**Report of the UL Task Force
on Civic Engagement, May 2012**

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B. Quilligan
S. Moore
S. Killian
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M. Bucholz
M. Adshead (Chair)

UNIVERSITY of LIMERICK

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Promoting University Community Collaboration

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UL TASK FORCE ON CIVIC ENGAGEMENT TERMS OF REFERENCE

To make recommendations on the development of a coherent community and/or civic engagement strategy for the University of Limerick

ABSTRACT

LIMERICK

smarter together

Higher education is in a time of flux, internationally, nationally but also locally.

Internationally, key drivers for change, such as global competition, demands for internationalization and bench-marking of teaching and research are pushing new ways of thinking about the traditional approaches to the work that we do. Nationally, the financial constraints within which we work are fuelling demands for good use of public money and accountability in performance. Locally the reorganization of the local authority boundaries and regional development infrastructure, the demise of Regeneration and other local Agencies, is raising questions about the role that the University of Limerick should play in regional renewal.

At the institutional level, a fresh emphasis on research demands not only international excellence, but a shift towards greater convergence and translational activities with knowledge transfer. Teaching imperatives push us to be more reflexive, and to provide stimulating student experiences and a broader variety of credited educational opportunities.

There are many diverse objectives and many diverse actions that may be taken in UL to achieve them – but now we have a unique and time-limited window of opportunity to implement one course of action that can support, augment and integrate our objectives across a range of goals, providing UL with a unique and innovative response that will set it apart from all other HEIs in Ireland. This report argues that a coherent and strategic Civic Engagement strategy will not only enable UL to deliver on the fourth goal of the UL Strategic Plan – in relation to civic engagement – but significantly contribute to our fulfilling the other three - regarding the student experience, research excellence and internationalization.

In fact, the current climate of uncertainly in Higher Education provides us with the perfect opportunity to show what is best about UL.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

DEFINING CIVIC AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

> *'strenuous, thoughtful argumentative interaction with the non-university world in at least four spheres: setting universities' aims, purposes and priorities; relating teaching and learning to the wider world; the back and forth dialogue between researchers and practitioners; and taking on wider responsibilities as neighbours and citizens'*
>
> **HEA Briefing Document**
> **'Enhancing Engagement in Irish Education'**

We propose that a coherent institutional approach to engagement, based on sound principles of international best practice, will provide UL with a sustainable implementation plan that is 'fit for purpose' in relation to any of the communities with whom we engage – locally, regionally, nationally and internationally. The principles of good engagement, and UL's commitment to upholding them, should remain the same, regardless of the geographic location of our engagement.

STRATEGIC RATIONALE – TO BE PIONEERING

> *''Higher education institutions need to become more firmly embedded in the social and economic contexts of the communities they live in and serve. Achieving this will help them become more relevant and responsive, and will also enhance their diversity and distinctiveness as institutions'*
>
> **Department of Education and Skills, 2010**

Strategically speaking, there is both a demand for engagement, in Ireland and internationally, as being best practice for institutions of Higher Education and a potential market supply of students who will choose UL over other institutions in order to avail of well-supported civic engagement opportunities. Effective civic engagement will not only contribute to our teaching, for many applied, therapeutic and medical programmes, it is an essential part of student learning. Principled civic engagement will enable us to develop sustainable research relationships within local communities and, last but not least, it is probably the only potential new income stream for Irish Higher Education in the current financial climate.

INTRINSIC RATIONALE – CONNECTING TO OUR CORE GOALS

Civic engagement can be a dimension to a wide variety of activities in UL – in teaching, in research and in our international focus. As the fourth goal in *Pioneering and Connected,* it is not only an objective in its own right, but an activity that can support and augment the achievement and ambitions of all other three institutional goals.

IDENTIFYING UL CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Alongside our written commentary about the different dimensions of Civic Engagement currently practiced in UL, we offer seven Engagement Exemplars illustrating the breadth and depth of UL's natural and intuitive commitment to engagement. These give a taste of the kinds of engagement activities that UL staff carry out on a routine basis as part of their different briefs.

UL CIVIC ENGAGEMENT - CONCEIVING COHERENCE

At the moment, we offer no practical support to all the good civic engagement work that is done. We offer no incentives to staff to do this kind of work. Without a clear institutional lead - staff are not sure if this is an activity that they should spend time on. Moreover, the institution gets very little recognition for what it does. The unique brand that is so typically UL is lost. Civic Engagement activities undertaken throughout the university struggle in the absence of a coherent system, encountering the same problems, overcoming the same issues, on a piecemeal basis. This results in an inefficient approach and is not making full use of our expertise. We are making good civic engagement too hard to do. A few enthusiasts will engage, but for most staff the obstacles are too high. The good-will of the enthusiasts will run out and we will have lost our competitive edge.

In this context, we are not mindful of the research relationships that we make and break. It is practically impossible for the community to contact us if they do not know someone in the institution. We do not know what we do ourselves and we are unable to account for our activities as an institution. In Civic Engagement activities, we do not promote best practice, or professional standards. At an institutional level, we have not engaged in a coherent or strategic way with our hinterland and local communities. We are, in effect, an under-utilised resource for the region and much of the responsibility for this is our own.

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATIONS

We are not arguing *for* civic engagement in UL, we are arguing for *recognition* of civic engagement in UL: so that UL staff can continue to do their work in this area; so that the institution can gain credit for this excellent work; and to provide institutional support and coherence to a neglected area of the UL mission. Civic Engagement is a signifier of what we do best in UL: we are innovative, applied, active and engaged. As an institution, we should recognize this and we should promote this message as clearly and completely as possible, so that we can see the value of what we do ourselves and so that we can promote it to others. Achieving this shift in attitude requires both a clear and coherent strategy and a strong institutional push.

Within this report is the rationale for the 23 recommendations that are summarised in on its conclusion.

DEFINING CIVIC AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The brief given to this Task Force was both broad - *to make recommendations on the development of a coherent community and/or civic engagement strategy for the University of Limerick* – and narrow, insofar as we were given the brief to recommend a strategy to address two actions from the Strategic Plan, viz.

> *'Contribute as partners to Limerick regeneration in those activities where our involvement can add value to the work of the relevant agencies and community groups'*
> and
> *'Increase the use of the University campus as a social and cultural amenity in ways that allow wider access by community groups and teams, that target national and international events to showcase the campus as a venue for large-scale events and that maximise our economic, social and cultural contribution to the Shannon region'*.

In order to reconcile the potential tension between these two ambitions, and to 'future proof' the recommendations insofar as we can, this report uses the definitions of community and civic engagement set down by the Higher Education Authority (HEA Briefing Document, 31 May 2011). The report is premised on a set of principles about how UL should proceed with civic engagement. Whether this engagement takes place within current geo-political and institutional policy contexts or any alternative future systems of regional/local administration makes no difference to our recommendations. We propose that a coherent institutional approach to engagement, based on sound principles of international best practice, will provide UL with a sustainable implementation plan that is 'fit for purpose' in relation to any of the communities with whom we engage – locally, regionally, nationally and internationally. The principles of best practice, and UL's commitment to upholding them, should remain the same, regardless of the geographic location of our engagement.

Engagement
'Strenuous, thoughtful argumentative interaction with the non-university world in at least four spheres: setting universities' aims, purposes and priorities; relating teaching and learning to the wider world; the back and forth dialogue between researchers and practitioners; and taking on wider responsibilities as neighbours and citizens'.

Civic Engagement
A mutually beneficial knowledge-based collaboration between the higher education institution, its staff and students, with the wider community-campus partnerships including the activities of service-learning/ Community based learning, Community Engaged Research, Volunteering, Community/Economic regeneration, capacity Building and Access/Widening participation.

Community Engagement
Higher education institution collaboration with geographic areas (eg. Local neighbourhoods) or groupings based on a common identity (eg young people). 'Community partners' can be members of the community, voluntary organizations or public representatives.

HEA Briefing Document
'Enhancing Engagement in Irish Education' 31st May 2011

STRATEGIC RATIONALE—TO BE PIONEERING

The current discourse around civic engagement may be relatively new to Irish higher education, but its everyday practice has been evident in UL since the first days of the National Institute of Higher Education (NIHE). The University of Limerick is already well-known for its pioneering pedagogical approaches. Since the outset, its institutional ambition to be 'excellent and relevant' reflected an intuitive concern with providing a link between the academic institution and the wider community for the benefit of all.

This institutional ethos is further reinforced by UL's commitment to Cooperative Education, which is a defining feature of the UL student experience. Through Cooperative Education, students have the opportunity to apply their academic learning in the world of work. From an employer perspective, Cooperative Education often represents the first conduit to proactive dialogue and engagement with the University community.

The President's Volunteer Award provides another excellent example of the role UL plays in fostering civic engagement amongst the student population. Established in September 2008 by the UL Access Campus Centre in association with the Faculty of Science and Engineering, the award seeks to recognise students for their involvement in volunteer projects. Since the foundation of the programme, 220 Science and Engineering undergraduate student volunteers have provided assistance with mathematics, biology, physics, chemistry, engineering or technical drawing to secondary school students from disadvantaged areas in Limerick. Volunteers provide one-to-one assistance to secondary school students for two hours every week over two semesters. Since the inception of this project all 170 secondary school students who participated have successfully passed their Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate examinations. Following its success, in 2010, the University of Limerick formally established the President's Volunteer Award (PVA). Through institutionalising a formal process that commends students for their involvement in volunteer activities, the university is encouraging and supporting the practice and creating new opportunities for volunteering. In 2011 eighty-two awards were granted to volunteers for their participation in a wide variety of projects, both internal and external to the university, of those forty-three volunteers received a 'Gold Level' award.

In other areas, the long-standing commitment to collaborative and applied research has recently been reinvented again, in a cross-disciplinary context, under the aegis of the UL Practicum. The UL Practicum enables students to engage in faculty-designed bespoke research projects in collaboration with external community sponsors. The UL Practicum draws on the notions of service-learning, civic engagement and emancipatory research methodologies for collaborative applied research. The UL Practicum is designed to develop service or community-based learning as a core element of the UL students' learning experience and to support the growth of cross-disciplinary faculty connections as a foundation for building convergent research capacity. The UL Practicum involves multi-disciplinary teams of undergraduate students (FYPs), postgraduate researchers and academics, from diverse academic domains.

Recognizing and developing a strong institutional focus on those activities that already mark us out as natural higher education innovators is an obvious strategic imperative. It requires us to recognize that sound engagement principles and practice are – and always have been - an important strategic imperative at the University of Limerick.

It is one that has already been recognized at the University of Limerick and supported by the Directorate of Student Affairs. In a review carried out by the UL Community Liaison Officer (Hanrahan, March 2011), it was noted that there are now significant national and international drivers for universities to become more connected to their communities. This view is strongly supported by the International Office, which notes that the demand for civic engagement activities from US and North American students has grown significantly in recent years (for details see the section on 'our internationalisation focus' in the next part of this report).

Nationally, the Hunt Report is the first major policy statement to give civic engagement equal prominence with the teaching/learning and research functions of higher education (Munck and McIlrath, 2011). According to this strategy:

> Engagement with the wider community must become more firmly embedded in the mission of higher education institutions. Higher education institutions need to become more firmly embedded in the social and economic contexts of the communities they live in and serve (Hunt, 2010: 9)

At the European level, the EU Commission (CEC, 2006) refers to the need for universities to 'communicate the relevance of their activities, particularly those related to research, by sharing knowledge with society and by reinforcing dialogue with all stakeholders'. Similarly, the Council of Europe's Higher Education Forum (COE, 2010) argued for a practical vision whereby higher education can promote citizenship and democracy through its research and teaching, and through student experience and community engagement. Similar trends are in evidence internationally, in particular, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) correlates the importance of education and an increase in civic engagement, thus signalling that educational institutions have an important role to play in fostering civic-minded citizens, which in turn contributes to challenging the democratic deficit (Lauglo and Øia, 2007).

In addition to the multiple external push factors for civic engagement activity, there are significant internal strategic institutional rationales for embedding civic engagement as part of higher educational practice in UL. In terms of our own institutional development and organization, Civic Engagement is an area where both administrative and academic arms of the university are equally involved and as such provides a useful platform to develop working relationships and institutional linkages that benefit the institution across its mission as a whole. This view is strongly supported by many administrative parts of the university, who feel that they have something to contribute but are often not given a voice or occasion to demonstrate their contribution (Access Office, Coop Office, Library, Student Affairs).

In addition to developing institutional linkages and synergies within UL, Civic Engagement gives UL significant opportunities to develop collaborative initiatives with NUIG – where UL is the lead partner. Civic Engagement is already an area of interest to NUIG, but one that UL excels in. Involvement in the Campus Engage network demonstrates that many of our partners are interested and keen to learn about what we do in UL, but at the moment we lack the institutional capacity to demonstrate our excellence. We are not 'punching our weight' in inter-institutional civic engagement fora and in so doing, we are loosing an opportunity to showcase some of our best work.

INTRINSIC RATIONALE—CONNECTING OUR GOALS

> *'Higher education institutions need to become more firmly embedded in the social and economic contexts of the communities they live in and serve. Achieving this will help them become more relevant and responsive, and will also enhance their diversity and distinctiveness as institutions'*
>
> **Department of Education and Skills, 2010**

The Kellogg Foundation Commission's challenge for higher education to shift its focus from 'teaching, research and service' to 'learning, discovery and engagement' (CIC, 2005) is now gaining more mainstream and widespread support in Ireland (Hunt Report, 2011) and elsewhere. Universities worldwide are increasingly being asked to foster their wider social roles through public and community engagement (Jones, Trier and Richards, 2008). Underpinning these exhortations is the notion that by opening up higher education to the public, research, teaching and learning will be enriched, and that local communities will enjoy wider benefits (NCCPE, 2011: 12). This is a view that is supported and substantiated by the UL Strategic Plan's four over-arching goals.

The Student Experience

UL's strategic plan (2011-2015) commits to providing 'an outstanding and distinctive experience for every one of our students, to enable them to become knowledgeable, skilled and confident graduates'. This is coupled with our commitment to have a strong and substantial impact on the communities we serve. Innovative, civically engaged pedagogy is consistent with these goals. In addition to, and building on these goals, UL has finalised its graduate attributes statement which further underlines the unique ways in which we want our students to develop, across all disciplines. UL commits to providing a learning environment that stimulates students to be responsible, articulate, proactive, creative, collaborative and knowledgeable. UL's graduate attributes statement represents our collective commitment to creating and sustaining an outstanding and distinctive learning experience for all our students. It articulates our educational priorities and it demonstrates the important emphasis in UL education on ensuring that students learn to be responsible in their communities. Together the graduate attributes summarise the kinds of people that we encourage UL students to become during their programme of learning.

In addition to the *affective* learning outcomes we would desire for all of our students, successful civic engagement is now an essential part of the curriculum for the Graduate School of Medicine and associated midwifery, nursing and health therapies, where contemporary technological, healthcare, and cultural shifts, have presented a radical challenge to the traditional views of universities as secure repositories of knowledge. There is a demand for health care practitioners with new skills and competencies that can be met only if students have learning experiences outside hospital and classroom settings. There is an increasing awareness that contemporary students of the 21st Century resonate to engaged learning with productive outcomes for communities as well as themselves, and that quality engaged learning can improve learning achievement, retention, and social/civic responsibility. Many students appreciate being involved in community-based projects that give them real-world experiences and allow them to integrate theory with practice. Through these experiences, students gain invaluable insight into community

needs and resources as they move outside traditional health care settings. In short, students from the school of medicine and many of our therapeutic and nursing students need communities to learn: our students require community experience to be the best that they can be.

Our Research Profile

A key activity for any University is the carrying out of research. Much of the research carried out in UL benefits from working with participants from the local community. The respectful nurturing of good relationships between researchers and participants (and the communities they come from) means that participants are valued, informed and even consulted about research to be carried out. Thus local people become active and willing collaborators in research and their input will improve research quality and usefulness. The UL Practicum serves as a model where local groups and organizations come to UL with research questions, ensuring that research is translational and develops strong bonds for future research.

As well as this grass roots approach, particularly in the areas of health and education, local research communities need to be facilitated and supported through high-level strategic relationships between UL and major stakeholders, such as education agencies and the HSE.

Our International Focus

In terms of our international focus, UL can easily claim to be the most engaged university in Ireland. 34% of all UL undergraduates spend at least one semester overseas: no other Irish university comes close to this proportion (International Office). 13% of UL undergraduates participate in the Erasmus exchange programme, compared to a 4% average across the rest of Europe (International Office). This is an area where we clearly already excel, but the market is changing and in order to maintain and increase our competitive edge, we need to respond to the changes in market demands from overseas students.   The North American market in particular is asking for new products in the study abroad arena: 52% of US students surveyed would like to study abroad for shorter periods than are currently offered and to take up volunteering and/or service-learning civic engagement opportunities. This requires that we have both credited curricular civic engagement activities and non-credited student volunteering opportunities.

From the International Office's perspective, the university is unable to respond to this demand within its current structures. To market UL successfully in North America and the US, the International Office needs to be able market the civic engagement opportunities that exist in UL. This requires a dedicated web platform, with details of civic engagement projects, activities and opportunities for foreign students. It also requires that current UL civic engagement activities be supported if they are to absorb these kinds of visiting students. At the moment, institutional support for student civic engagement is uneven. The PVA programme is supported by the UL Community Liaison Officer, but the Community Liaison Officer is not institutionally linked or connected to other engagement activities, missing opportunities to leverage PVA networks into other university civic engagement activities. The UL Practicum has no formal institutional support at all. It exists as long as faculty are willing to engage in collaborative community research, without formal university recognition or support: this is not a sustainable.

The potential to develop our international focus through the development of civic engagement is very real. It is an area where UL already excels and where UL staff have already identified the means to further succeed. More broadly, the HEA is interested in positioning 'Ireland Inc' as a niche market for higher education, developing its potential as a 'one stop' student destination, where international students can gain qualifications and/or educational credits, access to Europe and easy travel, plus civic engagement obligations as part of their degrees (Tom Boland, HEA). UL should be the lead institution in this endeavour; setting the standards by which other Irish Higher Education institutions are judged.

Our Contribution to the Development of the Nation and the Region

The University of Limerick is a publicly-funded institution and as such has a natural obligation to play its part in supporting the social contract of government. Article 12 of the Universities Act of 1997 (Government of Ireland, 1997), under the aegis of which UL operates, lists among the objects of a University 'to support and contribute to the realisation of national economic and social development" and "to promote the cultural and social life of society'. Civic and community engagement can be seen as one way to implement this social responsibility – a commitment that has been renewed with the affirmation of UL graduate attributes:

Adopting a responsible, civically aware and engaged approach to their actions and decisions at work and in society; exploring issues of corporate and social responsibility, ethical practice and sustainability; adopting a global perspective, recognising both the local and global impact of decisions and actions; being personally and professionally responsible, orientated towards making substantial and positive contributions to society.

More generally, community-based initiatives create social capital for the University. Social capital refers to a wide range of intangible assets that are held within the people working in or living around UL. In the context of corporate social responsibility, social capital provides a level of community acceptance for a business, which generates what is sometimes called its 'licence to operate'. This 'licence' refers to the informal, unwritten permission granted by the nearby community to the business, resulting in an implicit tolerance for some level of inconvenience created by the business, in return for respect and support to the community from that business. Finally but possibly most important, the engagement of UL can help to solve social problems in the immediate hinterland, which in turn will make for a better environment in which UL can operate. We will be able to operate in a better environment, if we use our unique position to make the place better.

IDENTIFYING UL ENGAGEMENT

IRELAND'S BEST KEPT SECRET

Hart *et al's* (2010) synthesis of the literature on public engagement and Higher Education identifies seven 'dimensions' of public engagement (see table 1). These are not mutually exclusive but overlap. They encompass different 'types' of engagement and different motivations for it. The dimensions are: Public access to facilities; Public access to knowledge; Student engagement; Faculty engagement; Widening participation; Encouraging economic regeneration and enterprise in social engagement; Institutional relationship and partnership building. Despite the breadth of possible civic engagement activity, in UL we manage to contribute to all of these dimensions – though probably we do not always conceive of them as civic engagement activities and in consequence fail to give them the profile and/or support that they deserve.

Table 1 Hart et al's Dimensions of university public engagement

Dimension of public engagement	Examples of engagement	Possible higher level outcomes
1. Public access to facilities	• Access to university libraries • Access to university buildings and physical facilities e.g. for conferences, meetings, events, accommodation, gardens etc. • Shared facilities e.g. museums, art galleries • Public access to sports facilities • Summer sports schools	• Increased public support for the institution • Better informed public • Improved health and well-being
2. Public access to knowledge	• Access to established university curricula • Public engagement events e.g. science fairs; science shops • Publicly accessible database of university expertise • Public involvement in research	• Increased quality of life and well-being • Increased social capital/ social cohesion/social inclusion • Enhanced public scholarship
3. Student engagement	• Student volunteering • Experiential learning e.g. practice placements; • Collaborative research projects • Curricular engagement • Student-led activities e.g. arts, environment etc.	• Increased student sense of civic engagement • Increased political participation
4. Faculty engagement	• Research centres draw on community advisers for support/direction • Volunteering outside working hours e.g. on trustee Boards of local charities • Staff with social/community engagement as a specific part of their job • Promotion policies that reward social engagement • Research helpdesk/advisory boards • Public lectures • Alumni services	• Social benefit to the community • Increased staff sense of civic engagement • Institutionalised faculty engagement • More 'grounded' research

5. Widening Participation (equalities and diversity)	• Improving recruitment and success rate of students from non- traditional backgrounds through innovative initiatives e.g. access courses, financial assistance, peer mentoring • A publicly available strategy for encouraging access by students with disabilities	• Improved recruitment and retention of undergraduates, especially from excluded communities
6. Encouraging economic regeneration and enterprise in social engagement	• Research collaboration and technology transfer • Meeting regional skills needs and supporting SMEs • Initiatives to expand innovation and design e.g. bringing together staff, students and community members to design, develop and test Assistive Technology for people with disabilities • Business advisory services offering support for community-university collaborations (e.g. social enterprises) • Prizes for entrepreneurial projects	• Local/regional economic regeneration • Social and economic benefit to the community
7. Institutional relationship and partnership building	• University division or office for community engagement • Collaborative community-based research programmes responsive to community-identified needs • Community-university networks for learning/ dissemination/knowledge exchange • Community members on Board of Governance • Public ceremonies, awards, competitions and events • Website with community pages • Policies on equalities; recruitment; procurement of goods and services; environmental responsibility • International links • Conferences with public access and public concerns • Helpdesk facility • Corporate social responsibility	• More effective strategic investment of resources • Conservation of natural resources and reduced environmental footprint • Expanded and effective community partnerships • Social and economic benefit to the community

Source: Angie Hart, Simon Northmore, Chloe Gerhardt (2010) *Briefing Paper: Auditing, Benchmarking and Evaluating Public Engagement,* National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement, NCCPE Research Synthesis, No. 1, pp.14-15

If we take each of these dimensions of engagement and look for evidence of them in UL, it becomes apparent that civic engagement is a persistently strong element of UL activities across the board. In the remainder of this section, we look the kinds of activities that UL undertakes in each of these dimensions and how these dimensions of civic engagement might be further developed and supported in an overall institutional strategy.

1. PUBLIC ACCESS TO FACILITIES (EXEMPLAR: I-PLAY @ UL ARENA)

One conspicuous area of activity here is the University Arena. The UL arena, in facilitating public access to its facilities has an important role to play in being the 'face' of the university that the public is most likely to encounter. Access to sports facilities fosters more active and healthy lifestyles as well as community involvement. In addition to the myriad fitness classes which are open to the public the arena facilitates swimming lessons for school-age children through cooperation with local schools. This programme, which runs from annually from September to June is extremely beneficial to schoolchildren from the local area and correlates with national directive to include swimming as a part of physical education in schools. Through opening the arena to local children the university is providing a tangible benefit to some of the youngest members of the community.

This is only one example of the many ways in which the UL Arena is one of the most active interfaces between the university and the public. There are also many other less well-known engagement activities between PESS (Physical Education and Sport Sciences) students and staff on a range of community games, sports and education programmes. The I-Play initiative exemplar detailed here is but one example of the innovative and engaged ways that University staff and students use our campus facilities to deliver far more access to University sports facilities than straight-forward admission to public facilities. The I-Play project invites intellectually disabled children to a 10 week programme of fitness activities, designed by PESS staff and delivered by 2nd and 4th year PE students (see exemplar).

Through its public facilities, its Open Campus, the riverside walks, permanent exhibitions and regular music events, the University of Limerick is already connected to its local residents. The university campus is not a closed space and the pathways between the campus and the city provide a natural connection. Nevertheless, it is often perceived as closed and changing that perception is critical if we are to productively engage and contribute to the city and the region as is intended in the universities act upon which we are founded (Government of Ireland, 1997), our own strategic plan (*Pioneering and Connected*), locally in the Brosnan Report (2011) and nationally in the Hunt Report (2011).

The entirety of this Task Force Report contains a series of recommendations to help us change this perception of the University. For the most part, these recommendations highlight the breadth and quality of *extant* engagement activities all over the campus. We are not arguing *for* civic engagement in UL, we are arguing for *recognition* of civic engagement in UL, so that UL staff can continue to do what they are good at, so that the institution as a whole can gain credit for their excellence and so as to provide institutional support and coherence to a neglected area of the UL mission. Civic Engagement is a signifier of what we do best in UL: we are innovative, applied, active and engaged. As an institution, we should recognize this and we should promote this message as clearly and completely as possible, so that we can see the value of what we do ourselves and so that we can promote it to others. To achieve this shift in attitude requires both a clear and coherent strategy and a good institutional push.

2.   PUBLIC ACCESS TO KNOWLEDGE (EXEMPLAR: UL SCIENCE WEEK)

Public engagement events

The University already has a good reputation in public engagement events: the success of UL Science Week is an excellent example of this kind of activity (see CE Exemplar 2). Arguably, we could support more public engagement events in other disciplinary areas. For example, current EHS (Education and Health Sciences) public engagement events on health and well-being, such as the nationwide campaign on back pain "Challenging Back Pain myths" could be given greater visibility, thus increasing participation. Public conferences on 'economic crisis and opportunities' from KBS; or from the social sciences in general, a public conference on upcoming Constitutional Reform or Social Change etc. Such high profile conferences could target a mixture of policy practitioners, leading academics and advocacy groups, as well as members of the public and associated interest groups. They would be a means to garner publicity for the University and to lead public debate. There is no reason why there should not be a significant annual public engagement event, hosted by alternative faculties each year.

Faculty efforts that are currently spent on promotional activities, such as inaugural lectures and agenda-setting lectures could be concentrated so as to create a bigger impact and the potential for more academic outputs from the activity. Such events would still incur administrative costs – time being the biggest one for faculties and departments that are already stretched. Still, if UL were to commit to supporting an annual public engagement conference (with the topic and theme decided locally in responsible faculty), there would be economies of scale in terms of time and experience – particularly if one part of the university took responsibility for the coordination of this activity on an on-going basis. The International Office convenes summer schools, a Civic Engagement office could support public engagement activities (see recommendation 10).

Publicly accessible database of university expertise

Currently the university's database of expertise is focused on promoting the university through engagement with the media. Whilst this is useful for press coverage it is not adequate to promote the broader range of potential civic engagement opportunities. It is proposed that the Civic Engagement Office will take responsibility for the development and maintenance of a comprehensive data base of expertise. This will be targeted towards civic and community engagement and will be useful for both internal and external stakeholders. In addition this would enhance the resources available to the Press Office in supporting their promotion of the university (recommendation 11).

Knowledge transfer

These capacities already currently exist in the university, but might be better supported and reduce duplication within a centralized civic engagement office that could integrate the patchwork of knowledge transfer activities currently taking place and follow through on many of the recommendations in the existing Knowledge Transfer policy (recommendation 12).

Public involvement in research

This is currently best captured by the UL practicum. Drawing on notions of service-learning and civic engagement and emancipatory research methodologies for collaborative research, the UL Practicum enables students to engage in faculty-designed bespoke research projects in collaboration with external community sponsors. The initiative's objective is to develop service or community-based learning as a core element of the UL students' learning experience and to support the growth of cross-disciplinary faculty connections as a foundation for building convergent research capacity. The UL Practicum involves multi-disciplinary teams of undergraduate students (FYPs), postgraduate researchers and academics, from diverse academic domains. Academic representatives from all four faculties (AHSS (Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences), KBS (Kemmy Business School), FSE (Science and Engineering), FEHS (Educational and Health Sciences), plus the Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL) and the Research Office have been involved in its development and implementation.

Although well thought of in the University, the initiative has no administrative support. Following its initial piloting in the Department of Politics and Public Administration (PPA), Practicum projects are still supported in the Department of Politics and Public Administration, but on a much smaller scale to that envisaged originally. During 2010-2011, QIFAC (Quality Improvement Fund Allocation Committee) funding supported seven UL Practicum projects across the university in order to test out the issues that would be raised by attempts to mainstream this initiative. The QIFAC pilot demonstrated:

- A need for minimal administrative support, to arrange meetings, take minutes, respond to queries.

- Administrative support to co-ordinate students across different academic programmes. (Practicum projects require long lead-in times to plan collaboration and to facilitate the availability of students on different programmes taking the Practicum in different parts of their studies)

- A need for a Practicum Advisory Board: to support academics carrying out practicum projects; to maintain curricular integrity of practicum projects; and to recommend ECTS credits where appropriate (see Appendix 2)

Above all, the QIFAC pilot demonstrated that the mainstreaming the UL Practicum is mostly about changing the working practice and culture of how academics work: it is about removing them from their disciplinary silos and enabling them to work in teams. The roll-out year demonstrated an incredible enthusiasm from staff but also identified a number of key deficits in the supports necessary for this kind of work: advice on drawing up service agreements, memorandums of understanding, codes of professional ethics/conduct for applied research, administrative support to arrange and minute meetings. Without these basic supports, participating in convergent trans-disciplinary work is "just too hard to be worth the effort". The cross-disciplinary work that this type of innovation requires must be facilitated by appropriate supports (Recommendation 11, 13).

3. STUDENT ENGAGEMENT (EXEMPLAR: CO-OP OFFICE *ENGAGE AFRICA* INITIATIVE)

UL students live and work in a campus with myriad opportunities for civic engagement and relish this environment. Our students' achievements in civic engagement offer a real opportunity to demonstrate our distinctiveness within the Higher Education sector. In our attempts to focus on our institutional weaknesses, we have a habit of ignoring our obvious strengths.

UL's commitment to cooperative education is a conspicuous example of experiential learning in practice. Despite the Cooperative Education and Career Division's long established role and expertise, there is a perception that its best work achieves more recognition outside the university than internally. The awarding of the Employability Award 2012 for the *Engage Africa* programme is a perfect example of this. Here is an area where UL excels and provides life-changing, positive student experiences that go largely unnoticed (see exemplar 1). (recommendation 5)

The successful roll out of the President's Volunteer Award (PVA) is another example of UL achieving and excelling in the area of civic engagement. The office responsible for this area has already identified the need for a university wide Civic Engagement Strategy to underpin the work of Community Liaison Officer and PVA system (Hanrahan, 2011) (recommendation 14).

The vibrant life of UL Clubs and Societies demonstrates the wide range of student activities carried out in UL, many with civic engagement dimensions, which are not formally acknowledged by the institution as such and often proceed without public knowledge of them – river bed clean ups by the environmental society or lunch-time recitals in IWMAD (Irish World Academy of Music and Dance) are but two examples of the diversity of activities that we do not promote as part of our civic engagement. An effective UL Civic Engagement Office would act as a platform to record and promote this activity, and to publicise it (recommendation 9). It is likely that if such a forum existed, we would know of far more student activity that we are currently unaware of and which the institution as a whole is unable to capture, promote or support.

4. STAFF ENGAGEMENT (EXEMPLARS: KBS SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS; HISTORY OF THE FAMILY PROJECT)

Staff engagement takes many forms and in UL the institution as a whole is ignorant of most of them.

There is no complete record of UL staff sitting on the boards of external institutes, cultural institutions, charitable boards and other such organizations. Many UL staff volunteer inside and outside of working hours, on the Trustee Boards of Local Charities or Organizations, yet the extent of this activity - and with it the extent of UL's networks within the community - remains unknown. Conversely, it is unclear how many members of the boards of UL Institutes and Centres are chosen from, or represent particular interests within, the wider community. If there is a record of this, it is not easy to access. A University wide audit of staff who are members of boards, bodies and charities would be a wonderful support for would-be civic engagement activities, as well as an affirmation of our collective engagement with local, regional and national communities. It would be a means by which the University could express our connectedness and engagement, but the information is not available. (recommendation 15) (recommendation 16)

Some staff have social and/or community engagement as a specific part of their job or brief, yet who these staff are and what they do is not recorded by the university. This makes the task of engagement harder. New staff with engagement briefs as part of their role cannot easily find UL colleagues who might share their experience. Existing staff, tasked with engagement as part of their brief, often work in ignorance of other similarly tasked UL colleagues who would willingly collaborate or contribute to their endeavours. Successful civic engagement and collaboration with the communities outside UL might be more efficiently achieved if we first attempted engagement and collaboration with similarly tasked colleagues within UL. We could, for example, establish a community of praxis for staff involved in Civic Engagement (these already exist in other areas of university activities eg. such as e-learning, Problem Based Learning etc) (recommendation 17)

For those staff, for whom civic engagement is not directly or intrinsically part of their job, promotion policies should incentivize civic engagement. This does not entail any change in current promotions procedures or purpose. Service is already counted in all progression/ promotions procedures. The University need only make it clear that civic engagement may be included within this dimension (recommendation 6). While engagement activities should not be compulsory, engagement activities should be a recognized and valid means of contributing service to the UL mission. It is important, however, that if the University is to recognize such service, there needs to be a universal, transparent system for recording it. The establishment of a Civic Engagement Recording System by a central Civic Engagement Office could serve to achieve this goal and spread best practice in terms of the information requested and types of feedback sought (recommendation 8).

Finally, if we are to encourage and support staff Civic Engagement, and offer to acknowledge it in progression and promotions procedures, the establishment of a central Civic Engagement Advisory Group would assist in promoting and supporting this endeavour. Potential members of this group already exist, but are not formally identified, or induced to perform any mentoring function. To establish such a group would not be difficult, but would signal a clear institutional lead in promoting and supporting civic engagement activities. (recommendation 6)

5.   WIDENING PARTICIPATION (EXEMPLAR: ACCESS CAMPUS STUDY CLUB)

In terms of widening participation, the UL Access Office and its associated Access campus provide a leading role, by improving recruitment and success rate of students from non-traditional backgrounds through a range of initiatives and support services. Through its specialized programmes: for disabled and disadvantaged; to assist routes into UL; in the Access Campus community initiatives; and, in a wide range of schools activities, the Access Office plays a pivotal role in increasing public access to knowledge. Despite the success of the Access Office, its staff have expressed the view that its work is not always recognized by the rest of the university. Calls for a UL presence in town, for example, often ignore the existence of the UL Access Campus in the city since 2003. This is borne out by a visit to the UL homepage. The Access Campus does not appear under any of the tabs and can only be found through an A-Z search of the University directory, which is fine, so long as you know already that it exists and what it is called.   On the UL website

'Access Campus' is an oxymoron (Recommendation 5). Once more, some of the best Civic Engagement work in UL passes largely unnoticed. Whilst we are arranging to celebrate the UL 40, we could perhaps easily also accommodate and celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Access Campus (recommendation 18).

If the university is to support civic engagement, then it must support responsible civic engagement, where experienced staff with good relations in communities can provide the necessary mentoring and support to new projects in the community. This has not always been the case.

Staff in the Access Office point to a variety of opportunities where they could contribute to European project bids, or other funding applications; but do not have the internal networks to do so. An obvious example, might be some collaboration between the Access Office, the International Office and interested faculty in putting together an Erasmus worldwide application to attract international students to volunteering programmes. A central Civic Engagement Office, with a Civic Engagement Team comprising representatives from all parts of the university involved in civic engagement activities could provide this role (recommendation 3).

6. ENCOURAGING ECONOMIC/SOCIAL REGENERATION AND ENTERPRISE (EXEMPLAR: SMARTER TRAVEL)

The University has a conspicuous and significant role in economic and social regeneration, particularly in its encouragement of research collaboration, technology transfer, business spin-offs from UL research, and research 'spin-ins' from the location of high-end companies in Limerick with specific research requirements. In this context, the task of supporting economic regeneration is carried out primarily through the activities of the Research Office and the Nexus Innovation Centre is an excellent illustration of UL's positive contribution to the regional economy. The capacity of the Research Office to carry out this role, however, is constrained currently by the fluid geo-political regional administration. The shifting of responsibilities within Shannon Development, the current uncertainty surrounding responsibility for the Plassey Technological Park, and the general uncertainty about the future of local authority structures and regional administration make it more difficult for UL to secure regional investment. Faced with such uncertainty the university has two choices: we can wait and hope that the future administration of the region will be conducive to our efforts; or we can act decisively and be an active agent in shaping the regional changes that are imminent. In the current political climate, a positive, proactive intervention from the University of Limerick would be welcomed – both locally and nationally (recommendation 19). In this context, we are a strong regional player, commanding key resources for investment and business: we should be seeking therefore to engage positively with government at national and local levels, so that in the outplaying of the current political and administrative re-organization, our interests and concerns (which are the interests and concerns for the region) can be clearly articulated (see section 7 below). We cannot play this role, however, without a convincing articulation of our strategy for engagement. We cannot simply demand influence: we must show that we have an engaged and thoughtful plan for how we might use it. A clear and coherent strategy for civic engagement then, is a necessary, though not sufficient condition for fulfilling our other institutional ambitions in relation to regional, national, and international research and investment potentials in UL.

More recently, the Research Office has also developed the UL profile in relation to more socio-economic dimensions of renewal with the UL Urban Renewal Initiative. This initiative has begun by drawing together key local civic organizations and state agencies in a series of focus groups designed to ascertain what local agencies and actors might want from UL, and what kinds of activities UL might be able to offer in these contexts. Although not yet concluded, one message is clear: potential partners outside UL find it very difficult to know how to reach the people and/or expertise that they might want inside UL. Even when they do, the Research Office reports that our capacity to follow through on initial contacts and maintain relationships, which may have significant potential for collaborative partnerships, is weak. With our current institutional configuration, we do not have the follow up capacity to develop relationships and potential collaboration. A central Civic Engagement Office, with a Civic Engagement Team comprising representatives from all parts of the university involved in civic engagement activities could provide this function (recommendation 3).

7.   INSTITUTIONAL AND RELATIONSHIP PARTNERSHIP BUILDING – WITHIN AND WITHOUT (EXEMPLAR: UL PRACTICUM ENNIS HUB)

UL's increasing involvement in health and education teaching and research requires us to consider seriously the relationships and partnerships that we wish to build with key local health and education stakeholders. Whilst many local initiatives with small groups of service providers exist, there is no high-level strategic oversight or commitment to these myriad relationships on the ground – threatening their viability and sustainability. In order to address this, the university needs to consider how it will regularly meet with local health and education managers as a way of formalizing institutional linkages that foster and nurture our learning and research relationships (recommendation 20).

Within UL

Civic Engagement is one of the four key goals in UL's Strategic Plan, and this ambition needs to be institutionally apparent. There is a Centre for Teaching and Learning, which leads on student experience initiatives; a Research Office to lead research; and an International Office to focus on internationalization. Yet there is no institutional focus on Civic Engagement. Although it is clear from the fore-going that much of the work of Civic Engagement is integral to other university goals and activities, the consultation undertaken for this report was marked by a resounding consensus that there should be a central university Office for Civic Engagement (recommendation 1). This need not incur any additional expense – there are plenty of spaces (functional and geographic) in which Civic Engagement could be located. Administrative capacity already exists and, in some cases, is already dedicated to civic engagement activities (recommendation 2). Organizing such administrative capacity as currently exists into an Office for Civic Engagement need not change current reporting structures: indeed it should not, the purpose is to achieve an integration of civic engagement activity across the university, not to hive it off and isolate it.

The chief difficulty facing UL is that despite the broadest range of civic engagement activity, much of which is characterized by innovation and excellence – our left hand does not know what the right hand is doing. In order to achieve inter-institutional synergies that will save time, frustration,

duplication of efforts and inefficiencies, we need an integrated university structure for Civic Engagement. A University Civic Engagement Working Group should be established, meeting regularly to share information and develop inter-institutional linkages in relation to Civic Engagement. This working group should comprise representatives of the major administrative units, as well as academics concerned with civic engagement (recommendation 3). The Civic Engagement Office and Working Group should be led by an academic, partially seconded (in the same way that Assistant Deans are) to the Civic Engagement Office for a three year term (recommendation 4).

In addition to the relevant administrative parts of the university, the Civic Engagement Working Group should comprise one representative/ contact point for civic engagement from each faculty. Since civic engagement activity is being actively pursued one way or another in all faculties, it is clear that such academics already exist. Their presence on the CE Working Group is vital so that the Civic Engagement Office can be attuned to what is going on in the ground in each of the faculties. Conversely, Civic Engagement faculty reps will provide an important feedback mechanism to staff in their own faculties about the existence of, or potential for, broader cross-disciplinary initiatives and projects. Together the Civic Engagement Working Group can act as an experienced source of advice and support for staff interested in CE possibilities or projects, providing feedback and tips on best practice for would-be civic engagement activities. It is in this capacity that the CE Working Group can provide the administrative and academic support identified as necessary to support the mainstreaming of the UL Practicum (see section 2). (recommendation 4).

The seconded staff member responsible for Civic Engagement should have clear terms of reference for their work (see recommendation 4) and should, first and foremost, in consultation with the CE Working Group, be responsible for the design of a website that will be functionally useful for a range of users, with appropriate links and resources – a one-stop shop for UL Civic Engagement (recommendation 5). Another important initial activity will be a 'Civic Engagement Information blitz': whilst most UL staff are clear about UL ambitions (and the implication for their work practice) in terms of the student experience, research and internationalization; there is no clear consensus about what Civic Engagement is, what activities it might comprise, what resources there are to do it, what benefits there might be to Civic Engagement activities, and what constitutes best practice for civic engagement activities (recommendations 6).

This latter point is of fundamental importance (recommendation 7). If the university is going to acknowledge and promote civic engagement activity, it also has a responsibility to ensure that it encourages best practice and mindfulness. For this reason, the recording of CE activity should be done in such as way, that it encourages staff to reflect on their CE practice (see Appendix 3 CE Recording Practice). In the same way that the Centre for Teaching and Learning has encouraged attention to teaching praxis and performance, the CEO should encourage attention to CE praxis and performance (recommendation 8).

In addition to these immediate tasks, the terms of reference for the seconded staff member responsible for Civic Engagement should also include the following:

- Provide clear, simple coherent contact point for civic/community engagement with UL.

- CE information blitz

- Chair Practicum Advisory Board

- Annual campus conference to showcase UL

- CE funding opportunities sourced, and funding applications made

- Initiate and lead collaborative initiative with NUIG

- Nurture formalized institutional link with Limerick Local Authority

- Establish formalized institutional link with other local/regional interests as necessary.

- Provide audit of UL *external* CE activities (representation on boards, task forces, external bodies etc.)

- Provide platform for *internal* CE activities to be show-cased

Civic engagement with the city – time for a new partnership

Notwithstanding the many personal, positive and productive relationships between UL staff and the city of Limerick (in a multiplicity of guises), at a more generalized level the relationship between the city and the university is historically ambivalent. There is a commonplace sense of resentment in many quarters of the city that UL was established outside of it and in some instances in competition with it. One councilor interviewed for this report referred to seeing an early draft of the Brosnan Report, which recommended that no further planning permission be given to the UL campus in order to encourage investment in town. It is likely that such an extreme view will not survive the final recommendations, but its occurrence at all is not a good indication of the state of relations between the university and the city. It is possible that this tension was exacerbated by the city/ county boundaries, which have also been addressed in the Report's recommendations; but the university as corporate entity must also bare some responsibility for the endurance of these opinions about the institution amongst our closest neighbours. That these opinions are as likely to be voiced in the civic offices of the city as in the town, speaks volumes about the mismanagement of our public reputation in the city. The current political and administrative upheaval provides UL with a perfect opportunity to proactively address this situation.

Amongst the recommendations of the Brosnan Report (2011:35) it is suggested that a new Limerick City and County Council 'will be responsible for the urban area, natural areas of extension, the University of Limerick campus, the National Technology Park, the entire rural area of the County of Limerick, and those urban areas of Clare which adjoin the city'.

It is proposed that this new authority will require a new management structure, 'and the acquisition of the skills and expertise necessary to meet Limerick's challenges. The new authority will draw on the staffing complements of Limerick City Council and Limerick County Council and will recruit additional expertise, as necessary' (Brosnan, 2011: 36).

In attempting to re-cast its relationship with Limerick, the University should seek representation within this new management structure (recommendation 21). This should not be demanded 'as of right'; rather the request should be framed as part of a broader university institutional initiative on Civic Engagement, which holds the relationship between the University and Limerick City and Council at its core. In addition to representation on the new Limerick City and Council administrative structure, there are also a variety of other ways that we could concretise our collaboration as well as co-ordinating those activities that various parts of the University already engage in with the city.

There is already strong support within the city for a university presence within the city as part of current re-development initiatives. Whilst it is beyond the scope of this report to recommend specific actions in this regard, we might very usefully recommend the institutionalizing of a space and/or a relationship with the city where these kinds of joint initiatives could be examined and explored. A university representative on each of the Strategic Policy Committees reporting to the Civic Engagement Office would enable the university to behave more coherently and strategically towards developments in Limerick. Currently some UL staff do sit on SPCs, but their work there is not formally acknowledged or utilized by the University in any strategic way – moreover, UL members of current SPCs are there by chance, not design. In this respect, given the current upheaval of administrative structures, it might be appropriate for the university to have the right to nominate a member to each SPC, liaising with the UL Civic Engagement Office, so that the institution has a formal way of organizing its inputs and/or responses to developments in the region (recommendation 22). The corollary of this would be to maintain the current city and council representation on the University Governing Authority and perhaps creating a Governing Authority sub-committee on Civic Engagement, with the city and council Governing Authority members (and possibly the UL SPC representatives) and using the administrative support of the proposed University Civic Engagement Office (recommendation 23).

This formalizing of linkages between the new city and council administration and the university is an important way of signaling our interest in dialogue and collaboration about how we might all contribute to Limerick's future.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IN UL—CONCEIVING COHERENCE

This report has framed its discussion around the seven dimensions of civic engagement identified by Hart *et al*'s (2010) synthesis of the literature on Higher Education public engagement in the UK. The report demonstrated that UL has a range of civic engagement activities across **all** of these dimensions. It is possible then to think of these activities continuing, but coordinated and supported by a central UL Civic Engagement Office, providing the informational infrastructure necessary to deliver value-added synergies and supports to existing civic engagement work in UL. The recommendations are not costly but map out a detailed set of actions that need to be undertaken if we are to achieve this ambition.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

ESTABLISHMENT OF A CIVIC ENGAGEMENT OFFICE

RECOMMENDATION

1. **Establishment of UL Civic Engagement Office as a separate administrative unit within the university**

2. **Staff the CEO with existing administrative resources already engaging with CE activities (e.g.. Community Liaison, Knowledge Transfer etc.)**

3. **Establish UL CE Working Group/Team comprising:**

   - Seconded staff member with half teaching load to lead Civic Engagement Team (comparable to ADR (Assistant Dean Research), ADAA (Assistant Dean Academic Affairs) position, but just one for UL as a whole)
   - Faculty CE representative x 4 (relieved of one module's teaching, or equivalent, to develop faculty CE projects, plans, initiatives in collaboration with working group)
   - 4x 3,000 euros per rep;
   - Director of Co-op Education or her nominee
   - Director of International Office or her nominee
   - Community Liaison Officer (Student Affairs nominee)
   - Access Office representative

   Terms of Reference for Civic Engagement Team:

   - Maintain university wide calendar for civic engagement activities
   - Share information about civic engagement activities and potential synergies
   - Provide supports and advice to staff interested in civic engagement
   - Support the work of the seconded staff member in civic engagement (see terms of reference below)

4. **Terms of Reference for staff secondment for Civic Engagement:**

   - Provide clear, simple coherent contact point for civic/community engagement with UL.
   - Coordinate construction of single user-friendly UL CE website
   - Lead CE information blitz
   - Chair Practicum Advisory Board
   - Deliver support for Annual public event/ conference to showcase UL – including a 10th Anniversary celebration of Access Campus as part of UL40

- CE funding opportunities sourced, and funding applications made
- Initiate and lead collaborative initiative with NUIG
- Formalize institutional link with Limerick Local Authority
- Formalize institutional link with other local/regional interests as necessary.
- Provide audit of UL external CE activities (representation on boards, task forces, external bodies etc.)
- Provide platform for internal CE activities to be show-cased (oversight of website construction in consultation with CE Team)

(3 year length of service, comparable to Assistant Deans position)

5. **Set up UL Civic Engagement Website and Resource to:**

- provide platform and showcase for UL CE activity
- provide single accessible contact point for external visitors looking for CE details
- provide coherent platform for all UL CE activities e.g.. Links to PVA, Practicum, Coop Office, International Office, Access Office, Arts Office etc.
- provide practical resources to staff interested in CE
- detail the diverse external activities carried out by UL in the community on a day to day basis (a shared university wide engagement calendar)

6. **Engage in university-wide CE informational campaign concerning:**

what activities it might comprise,
what resources there are to do it,
what benefits there might be to Civic Engagement activities,
what constitutes best practice for civic engagement activities
what rewards exist for civic engagement activities

7. **Establish and promote best practice approaches and mindfulness in UL civic engagement activities**

8. **Establish agreed system for Recording Civic Engagement Activities**

(in order to deliver web-based platform, and to encourage best practice for Civic Engagement)

PUBLIC ACCESS TO FACILITIES

9. **Initiate Open Campus marketing campaign**
CEO in co-ordination with marketing office
CEO CE Team in coordination with Faculty Reps and associated units
Develop logo and brand for civic engagement across university
(Limerick – Smarter Together see Appendix)

PUBLIC ACCESS TO KNOWLEDGE

10. **CEO provide administrative support for annual public engagement event (s)** (working with CE Team and Faculty Reps to identify event possibilities and provide academic inputs)

11. **Establish and maintain a targeted data base of university expertise as part of CEO brief.** Development of this dynamic data base should proceed in consultation with appropriate internal and external stakeholders.

12. **Appraise current university Knowledge Transfer activities** with a view to facilitating the implementation of UL Knowledge Transfer strategy.

13. **Establish permanent institutionally recognized UL Practicum Advisory Board** to oversee and support the UL Practicum

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

14. **Develop institutional synergies between different CE activities**
UL Community Liaison Officer to leverage PVA supports into other areas of Civic Engagement

STAFF ENGAGEMENT

15. **Ascertain where community advisors already exist in current UL centres, institutes or areas of university activity** in order to provide information for a comprehensive data base of UL Civic Engagement

16. **Audit of UL staff positions on external Boards, Charities,** Organizations etc. in order to provide information for a comprehensive data base of UL Civic Engagement

17. **Facilitate and support the establishment of a 'Community of Praxis' for civic engagement**

WIDENING PARTICIPATION

18. **Celebrate 10th Anniversary of Access Campus as part of UL40 Celebrations**

ENCOURAGING ECONOMIC/SOCIAL REGENERATION AND ENTERPRISE

19. **Seek proactive engagement with, and long-term representation on, emerging regional and local governance investment/research infrastructure**

INSTITUTIONAL RELATIONSHIP AND PARTNERSHIP BUILDING

20. **Establish high level strategic dialogue between local HSE and education agencies** to support mutual development of learning and research

21. **Seek CEO representation on new city council management structure**

22. **Seek UL representation on city council Strategic Policy Committees (SPCs)** appropriately qualified staff, reporting to CEO to contribute to coherent engagement with city Council

23. **Retain two places on UL Governing Authority for new city council local authority and establish a Governing Authority sub-committee on Civic Engagement**

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Task force meetings:

The Task Force team met together on eight occasions, plus 15 'spin off' meetings with individual task force members, with numerous additional emails and phone contacts In between.

Presentations to Task force:

Merrit Bucholz

Chris McInerney

Focus group consultations:

UL internal stakeholder meeting for Urban Renewal

UL external stakeholder meeting for Urban Renewal

Meeting with AP SIF project leaders

Institutional consultations with:

Access Office	Limerick City SPC for economic and social development
AP SIF Civic Engagement consultation with community stakeholders	Research Office
	Student Administration
Cooperative Education	UL Community Liaison Officer
International Office	
Limerick city councillors, planners and officials	

UL CIVIC ENGAGEMENT EXEMPLARS

WHO PARTICIPATED:

A COHORT OF 3RD AND 4TH YEAR PHYSICAL EDUCATION STUDENTS ALONG WITH 3RD YEAR SCIENCE TEACHING STUDENTS WORKED WITH THE DOWN SYNDROME ASSOCIATION, THE MID-WEST SPINA BIFIDA AND HYDROCEPHALUS ENABLE IRELAND, TO INVOLVE CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS IN THE PROGRAMME

WHAT DID THEY DO:

STUDENTS FROM UL MET WITH THE CHILDREN ONCE A WEEK FOR 10 WEEKS FOR 1 HOUR OF GAMES, DANCE, AND OTHER PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES. EACH CHILD WAS PAIRED WITH ONE OR TWO STUDENTS FOR THE DURATION OF THE PROGRAMME, THUS ALLOWING FOR THEM TO DEVELOP A RAPPORT WITH ONE ANOTHER. THE ACTIVITIES TAKE PLACE IN THE GYMS OF THE PHYSICAL EDUCATION BUILDING AND PROVIDE THE CHILDREN WITH VARIOUS INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP ACTIVITIES AIMED AT FUN, ENGAGEMENT AND BEING PHYSICALLY ACTIVE.

WHY DID THEY DO IT?

BOTH THE UL STUDENTS AND THE CHILDREN DERIVE BENEFIT FROM SUCH A PROGRAMME. THE UL STUDENTS, WHO ARE TRAINING TO BECOME TEACHERS, GAIN EXPERIENCE IN WORKING IN AN INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES AND SPECIAL NEEDS. THIS EXPERIENCE WAS AIMED AT HELPING THEM TO DEVELOP THEIR SKILLS IN WORKING WITH ALL KINDS OF CHILDREN. THE CHILDREN WERE ENCOURAGED AND ASSISTED IN DEVELOPING NEW SKILLS, PLAYING NEW GAMES AND INTERACTING CLOSELY WITH THE UL STUDENTS.

HOW WELL THEY DO?

THE FEEDBACK RECEIVED FROM THE PARENTS OF THE CHILDREN INVOLVED WAS POSITIVE. SEVERAL PARENTS EXPRESSED HOW THEY OBSERVED THEIR CHILDREN LEARNING NEW THINGS AND DEVELOPING THEIR SELF-CONFIDENCE. MANY ALSO EXPRESSED HOW EXCITED THEIR CHILDREN WERE TO ATTEND THE WEEKLY SESSIONS. THE UL STUDENTS KEPT TEACHING LOGS FOR THE DURATION OF THE PROGRAMME. IN THESE LOGS THEY WERE ASKED TO EXPRESS HOW THEIR OWN ATTITUDES TOWARDS TEACHING IN AN INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT HAD CHANGED.

SCIENCE & ENGINEERING

WHO PARTICIPATED?

UL FACULTY OF SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING
DISCOVER SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING
FORFAS
LOCAL PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

WHAT DID THEY DO?

FIVE DAYS OF TALKS, EXHIBITIONS, DEMONSTRATIONS AND SHOWS AIMED AT PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS FROM 14-18 NOVEMBER 2011

INVENTIVE AND INTERACTIVE EVENTS INCLUDING SPACE FLIGHT SIMULATION WITH NASA ASTRONAUT GREGORY H JOHNSON, JOHN BREEN'S "CREEPY CRAWLIES IN THE LAB" AND ROBERT HILL'S 3-D COSMIC EXPLORERS SHOW

WHY DID THEY DO IT?

TO INTRODUCE PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS TO SCIENCE IN A FUN AND EXCITING WAY TO ENCOURAGE THEM TO DEVELOP AN INTEREST IN SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING

TO INTRODUCE SCHOOL CHILDREN AND PARENTS TO THE SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING STAFF AND FACILITIES AT UL

HOW WELL THEY DO?

UL SCIENCE WEEK PROVIDED A MAJOR REGIONAL CONTRIBUTION TO NATIONAL SCIENCE WEEK

FEEDBACK RECEIVED FROM SCHOOLS AND PARENTS WAS HUGELY POSITIVE.

SPIN OFFS INCLUDE THE FOSTERING OF SCHOOLS SCIENCE DAYS WITH VISITS FROM UL STAFF AND STUDENTS

Engage Africa

WHO participated:

To date, through Engage Africa, 120 UL students from diverse degree programmes have participated in internships in Ghana, Uganda, Zambia, South Africa and Kenya.

WHAT did they do:

In arranging placements for these students UL has always by-passed intermediaries and worked directly with host communities in order to ensure that the students are providing communities with services they need. The students also live within the communities they serve. They engage in a wide variety of tasks, including teaching, community development, IT services, health administration and sports development.

WHY did they do it?

This programme was developed because amongst the UL student population there was a demand for placements in international development. As a result of the cultural, social and economic differences between Ireland and the host communities, students participating in this programme gain skills, knowledge and experience that they would have never gotten on placements within Ireland. In partnering directly with the host communities, UL is able to provide students to work on projects where they are really needed.

HOW well they do?

Upon their return, many students have expressed how valuable they found their experiences in Africa. Students also expressed how this experience has shaped and changed their goals and visions for their future careers. Host employers have also expressed how much they VALUE THE programme and they speak highly of the UL students who have lived and worked in their communities.

History of Family Project

WHO PARTICIPATED

THE DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY IS WORKING IN COLLABORATION WITH VARIOUS LOCAL AUTHORITIES, INDIVIDUAL FAMILIES, CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS AND ARCHIVAL REPOSITORIES

WHAT DID THEY DO

THE HISTORY OF FAMILY PROJECT IS INVOLVED WITH THE DIGITISATION OF ARCHIVES AND OTHER HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS. THE FIRST PROJECT UNDERTAKEN IN 2007 WAS THE DIGITISATION OF THE INDICES OF THE DUBLIN DIOCESAN ARCHIVES, SINCE THEN THE PROJECT HAS ENABLED ARCHIVES TO MAKE THEIR COLLECTIONS MORE ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC. RECENT DIGITISATION WORK, SUCH AS THE MCGILLYCUDDY OF THE REEKS, THE GABBET PAPERS, THE FOYNES MUSEUM AND ARCHIVE ARE OF IMMENSE LOCAL VALUE. MUCH OF THE DIGITISED WORK IS MADE AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC.

WHY DID THEY DO IT?

THE DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY IS COMMITTED TO THE PRESERVATION, CONSERVATION AND DISSEMINATION OF HISTORICAL RECORDS. THE PROJECT WAS STARTED AFTER A GENEROUS GRANT FROM JOHN AND PAULINE RYAN AND HAS CONDUCTED SEVERAL PROJECTS SINCE 2007. OUR WORK HAS RESCUED IRREPLACEABLE HISTORICAL RECORDS OF LOCAL AND NATIONAL IMPORTANCE AND BROUGHT THEM A WIDE RANGING AUDIENCE. COLLABORATION WITH PARTNERS SUCH AS SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, UL AND THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF IRELAND IS OF GREAT BENEFIT TO THE PROJECT AS A WHOLE.

HOW WELL THEY DO?

THE HISTORY OF FAMILY PROJECT ACTS AS A KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE PLATFORM. IT INVITES THE LOCAL COMMUNITY TO ACTIVELY ENGAGE IN THEIR HISTORY THROUGH WORKSHOPS AND THE CREATION OF USER-GENERATED METADATA. IT ALSO OFFERS AN ONLINE DISSEMINATION PLATFORM TO COLLEAGUES WITHIN THE FACULTY TO BRING THEIR WORK TO A WIDER AUDIENCE. A RECENT PROJECT OUTLINING HUMANITARIAN WORK OF THE 'GREY NUNS' IN CANADA DURING THE FAMINE PERIOD WAS COMMENDED BY PRESIDENT MICHAEL D. HIGGINS.

AccessCampus Study Club

WHO PARTICIPATED:

VOLUNTEERS WORK WITH SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS FROM SOUTH LIMERICK CITY. THE PROGRAMME STARTED WITH 9 STUDENTS IN 2007 AND HAS STEADILY INCREASED TO THE PRESENT TOTAL OF 120.

WHAT DID THEY DO

THE STUDY CLUB RUNS THREE EVENINGS PER WEEK AND STUDENTS RECEIVE HELP IN MOST JUNIOR CERT AND LEAVING CERT SUBJECTS. THE FOCUS IS NOT ON GIVING GRINDS ALONE, BUT ON BUILDING THE CONFIDENCE OF STUDENTS. THE STUDY CLUB MEETS FOR 3 HOURS EACH EVENING AND ALSO PROVIDES STUDENTS WITH OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN ABOUT OTHER SUBJECTS, SUCH AS BUSINESS AND PHOTOGRAPHY. VOLUNTEERS ARE COMMITTED NOT JUST TO TUTORING STUDENTS, BUT TO HELPING THEM REACH THEIR FULL POTENTIAL.

WHY DID THEY DO IT?

THE ACCESSCAMPUS AND THE STUDY CLUB ARE WONDERFUL EXAMPLES OF WHAT CAN RESULT FROM CIVIC ENGAGEMENT. THE ACCESSCAMPUS AIMS TO MORE FULLY INTEGRATE THE COMMUNITY INTO THE UNIVERSITY AND THE UNIVERSITY INTO THE COMMUNITY. THE ACCESSCAMPUS WAS ESTABLISHED TO ENHANCE THE OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE TO THE SOUTH LIMERICK COMMUNITY.

HOW WELL THEY DO?

THE STUDY CLUB HAS BEEN EXTREMELY SUCCESSFUL. THIS IS EVIDENCED FIRSTLY BY THE GROWTH OF THE CLUB OVER THE PAST FIVE YEARS TO THE CURRENT NUMBER OF 120 WITH AN ADDITIONAL 47 ON A WAITING LIST. THE RESULTS OF THE STUDENTS SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES, AS NO ONE IN THE STUDY CLUB HAS FAILED MATHS OR SCIENCE IN THE LEAVING CERT. THIS IS A FANTASTIC ACHIEVEMENT THAT SPEAKS TO THE HARD WORK OF THE STUDENTS AND THE DEDICATION OF THE STUDYCLUB STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS.

Ennis 2020
People. Place. Potential.

WHO PARTICIPATED?

ENNIS TOWN COUNCIL PARTICIPATED WITH THE CLARE ACTIVE CITIZEN NETWORK AND A UL PRACTICUM FROM THE MA IN TECHNICAL COMMUNICATIONS AND E-LEARNING

WHAT DID THEY DO?

THEY CARRIED A SERIES OF TARGETED AND GENERAL PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT EXERCISES ALONG WITH THE UL MA STUDENTS. THEY PRODUCED A REPORT ON VISIONS FOR THE TOWN FOR ENNIS TOWN COUNCIL. THE UL MA STUDENTS ALSO DEVELOPED A WEBSITE. PHASE 2, AIMED AT DEVELOPING A STRATEGY DOCUMENT IS UNDERWAY.

WHY DID THEY DO IT?

THE AIM WAS TO SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF A PARTICIPATORY PLAN FOR ENNIS AS A HUB TOWN IN LINE WITH THE NATIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY. THE PROJECT WAS ALSO UNDERTAKEN AS PART OF THE UL PRACTICUM PROGRAMME TO ENABLE DEEPER CIVIC ENGAGEMENT BY MASTERS LEVEL STUDENTS.

HOW WELL THEY DO?

THE PROCESS INVOLVED PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT WITH OVER 300 PEOPLE, AND FROM THIS A DETAILED REPORT WITH VISIONS FOR ENNIS 2020 WAS PRODUCED. UL STUDENTS HELPED PRODUCE AN ACCESSIBLE WEBSITE WITH FEEDBACK TOOLS. THE OUTCOMES ARE NOW PROVIDING THE BASIS FOR THE PREPARATION OF AN ENNIS 2020 HUB STRATEGY, AND THE PROCESS PROVIDED HIGHLY EFFECTIVE PROBLEM BASED LEARNING FOR THE UL STUDENTS.

PRACTICUM ADVISORY BOARD PROPOSALS

OVERSIGHT OF UL PRACTICUM

Terms of reference for Practicum Management Board

1. Directing and monitoring all aspects of delivery of Practicum
2. Maintaining appropriate liaison with Heads of Department, Course Boards, External Examiners and External Sponsors
3. Making recommendations on behalf of the Practicum Management Committee with regard to the academic management and structure of practicum projects
4. Convening, chairing and recording meetings of the Practicum Management Board
5. Maintaining Practicum Project data and preparing for periodic quality review
6. Representing the Practicum externally and internally and the preparation of publicity in conjunction relevant university departments, faculties and units
7. Meetings with Executive Board as necessary (but not Maura)

   Though the responsibility for the above duties will reside with the PMB chair, the discharge of these duties may be delegated or shared according to decisions by the Management Committee

   1

2Criteria for taking up Practicum Projects:

1. approval by relevant UL Course Board and lecturers involved
2. lecturers must buy in to project
3. minimum staff/student ratios for viability?
4. must be learning outcomes for students
5. academics must provide feedback to external sponsors in whatever way is agreed
6. students, staff and sponsors must sign a MOU re. participation (prepare draft MOUs, eg. Students get marks deducted for non-participation having first signed up)
7. exhortation to multi/inter – disciplinarity of projects

Mapping out Practicum Process

1. Practicum Management Board assigns Practicum Project Team
2. Project Team leader reports back to Practicum Board
3. Project Team meet for initial scoping of practicum project practicum 'handler'
4. Student recruitment via Project Team leader (supported by the Practicum)
5. Practicum Project Team leader responsible for Ethics Application (supported by the Practicum)
6. Students commit to necessary extra curricular meetings/training facilitated by the Practicum

Practicum Administrative responsibilities include:

1. Present in initial project scoping exercise to manage expectations and determine feasibility of UL involvement
2. Expectations management for External sponsors re practicum outcomes
3. Draft MOU with partners
4. Minute practicum project meetings
5. Coordinate students
6. Provide appropriate training and project planning
7. Collate story board material
8. Provide on-line coordination of projects and information dissemination
9. Pre and post evaluation of projects and partners (student experiences, affective learning etc., external sponsor experience of practicum, reflexive practice)
10. Dissemination and publication of projects
11. Knowledge transfer and development of civic engagement