For further details, see www.ul.ie/gps/courses/intermediary-studies-professional-diploma

Tackling road deaths using AI and robotic technologies



Pictured at FMCI (Future Mobility Campus Ireland) test centre for Autonomous Car Technology in Shannon, Co Clare are (Left to Right) Letizia Maretti, Provizio, Srikanth Tiyyagura, PhD Student at the University of Limerick, Barry Lunn, CEO of Provizio, and Dr Ciaran Eising, Lero Researcher at University of Limerick. Picture Credit: Arthur Ellis

"A critical challenge to the successful deployment of autonomous vehicles is the difficulty the vehicle has in viewing and understanding the environment in which it must safely operate and understanding its location within that environment," explains Dr Eising. Dr Van de Ven said they would be working with Provizio to deploy the technology on Provizio test vehicles and make developments commercially available to car manufacturers worldwide.

"Our researchers will spend time with Provizio on the Future Mobility Campus Ireland (FMCI) in Shannon to learn about Provizio's technology and deploy the technologies developed," he added. Provizio founder Barry Lunn said: "We started Provizio to solve the global road death pandemic. For the last 20 years, international regulatory policy has focused on trying to make us better, more responsible drivers. This approach has failed consistently."

"We are building augmented, guardian angel technology to make us all better and safer drivers. We are using unparalleled 'beyond-line-of-sight' sensor technology coupled with artificial intelligence 'on-the-edge' to perceive, predict and prevent accidents," he added.

RESEARCHERS at Lero, the Science

Foundation Ireland Research Centre for Software, are teaming up with automotive perception company Provizio to develop artificial intelligence tools to end traffic accidents on the world's roads which result in 1.35 million deaths annually.

Provizio founder and CEO Barry Lunn said the World Health Organisation (WHO)* estimates that annually, more than 1.35 million die in road traffic accidents, with more than 50 million people maimed, and the cost to the global economy is estimated to be just shy of €2 trillion annually.

"Preventable human error has a role in more than 90% of road accidents. The numbers have not changed for more than 20 years. Unless we initiate change, this worldwide problem will continue unabated. We started Provizio to solve this problem

firstly, and then we will pave a path to safe, sustainable and ubiquitous autonomy. With the right focus, we believe that robotics and drivers can work together to reduce both road deaths and accidents to zero – 1.35 million to zero drives everything we do," he said.

Lero researchers Dr Ciarán Eising and Dr Pepijn Van de Ven, in association with Provizio, will focus on the fusion of data from onboard cameras and radar sensors to help eliminate traffic accidents for all drivers – human and robotic. "Every decision to move that an autonomous car makes, based on its sensor inputs, is potentially a life or death one. The time-critical nature of the car's operation means that only the car can make these decisions safely and reliably.

UL leading the way globally on Parkinson's Disease research

RESEARCHERS at University of Limerick School of Medicine have developed a set of aquatic therapy practice guidelines that has internationally been described as a world first. The UL-led research addressed an unmet need for and agreed set of evidence-based guidelines by establishing an international consensus for optimal delivery, dosage, frequency, intensity, and content of aquatic therapy to strengthen clinical decision-making by healthcare practitioners in implementing safe, efficient, and effective aquatic therapy programmes. The breakthrough puts UL leading the way in Parkinson's disease research as the guidelines represent a world first in achieving international consensus on the evidence-based application of aquatic therapy in the treatment of the disease.

The research behind the guidelines was conducted by Louise Carroll, School of Allied Health as part of her doctoral studies under the supervision of Professor Amanda Clifford, School of Allied Health, UL along with Professor William (Billy) O'Connor, UL School of Medicine, and Professor Meg Morris, La Trobe University Melbourne as co-supervisors. The study included an international collaboration with Dr Daniele Volpe from the Fresco Parkinson Institute Centre of Excellence, Italy who alongside Dr Jon Salsberg at the UL School of Medicine, provided expertise for the aquatic therapy and patient and public involvement component of the study. Professor William O'Connor explains, "Aquatic therapy involves water immersion as an exercise and rehabilitation medium to improve physical capacity and psychosocial wellbeing of those living with Parkinson's disease. Positive effects include reduced disability with improved mobility and balance in those with mild to moderate illness.

The UL led team conducted the research at the height of the pandemic between May 2020 and June 2021 and the resulting guidelines are based on robust research evidence, the opinions of people living with the illness, and on practice-based expertise stemming from international expert consensus. "Significant logistical challenges were overcome to move the research online – an innovation that facilitated the collection of evidence based findings and allowed consensus with diverse range of clinical expertise across five continents," said Professor O'Connor.

AQUATIC THERAPY GUIDELINES

For people with Parkinson's disease



A person-centred approach is recommended.
Design and tailor aquatic programs to individual needs, goals, preferences, co-morbidities, medication and the stage of disease.



FREQUENCY: HOW OFTEN?

Community-based setting:
At least **twice per week** as part of an overall exercise and physical activity program
OR
At least **once per week** together with a targeted home exercise program

Rehabilitation/ hospital setting:
2-5 times per week as part of an overall therapy program



INTENSITY: HOW HARD?

In the warm-up and cool down phase include low intensity activities.

In the active phase aim for **moderate to high intensity** aquatic exercises including:
progressing aquatic exercises by gradually increasing the quality, time, speed, resistance and number of repetitions and sets.



DURATION: HOW MUCH?

30-60-minutes are recommended.

At least **12-weeks** of aquatic therapy is recommended for optimal outcomes.

Continuous participation in community aquatic therapy is recommended if possible.



TYPE: WHAT ELEMENTS?

- Mobility
- Balance and posture
- Muscle strength
- Speed, co-ordination and motor skills
- Water-based walking & gait training
- Flexibility
- Quality of life and emotional wellbeing
- Cardiorespiratory fitness
- Pain management







“ Aquatic therapy involves water immersion as an exercise and rehabilitation medium to improve physical capacity and psychosocial wellbeing of those living with Parkinson’s disease

The inclusion of a panel of patient stakeholders in the research process gave added strength and depth to the aquatic therapy practice guidelines by ensuring that the new guidelines could be tailored to individual patient abilities and needs.

“Parkinson’s disease is one of the most expensive diseases to treat with drugs as it can cost up to €200,000 per patient, per year for drug treatment,” noted Professor O’Connor adding that “while Parkinson’s disease is rarely fatal, the resulting immobility can expose patients to often lethal infections e.g. pneumonia. “Our approach here was to look at a novel non-drug approach namely aquatic therapy in treating this illness. Aquatic therapy also effectively targets the social withdrawal and depression which may often complicate this illness.”

Despite the challenges, a high level of international recruitment from both practice experts and patients was achieved. Professor O’Connor said that this suggests that the agreed guidelines satisfy a previously unmet global need in supporting healthcare professionals in clinical practice.

“Another key strength of this research was the development of guidelines based on evidence-based practice, which is often missing from clinical practice settings. This is because healthcare professionals often have limited time to review all the available literature, and work within the ideals of evidence-based practice.

“In another innovation the guidelines were published in the *Journal of Parkinson’s Disease* as a two-page guideline infographic specifically designed for easy dissemination via social media platforms,” concluded the UL professor.

The infographic provides internationally agreed practical, systematic guide to clinicians in implementing an effective therapy programme tailored to individual patient needs.

The lived realities of anti-Muslim hatred in Ireland - a UL study

The Sustainable Alliances Against Anti-Muslim Hatred (SALAAM) project is aiming to change attitudes and combat racism

FOLLOWING the publication of his groundbreaking research in 2016, a University of Limerick researcher and senior lecturer has continued to work to further expose anti-Muslim hostility and hatred in Ireland.

Six years ago, Dr James Carr, senior lecturer in the Department of Sociology, University of Limerick published ground-breaking research on anti-Muslim hostility and discrimination in Ireland. This book, based on Dr Carr's PhD research, was the first of a kind in Ireland, casting a light on a heretofore under researched phenomenon in the Irish context.

As Dr Carr recalled: "The research for the book was underpinned by previous work I had undertaken in Ireland that revealed how limited we were in understanding how racism, in all its forms, was being experienced by people in Ireland. So the premise was quite simple: I wanted to illuminate the lived realities of anti-Muslim hostility and discrimination in Ireland so that this could be challenged through evidence based policies and smart, informed decision making."

In the intervening years while maintaining this approach, Dr Carr has undertaken work nationally with the Immigrant Council of Ireland, among others, further exposing the lived realities of anti-Muslim hatred in Ireland. Internationally, Dr Carr has also been engaged with and contributed to work by transnational bodies such as the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, the European Network Against Racism and the EU Commission. Most recently, Dr Carr contributed to revised policies from the Council of Europe's European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI). Being the first such revision in over 20 years, this is something that Dr Carr hopes, albeit cautiously, will be a "game-changer" in the fight against anti-Muslim hatred.

"The fight against anti-Muslim hatred and racism more broadly has attracted increased attention nationally and internationally in recent years, led in no small part by grassroots movements such as Black Lives Matter and a host of civil society actors," noted Dr Carr. At an institutional European level in addition to the work of ECRI noted earlier, in 2020 the European Union adopted the EU Anti-Racism Action Plan 2020-2025, and, in 2021 appointed its first ever Coordinator for Anti-Racism, Michaela Moua.

Dr Carr said that these high-visibility developments are matched at a regional level by various programmes designed to support research and policy work led by civil society organisations and academics working and collaborating in the area of anti-racism. The Sustainable Alliances Against Anti-Muslim Hatred (SALAAM) project, led by Dr Carr in University of Limerick is one such example. Funded by the European Commission's Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values programme to the value of just under €0.5m, SALAAM is a collaborative project between UL, Irish based civil society organisations (Doras, the Immigrant Council of Ireland and the Irish Network Against Racism), and importantly, members of Muslim communities in Ireland.

“ Muslim communities in Ireland, as indeed the world over, are rich in their diversity

Focusing on Muslim communities as a case study of diversity, SALAAM seeks to capitalise on forthcoming legislative and policy developments in Ireland, designed specifically to combat racism, as a springboard from which to fight anti-Muslim hatred. These include the new National Action Plan Against Racism, legislation to challenge hate crime, both of which promise to be published in 2022, and the continued national implementation of the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty (2014). These national developments align with those being undertaken at a broader EU level in the fight against racism. As a project, the manner in which SALAAM focuses on the implementation and development of these initiatives places UL to the fore as an academic institution when it comes to challenging racism, and in particular anti-Muslim hatred, in Ireland.

"Over the course of more than a decade of researching with Muslim communities on the topic of anti-Muslim hatred, I have come to understand all too well the realities of this phenomenon in Ireland. People have welcomed me into their mosques, their cultural centres and their homes to share their lived experiences of anti-Muslim hostility and discrimination. I won't go into the details here, some

of which are distressing to say the least. What I will say, though, is that there is a pressing need for action in this area. The fact that we are in a changing legislative and policy context in terms of challenging racism makes this the ideal time to act and for the SALAAM project to do its work,” said Dr Carr.

The core objectives of SALAAM include: developing training and education programmes for Local Authority staff; the development of recording mechanisms for reports of anti-Muslim hostility and discrimination; the development of a referral directory of supports for people who experience anti-Muslim hatred; the creation of platforms to support community engagement; and the rollout of public awareness campaigns. The latter will on the one hand, engage with the general public in participating cities to challenge negative stereotypical representations of Muslim communities while a separate campaign will also work within Muslim communities to raise awareness of the changing legislative and policy context.

“Muslim communities in Ireland, as indeed the world over are rich in their diversity. As such, the learnings from SALAAM will be easily translatable to the experiences of others in Ireland that experience hostility and discrimination on the basis of their identities,” said Dr Carr. Working with Muslim communities in the four participating cities is crucial for the success of SALAAM. The project is based on an action research methodology, which places the lived experiences and voices of members of Muslim communities to the fore. As such, one of the first phases of SALAAM will involve the collection of insights from across the communities on experiences of anti-Muslim hatred and of suggestions of what can and should be done to challenge it.

“The active involvement of Muslim communities will ensure that it is the experiences from within that inform the way forward. This will also go some way toward ensuring the support of Muslim communities when it comes to spreading the word of the aforementioned legal and policy developments,” Dr Carr said.

Dr Carr is keen to underscore that “no one person or voice” should be seen to speak for everyone within Ireland’s Muslim communities. As such, Muslim men and women from a range of backgrounds will be invited to participate in SALAAM. Importantly, the inclusion and participation of Muslim communities in SALAAM is not limited to providing advice as to how the project should progress. A core objective of SALAAM is to train interested members from within Muslim communities to become trainers for Local Authority staff themselves, supported in the long term by Dr Carr and others at UL. In addition to being inclusive then, SALAAM, by design has an eye on sustainability. Maintaining a focus on sustainability, SALAAM will also work to establish engagement platforms from which Muslim communities in the participating cities can meet with representatives of the Local Authorities to discuss any concerns or issues they may have.

According to Dr Carr, “the inclusive approach inherent to SALAAM will be vital if these platforms are to represent the range of identities and perspectives within Muslim communities and



Dr James Carr: Senior lecturer
in the Dept of Sociology

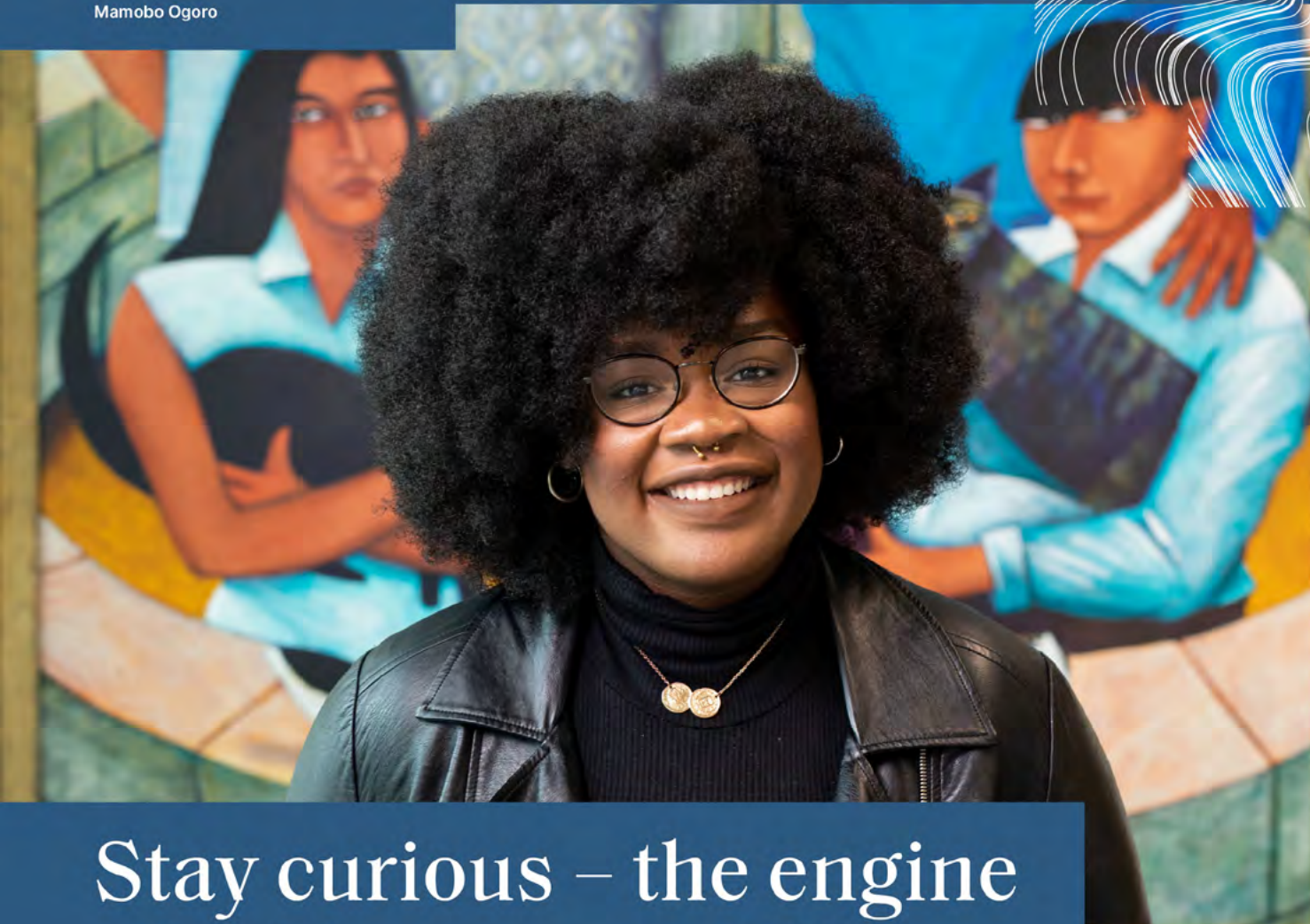
the broader success of the work in the longer term. SALAAM will run until the spring of 2024, but the ‘baked-in’ sustainability of the work holds much promise that initiatives developed during the project will resonate into the future in Ireland and further afield. Indeed, discussions with organisations such as the European Coalition of Cities Against Racism have already illuminated pathways for knowledge sharing from the Irish to the international context. These of course will be in partnership with representatives of various European municipal authorities and civil society organisations among others.”

Reflecting on the potential impact of SALAAM, Dr Carr suggested: “Years of relationship building with European partners provide immense opportunities for the SALAAM team to share insights and also to learn from those engaged in similar work. The collaborative approach running through SALAAM will undoubtedly be central to the project’s success, success which will further underpin the University of Limerick as an institution at the forefront of the fight against racism.”



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Stay curious – the engine of achievement at UL

EARLIER this year, University of Limerick launched the award-winning postgraduate recruitment campaign *Stay Curious* to highlight the benefits and opportunities offered by postgraduate study at UL.

The campaign focuses on UL graduates who have been driven by curiosity and determination. Many say curiosity is the engine of achievement and this campaign focuses on UL as a community for the curious, where purpose meets passion and where students are supported to achieve their own goals. Whether you are growing an idea from spark to market, transforming your future or asking the hard questions

of the world – the campaign illustrates that we are stronger together and it is in working and achieving together that we will stay passionately curious.

Who better to highlight and celebrate the spirit of curiosity needed to pursue higher education than some of our most well-known ambassadors. Initially the campaign launched with the focus on four inspiring students who shared their personal stories of postgraduate education at UL through this campaign. Each represented a different Faculty and study area or path within the University and a different stage in their career and personal lives. From a retired sports

star pivoting to a coaching career, to a young mother who took time out of the workforce to raise a young family, before returning to UL to get her MBA, all stories will resonate with so many pursuing career change, research or education.

Video interviews with the four inspiring graduates are available to view on [UL.ie/gps](https://ul.ie/gps) and phase two of the campaign will return later this year where more UL ambassadors will share their journeys, so be sure to keep an eye out in cinemas, print, outdoor and online over the next number of months for more and see where Curiosity might take you !

Mamobo Ogoro

Founder of Gorm Media

PhD Psychology and Applied Linguistics

"As a child I was always asking questions, I was always curious, I was always asking why. And there's a phrase in Nigerian dialect called "oversabi". It means you're a know-it-all and I was always told that as a child. But I think coming to UL, it really helped me foster this sense of curiosity; asking questions and having ways that I could answer those questions.

My name is Mamobo Ogoro and I am a third-year PHD student at the University of Limerick. I'm doing my PHD in the area of social psychology and Applied Linguistics. I am the founder of Gorm Media, which is a developing, impact-focused digital media company that curates common ground through conversations that matter. I started Gorm Media out of frustration mainly. We started in October 2020. At that time there was a lot of

polarising online discourse that was going on, with a lot of divisions, a lot of debate, a lot of argument that was happening and as a Social Psychologist all we want to do is create positive intergroup contact. We do a lot of that in physical spaces, so I thought to myself, how do I create positive intergroup contact in a digital space?

In developing the project further, I really hacked into my UL community and spoke with people in my surroundings. I didn't realise how much there was such, like, an abundance of resources. I came to UL when I was 17 years old and since then I've really developed and really grown into the person that I am now, with the support of UL. So UL really babied me, I believe, and really helped encase the person I am and helped me grow into the researcher, the social entrepreneur and the woman that I am today."



Jerry Flannery

Jerry Flannery

Rugby Coach

MSc Sports Performance

"I'd been playing professional rugby for over 10 years and I had quite a few injuries so I knew that I would probably start having to transition out of the sport. I did not feel that, you know, I was ready to just go from playing to straight into something else. I felt I needed a period to upskill, primarily to make myself feel more confident in what I was going to go at next. I did not know exactly what I was going to do but I felt the Masters in UL was something that facilitated that for me really, really well.

My name is Jerry Flannery, I studied in the University of Limerick in the Masters in Sports Performance doing a postgraduate in 2012 and I'm currently working as a professional coach in the Premiership in England. You know retiring is quite a difficult process. I tried to minimise the amount of change in my life and I had already spent ten years on the campus training with Munster, so for me, I was very aware of how good the facilities were. How prestigious the University was and how good the lecturers were, so I thought that this made the transition quite seamless for me to be able to stay on campus. It was a perfect fit.

One of the first things you have to have as a coach is technically to be competent and when you can be technically competent, but you can back it up with science, it just makes you so much more confident as a coach to deliver to the player. The main thing for the players is that they feel good and that they trust you and that they feel empowered but for you as a coach to be able to deliver it with real conviction - to know that science is backing this up, this isn't something that I just felt and you feel like you have that behind you, you can coach with a lot more conviction and that just translates into hopefully, you know, better performances from your players. Having a professional qualification, it gives you a little bit of rigor behind your work processes. It helps you with a lot of practical stuff that you can go and apply straight away so it gave me a really good foundation for kicking on in the next step of my life."

“ Having a professional qualification, it gives you a little bit of rigor behind your work processes

Siobhan Ryan



Siobhan Ryan

Sales Director, UiPath

Master of Business Administration

“My decision to go back to education was because I had taken close to six years out of the corporate world to spend time bringing up my kids when they were really small. When I wanted to go back to work I kind of realised that I might need to refresh my skills and frankly rebuild my confidence and make sure that I felt still relevant to the workplace, and very importantly that I had a stronger hand in negotiating the right salary going back. Having such a world-class University on my doorstep made that decision really easy.

Finola Cliffe

Chief Operations Officer, Hooke Bio Ltd.,
PhD Biotechnology

“There’s a huge history of entrepreneurship within The Bernal, that exposure opens up your mind to the possibilities of where you can take your research, what you can do with your research - that it is possible to commercialise what you’re doing and that really has helped in my current role in communicating with the engineers and the scientists that I work with.

My name is Finola Cliffe, I did my PhD at the University of Limerick in biotechnology with Professor Gary Walsh and Dr Tom O’Dwyer. I am currently the Chief Operations Officer with Hooke Bio Limited. In 2014, I was lucky enough to be interviewed for a position at the Stokes Institute, which is now The Bernal, and I was extremely overawed at that opportunity and I have worked with Professor Mark Davis since 2014 and we have successfully spun out a company from the University of Limerick called Hooke Bio Limited. We have had a number of UL graduates in the past, we currently have a number of UL graduates working with us and I have always found them to be extremely professional, very hard working and full of great ideas. Working in a start-up is a rollercoaster. I definitely think that my time doing my PhD in UL has given me the resilience to cope with that.”

Finola Cliffe



“ I’m able to work with one of the fastest growing software companies in the world

My name is Siobhan Ryan, I did the corporate MBA course in UL and I am currently sales director at UiPath. So I went into this as a stay-at-home mom looking to say how do I get more control. How do I begin to steer the right path for me to go back? And so, in the middle of the MBA I did an interview with a software company that was headquartered in the US and looking to set up their first office in Europe and that company selected Limerick as their first location outside of the US and I became the Sales Director for EMEA.

The MBA has helped me in sales because it gives you that rounded perspective of what other stakeholders in the business are looking for. I think part of what you’re showing a prospective employer with an MBA is it’s not about being the smartest person in the room. I think what it proves is that you have the grit to do all of the work that is involved. The fact that I’m sitting here in Limerick in my home office. I’m able to work with one of the fastest growing software companies in the world and I’m able to successfully drive our commercial strategy in Ireland from my back garden.”

Health equity scheme sees UL students attend inclusion clinics



Dr Patrick O'Donnell

By Genevieve Rocheleau, Co-Chair,
University of Limerick Health Equity Program

THE Health Equity Program (HEP) at University of Limerick is a volunteer initiative led by medical students seeking to address health disparity in the community. The student-led, non-profit organisation based at the University of Limerick Medical School is working to increase engagement and awareness of health equity in a local, national and global context.

Over the past year, nine medical students met twice monthly and planned awareness and fundraising initiatives including clothing drives for homeless shelters, feminine hygiene product drives, and fundraisers for the local domestic abuse shelter. As a medical student association, HEP also aims to provide future physicians an understanding of health delivery in underserved populations. With this aim in mind, HEP was fortunate to welcome several guest speakers this year discussing homelessness, addiction, trauma informed care, and child and domestic abuse survivors.

In collaboration with Dr Patrick O'Donnell, a GP based in the city who is a teacher and researcher at the UL School of Medicine, HEP organised observerships for medical students at the Inclusion Health Clinic in Limerick. Over 40 students spent several hours shadowing Dr O'Donnell and his team this year, at this low barrier

clinic specializing in addiction services, homeless services, mental health, Traveller Health and migrant health services.

When surveyed, students reported finding it "interesting to see how physicians work closely with nurses and admin to try and set up follow-ups, wound care, referrals...." Students were surprised at the scope of the work, which "includes things like vouching for the medical team at the clinic or accompanying patients to appointments and advocating for them" and the high volume of patients: "I didn't expect so many patients in the time that I was there." Participating students reported significant changes to the way they thought about treating those with substance use disorder and were moderately to significantly interested in incorporating addiction treatment into their future careers. Addiction Physicians are sorely needed; therefore this work may help to address addiction treatment shortages in the future.

Dr O'Donnell's programme experienced overwhelming demand and positive response from students. As one student described: "The key take away for me was how every patient was treated differently and that it's important to understand the patients fears and expectations before you jump to diagnosis or treatment."

HEP will continue to offer unique experiences for medical students in the newest project; a collaboration with the ADAPT domestic abuse services, which will aim to have students lead informal health discussions for the women and children at the shelter under supervision of a local GP volunteer. Through these programs, and with the generous support of local GPs volunteering their time, HEP is leading health engagement with vulnerable groups through partnership and a conscientious approach within the wider community.

“ Students were surprised at the scope of the work, which includes things like vouching for the medical team at the clinic or accompanying patients to appointments

UL plays a critical role in mainstreaming Assistive Technologies

by John Rainsford

RESEARCH undertaken by the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education confirms that almost one-in-five students now use Assistive Technology. Furthermore, nearly one-in-ten believe that such technologies are vital to their learning needs while some 14 percent of staff are also recorded as being Assistive Technology (AT) users. These figures are higher than the 6.2 percent of students with disabilities attending higher education courses in Ireland-according to a report by AHEAD (2018/19).

Thomas O'Shaughnessy is an Assistive Technology Officer at University of Limerick, with over a decade's experience as a Subject Matter Expert (SME). He explained: "ATs have changed a significant amount in the period that I have been working in the sector. Indeed, increasingly, learners are utilizing voice recognition, Text-To-Speech (TTS), and literacy applications, for reading, writing, and note-taking tasks, in order to enhance independent learning opportunities. "In fact, many of these applications have been mainstreamed into everyday technologies on mobile devices as well as across other applications like the Microsoft Office 365 suite." ATs immerse users into mixed-reality worlds, (part physical, part digital), where speech synthesis and voice recognition predominate.

“ These technologies support more inclusive pedagogical frameworks, like Universal Design for Learning, which is beginning to permeate across all levels of Irish education

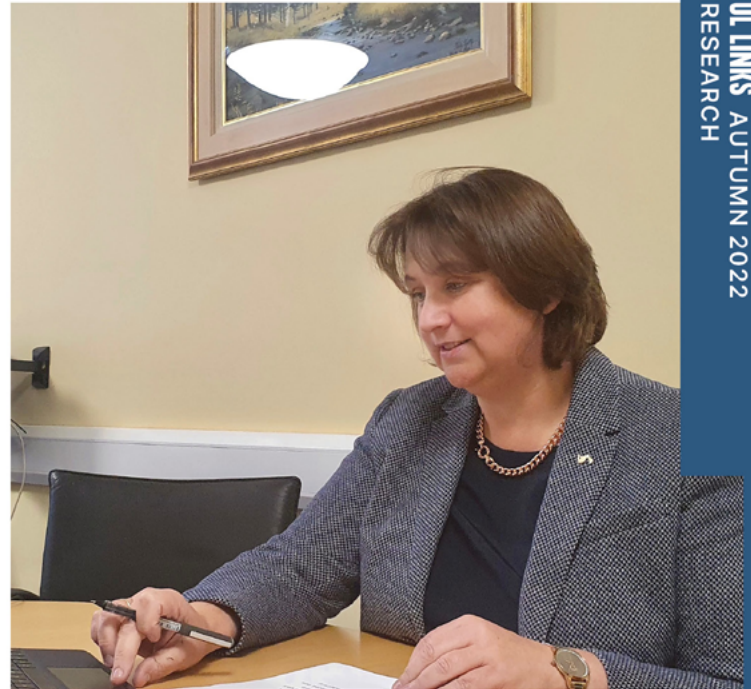
The former is commonly referred to as Text-To-Speech (TTS), with the latter being the opposite, Speech-To-Text (STT). Screen readers, like JAWS, NVDA, and Microsoft Narrator, convert raw and image-based text into speech or Braille using non-visual means. Narrator, first seen in Windows 2000, allows those with low vision, blindness, or learning disabilities, to operate ubiquitously without the need for a screen display. Alternatively, STT, produces on-screen words using a microphone instead of a keyboard. Indeed, software, such as Dragon NaturallySpeaking, allows for dictation at 70-120 words per minute.

"These technologies support more inclusive pedagogical frameworks, like Universal Design for Learning, which is beginning to permeate across all levels of Irish education," said Thomas O'Shaughnessy.

"In this regard, the Fund for Students with Disabilities supports the acquisition of AT including software site licences, as well as a range of other student supports, for Irish Higher Education Institutions. These funds allow HEIs to provide more inclusive and accessible environments for all their learners." As a result, ATs are impacting academic productivity, efficiency, and effectiveness, to a significant degree. For example, in-built accessibility features are becoming increasingly commonplace as companies seek to meet new legislative demands. Writing assistance tools, like Grammarly, can also help students with Specific Learning Disabilities such as Dyslexia or Dyscalculia. There are over 300 students with Dyslexia enrolled at UL alone, but the various technologies have significant potential to benefit a whole range of other students as well.

Students can now read, write, study, and sit exams, with increased self-confidence dealing easily with confusing words in different languages and accents. Thomas O'Shaughnessy commented: "Microsoft increasingly supports Accessibility Checkers, which check documents and presentations for accessibility, but can also be used in other applications, like Microsoft Word and PowerPoint.

"Microsoft PowerPoint also facilitates the creation of video captured presentations which can be uploaded to Microsoft Stream, the video sharing platform. The latter allows users to create and edit auto-captions, which are of use to the deaf or hard of hearing, as well as to international students struggling to learn a new language. Anne Rabbitte TD, Minister of State with responsibility for Disability at the Department of Health and the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, said that assistive technology "is a crucial tool in aiding people with disabilities to pursue education and stable work".



Anne Rabbitte TD -Minister of State with responsibility for Disability

“ I’m genuinely excited about the possibilities of digital technology for people with disabilities. As we move forward towards a more equal and inclusive society, we must ensure that access to technology for people with disabilities is a priority

"As tech grows, so does the population of people with disabilities depending on it. Assistive Technology can help people with disabilities to exercise their human rights and become more active members of society," said Minister Rabbitte. "Digital skills are essential these days so now we have several government initiatives to help develop them. One such example is the Digital Skills for Citizens Scheme. I'm genuinely excited about the possibilities of digital technology for people with disabilities. As we move forward towards a more equal and inclusive society, we must ensure that access to technology for people with disabilities is a priority."



Global Fellowships for UL researchers



Front row right: Aisling Ross, Jenna Lorusso, Aurélie Van Hoye, Siobhan Griffin, Joseph Mooney. Middle row: Dino Carpentras, Sumesh Sasidharan, Sergi Morales. Back row: Julia Alvarez-Malmagro, Alison O'Connor, Arash Kia, Mehakpreet Singh.

THREE UL researchers have been awarded Global Fellowships taking them to prestigious Universities in both the USA and Australia. The researchers, Dr Joseph Mooney, Dr Siobhan Griffin and Dr Aisling Ross will work for two years at MIT, Baylor University and University of Melbourne respectively. Speaking about the appointments, Professor Norelee Kennedy, Vice President Research at UL said, "The University has a strategic focus on supporting early career researchers to enhance their research excellence through forging international links with leading universities and these appointments are indicative of the talent we have at UL."

Dr Joseph Mooney will research passive, carbon-neutral, clean water technologies for tackling the ever-increasing global water crisis. Having graduated this year with a PhD in passive thermal management of 5G Data Centres from UL, Dr Mooney will work with Professor Evelyn N Wang at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, USA for two years and Dr Vanessa Egan and Professor Jeff Punch at Stokes Laboratories in University of Limerick's Bernal Institute, UL. Dr Mooney placed second in the Engineering panel in Europe with a scoring of 99.2% for his project work.

Dr Siobhán Griffin gained her PhD from the Department of Psychology at UL in 2020 and was awarded a three-year global fellowship to examine the biological mechanisms linking depression with increased cardiovascular disease risk and to test the potential of social identity interventions in alleviating such risk. Dr Griffin will spend two years working in the Baylor Behavioural Medicine laboratory at Baylor University, Texas, USA and a third year back at the Department of Psychology at UL under the mentorship of Professor Orla Muldoon.

Dr Aisling Ross gained her PhD in Biomedical Engineering from UL in 2020 and was one of two researchers to achieve the top score in the Life Sciences panel in Europe this year. Dr Ross will spend two years of her fellowship at the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research (WEHI), University of Melbourne, Australia working on the contribution of the Epstein-Barr Virus and the Tumour Microenvironment to Anti-Apoptotic Mechanisms in Diffuse Large B-Cell (lymphoma). In the third year, she will re-join Professor Paul Murray's lab at the Health Research Institute, UL.

Six incoming Marie Curie Fellowships

Similarly, six fellowships were awarded to international researchers to undertake their research at the University of Limerick.

Dr Jenna Lorusso gained her PhD from Western University Canada, subsequently joining UL as a postdoctoral fellow. Dr Lorusso will spend her two-year fellowship working on co-creating a preparatory policy engagement programme for quality physical education with Professor Ann MacPhail at the Department of Physical Education and Sports Sciences.

Dr Alison O'Connor will research how the operational lifetime of critical infrastructure can be improved through artificial intelligence. Dr O'Connor moved to UL from Imperial College London where she completed her PhD and postdoctoral studies in engineering structural integrity. Dr O'Connor will work with Professor Noel O'Dowd as part of both the Bernal Institute and Confirm centre.

Dr Aurélie Van Hoye will research health promoting sports club's policies. Dr Van Hoye completed her PhD at the University of Grenoble-Alpes and is Associate Professor at the University of Lorraine. She will work with Professor Catherine Woods in the Dept Physical Education and Sport Sciences.

Dr Julia Alvarez-Malmagro will develop a prototype 3D printed bio-reactor for the controlled production of pharmaceutical materials in a stand-alone environment. She will join Professor Edmond Magner and Professor Vivek Ranade's groups in the Department of Chemical Sciences and the Bernal Institute. Dr Alvarez-Malmagro completed her PhD in spectroelectrochemistry at the University of Seville, Spain.

Dr James Sargan is studying new scientific approaches to the study of premodern books. Dr Sargan gained his PhD at the University of Oxford and will join UL from the University of Toronto. He will work with Dr Carrie Griffin in the School of English, Irish and Communication.

Dr William Cheuquepan Valenzuela, originally from Chile, will develop a novel, disruptive and sustainable approach to photoelectrocatalytic carbon dioxide (CO₂) reduction. The aim is to achieve an unprecedented control of the degree of photo-reduction of CO₂ to high-value hydrocarbons in a biphasic system. He will join Dr Micheál D Scanlon's group in the Department of Chemical Sciences and the Bernal Institute.

The quality of the candidates applying to work at the University is evidenced in their success rate, where 47% of University of Limerick proposals received a score of 90% or higher.

Professor Norelee Kennedy said the awards are "prestigious, highly competitive fellowships that bring international scholars to UL and reflect the calibre of the fellows, supervisors, projects and UL as an institution to host them. The EU has funded a thriving community of 88 Marie Curie researchers at the University since 2014".

The Irish Research Council awarded 12 Postdoctoral Fellowships to UL researchers in the last two years. The awardees are as follows:

Dr Eanna Fennell, School of Medicine

Dr Róisín Hill, Department of Mathematics and Statistics

Dr Joseph Comer, School of Modern Languages and Applied Linguistics

Dr Fernanda Zamboni, School of Engineering and Bernal Institute

Dr Hala Jaber, Irish World Academy of Music and Dance

Dr Kwadwo Asare Owusu, Department of Chemical Sciences and Bernal Institute

Dr Sarah Markham, Department of Physics and Bernal Institute

Dr Rajeshree Khaire, Department of Chemical Sciences and Bernal Institute

The following researchers were offered IRC Postdoctoral Fellowships, but were unable to accept these having taken up new positions in UL and abroad:

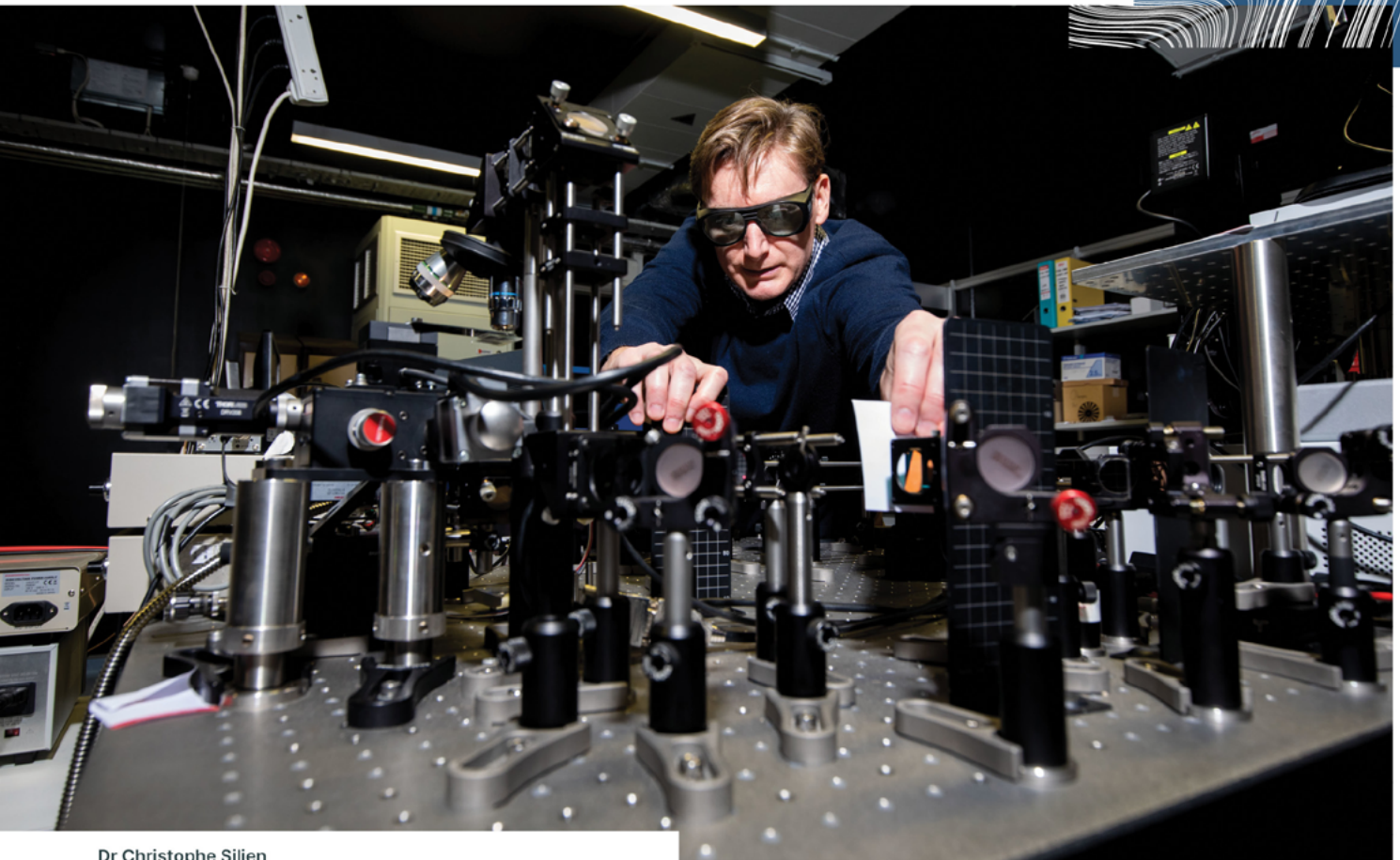
Dr Jennifer Cookman, Department of Chemical Sciences and Bernal Institute

Dr William Cheuquepan, Department of Chemical Sciences and Bernal Institute

Dr Mario Culebras Rubio, School of Engineering and Bernal Institute

Dr Ann-Marie Foster, Department of History.

Frontiers Funding for Bernal researchers



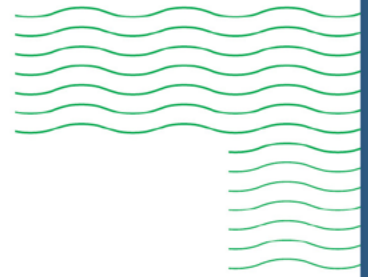
Dr Christophe Silien

RESEARCHERS at University of Limerick are to receive significant grants to support frontiers research. The researchers, all of whom are based at UL's Bernal Institute, were awarded €2.26m under the SFI Frontiers for the Future Programme announced by Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, Simon Harris. UL-based principal investigators Professor Usel Bangert, Professor Vivek Ranade, Dr George Barreto and Dr Christophe Silien were among 76 grants valued at €53.7 million to support frontiers research across ten Higher Education Institutions.

The UL research will investigate areas such as traumatic brain injury, manufacturing, microscopy and nanoelectronics. In line with SFI's gender strategy, the programme seeks to provide opportunities to address gender imbalance and to provide support for investigators returning to research after a period of leave. 42% of the research grants supported will be led by female researchers

and 32% by emerging investigators early in their research careers. The programme is run in collaboration with Geological Survey Ireland and the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) who are co-funding a number of the grants. Luuk van der Wielen, Director of the Bernal Institute said: "I am delighted to see the continued support of SFI for our researchers in general and for the just granted projects that focus on our strategic commitment to health-related and other grand challenges. "The four projects range from fundamental physics, biology and molecular mechanisms and their interactions to the development of new manufacturing processes for personalised health related products. "All four projects are exciting new examples of what multidisciplinary science and engineering under a single Bernal roof can bring."

Bernal Chair in Process Engineering Vivek Ranade was awarded €988,667, for his project 'Factory in a Box' for Personalised Products based on Emulsions (FabPRO).



“ 42% of the research grants supported will be led by female researchers and 32% by emerging investigators early in their research careers

Personalised products are gaining significant attention in personal care, food and medicine sectors. There is an urgent need to develop new ways to manufacture personalised products with desired properties on-demand. This project aims to develop novel ways of producing liquid-liquid emulsions (used widely in upcoming personalised and nutritional products) with desired attributes using a compact and modular ‘factory in a box’ platform. The project will develop new insights, devices and computational models to realise such ‘factory in a box’ platforms. The project will facilitate realisation of personalised products close to the source of need and will have significant impact on manufacturing in Ireland and beyond.

Dr George Barreto received €479,713 for his project, ‘Coupling neurosciences and artificial intelligence to potentiate pharmacological actions of tibolone over neuroglobin signalling in traumatic brain injury’. Traumatic brain injury (TBI) is a complex disease and current treatments do not work well. Intriguingly, women have a speedier recovery from TBI than men. Barreto believes this is due to a protein/molecule called neuroglobin, which is more abundant in the female brain and has vast protective effects in brain cells. Previous studies by his research group found that tibolone, a drug used as hormone therapy in postmenopausal women, increases the expression of neuroglobin giving it potential as a repurposed therapy for TBI. Current drug therapies that are used to treat TBI patients do not have a broad spectrum of action and often the therapeutic effect diminishes after injury, in addition to the fact that certain drugs work better in men than women.

This new collaborative project with Dr Ramírez (Universidad de Concepción, Chile) and Dr Peláez (University of Salamanca, Spain) will develop an artificial intelligence pipeline for the design and screening of ligands to potentiate the pharmacological effects of tibolone on neuroglobin in male and female cell cultures. Developing a new drug costs millions of euros and it can take at least 10 years to finally be put on the market. This research will propose Tibolone as a new treatment for TBI patients as this drug has shown a great

clinical potential and has broad anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties. Dr Christophe Silien was awarded €440,497 for his project, ‘Illumination Diversity for Label-Free super-resolution Biological Multimodal far-field microscopy’.

An important limitation of light microscopy is that nanoscale elements of cells driving life are too small to be observed and tracked, impeding discoveries in biological and medical research. It is ID-BioM’s purpose to demonstrate a super-resolution to facilitate biological imaging at the nanoscale. Most diseases that challenge our society originate from perturbation of the natural life cycle of cells. Photonics technologies use light that can penetrate and probe the corresponding mechanisms dynamically. The same technologies are relatively inexpensive and applied to diagnose from extracted biopsy as well as endo-biopsy. This project will strengthen Ireland’s knowledge base in the photonics and medical device sectors, provide a platform for advanced biological research and enhanced knowledge on the cellular origin of diseases and aid diagnostic and therapy monitoring.

Bernal Chair in Microscopy and Imaging Prof Ursel Bangert received €351,292 for her project ‘Pushing the frontiers of next generation nanoelectronics and energy storage by establishing, tailoring and exploiting the functionalities of novel materials: 2-D ferroelectrics and their domains and dynamic 1-D domain walls’. In this proposal a new class of 2-D materials, 2-D ferro-electrics, will be established, and their potential as essential components in novel, revolutionary nano-devices, used in memories, sensors and energy storage, explored. 2-D ferroelectrics may contain conducting atomic-scale channels, which could be used as mobile/electrical and novel line switches, for individual nano-devices.

The SFI Frontiers for the Future Programme supports the development of world class research capability and human capital in areas of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) that demonstrably support and underpin enterprise competitiveness and societal development in Ireland.

UL and Silkroad join together for a new cultural partnership

University of Limerick and Silkroad, the global musical ensemble founded by cellist and cultural ambassador Yo-Yo Ma, have announced the launch of a new cultural partnership

The artistic and educational collaboration will provide UL students with the unique opportunity to participate in the creation of a new theatre work exploring the history, cultures, and music of the immigrant communities who built the American Transcontinental Railroad. The resulting piece will be a crucial component of The American Railroad, Silkroad's multi-year concert, educational, and commissioning series led by Artistic Director Rhiannon Giddens, the Grammy-award winning musician who is artist-in-residence at the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance at UL.

The partnership was officially launched on September 8 last at Harvard University in Boston, US, with a series of workshops exploring the stories and songs of Irish railroad workers, followed by a performance featuring artists from Silkroad

and UL. "Having worked with the University of Limerick as their artist-in-residence over the last year, I've been dreaming up a collaboration between them and our artists at Silkroad for some time," explained Rhiannon Giddens.

"Members of our team visited UL's campus in March—just down the street from my home in Ireland—to begin exploring the intersections of Irish traditions and Irish American music within the context of the American Railroad. It's a joy to continue that journey now in Silkroad's neck of the woods, and I can't wait to see what we create together."

An array of artistic and educational activities—including master classes, workshops, artistic retreats, and performances—will broaden the newly-established collaboration in the coming months.

These activities will gather Silkroad and UL artists in Ireland to uncover the Irish community's impact and legacy on the American railroads, focusing on musical traditions that have been widely shared and reinterpreted since the 19th century. UL students will also be invited to share in and learn from the creative process as these artists join forces to design, shape, and produce a new theatre work, with music written and performed by members of the Silkroad Ensemble, as part of The American Railroad project. The UL residencies will be based at the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance, and will be facilitated and overseen by Dr Sandra Joyce, Interim Executive Dean of Arts Humanities and Social Sciences at UL. "UL is delighted to forge this partnership with the prestigious Silkroad Ensemble, particularly through Silkroad's Artistic Director Rhiannon Giddens," said Dr Joyce.

"Rhiannon's presence in Limerick, where she is raising her family, and her appointment as artist-in-residence at the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance have provided us with a unique opportunity to develop our relationship, and we are excited about the potential to collaborate going forward. "Silkroad's The American Railroad is a very appropriate focus for the building of our connections. We are delighted to be in Boston and at Harvard to celebrate the partnership and to plan for the future!"

For more, see silkroad.org.

Rhiannon Giddens



UL and Amazon Web Services launch new global fellowships programme



THE announcement of a new Global Fellowships programme as part of University of Limerick's BSc/MSc in Immersive Software Engineering (ISE) is being funded through a major new philanthropic gift from cloud service provider, Amazon Web Services (AWS). The substantial gift will allow UL establish and fully fund the new Global Fellowships programme in perpetuity.

This long-term collaboration between UL and AWS will help transform computer science education and research by attracting engineering leaders at all career levels from both industry and academia to UL's pioneering new course.

The ISE Global Fellowships will be highly competitive and prestigious software engineering awards. UL will appoint junior and senior Fellows coming from a variety of backgrounds, genders, expertise, and geographies, and each Fellow will be supported to spend between three weeks and six months inspiring ISE's students, collaborating with ISE's researchers, and engaging ISE's growing coalition of industry partners.

Welcoming the gift, UL Foundation CEO Harvey Duthie, said: "This is one of the most significant investments in the ISE programme to date, and AWS' commitment will underwrite the Fellows Programme forever. It's a confident statement about the future of technology in Ireland and demonstrates the importance AWS places on supporting world-class education." Professor Kerstin Mey, UL's President, said: "We want to create a globally prestigious teaching

and research Fellowship for technology leaders. We are excited to have the backing of a global leader like AWS for what we believe will be one of the best software courses in the world."

Mike Beary, Country Manager, AWS Ireland, said: "AWS has invested in Ireland for over fifteen years, and this contribution is part of our ongoing and long-term commitment to supporting educational development across the island. The Global Fellows programme will bring together pioneering teaching and research with world-class thought leaders and practitioners to help develop tomorrow's technology leaders and innovators. With a focus on diversity, equity and inclusion, the Fellows will be drawn from a wide variety of backgrounds, skill sets, life experiences and global locations. AWS is proud to be part of the programme and to work with UL to inspire students, and to champion fresh approaches to issues of importance to society."

UL's BSc/MSc in ISE is a transformational new teaching and research initiative that will welcome its first students to the University in September. Students will learn by doing, working on projects and in paid residencies at some of ISE's more than fifty partner organisations. They will also achieve a Masters' qualification in four years.

Candidates interested in applying can find out more here: <https://www.software-engineering.ie>

A landmark year as the UL Foundation celebrates the University's 50th anniversary



Harvey Duthrie, CEO

FOR thirty of the last fifty years, UL Foundation has been supporting landmark projects across the campus. As we celebrate UL's 50th Anniversary, I am delighted to report it has been another tremendous year.

We are receiving more six and seven figure gifts, from a greater number of donors, than ever before. The total raised this year will exceed €8.8 million. Thank you to everyone who has supported us.

Friends and alumni have responded generously to our 50ForFifty scholarships initiative. We already have commitments for forty of the fifty scholarships we set out to secure.

Our Immersive Software Engineering coalition has expanded and a special thank you to AWS, Carne, Dell, Johnson & Johnson and Tines who all joined in recent months.

Professor Mey has exciting plans for UL's future. The Foundation is certain philanthropy will help underpin this vision and the University's place as a global centre for teaching, research and learning.

To find out more about our work, click on www.ulfoundation.com.

Harvey Duthrie
CEO, UL Foundation

A selection of our most recent supporters:





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50

years of Firsts

This year, University of Limerick is proud to celebrate five decades of ensuring that our graduates are knowledgeable and engaged citizens who enrich the communities in which they study, live and work.

To find out more, visit us at our upcoming open days on the 20th and 21st of October.

ul.ie/opendays



UNIVERSITY OF
LIMERICK
OLLSCOIL LUIMNIGH

50

Reflecting
Connecting
Transforming

Machnamh
Nasc
Gníomh





Eyes on the past: Lily Walsh and Hannah Walsh Delahunt, Ed Walsh's grandchildren, looking at a model of the Foundation Building, which is part of the new exhibition 'A University of Our Time' in UL



UNIVERSITY OF
LIMERICK
OLLSCOIL LUIMNIGH

