SUSTAINING EXCELLENCE
2013 – 2017
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During the Great War two fellow students at University College Cork went off to fight. All too soon, one of them found the other dead in the trenches. He also discovered that the heat of the trenches had caused an acorn in the dead man’s pocket to sprout and grow. In the midst of death, there was life. The surviving soldier returned to UCC, planted the seedling in the Lower Grounds and went back to the Western Front, where he too perished.

Today, a century later, the acorn has flourished into a wonderful French oak, dominating the passing River Lee, and a reminder in this “Decade of Centenaries”, of the symbiosis of death, new beginnings and growth. When students join us at UCC, they do so at a turning point in their early lives. We provide an environment for them to flourish and grow. We do so in the classroom, around our vibrant campus, in our clubs, societies and cultural venues, amongst the hundreds of conversations of our diverse and eclectic community, and through our long tradition of independent thinking. When our students leave our gates for the last time, they are work ready and world ready, joining our alumni across the globe and shaping the world around us.

In this document, we set out our strategic agenda for the next five years, clearly demonstrating our confidence and ambition as a strong European university. We are mindful of current straitened economic times. That has only strengthened our resolve to ensure that when circumstances improve, we will emerge stronger and better able to compete in a dynamic international marketplace. I am also cognisant that this will be a period of major transition in Irish higher education as the National Strategy for Higher education becomes a reality. UCC is fully committed to playing its role in leading and shaping this important national agenda. Critical to success will be a sustainable funding model for higher education if Ireland is to uphold the international reputation of Irish universities, to improve the standing of Irish universities in world rankings and to ensure our continued ability to attract overseas students, research investment and foreign direct investment into Ireland. We will work with the government and all stakeholders to create the conditions for success.

UCC has been shaping minds and shaping the world since 1845. Within the period of this five year plan we will mark the 200th birthday of one our greatest teachers, the inventor of the mathematical logic that underpins all of modern computer science. We will celebrate the independent thinking life of George Boole (Professor of Mathematics at UCC 1849–64) as we provide our students with strong roots in a world facing change: learning from it, preparing people for it, impacting on it, contributing to it and changing it for the better. This plan sets out to show how.

Dr. Michael B. Murphy, President
INTRODUCTION

2.1 University College Cork (UCC), National University of Ireland, Cork, was established as the university of Munster in 1845. Situated in Ireland’s second city, UCC is the comprehensive globally-oriented research-led university of the south of Ireland providing the full range of disciplines and playing a key role in the development of Ireland’s knowledge-based society. As Ireland’s first five-star university, UCC boasts a vibrant, modern, environmentally-sustainable campus and a top-ranked student experience. second to none in Ireland. We take pride in our long tradition of independent thinking in teaching, learning and research. Our students are of central importance, and the creative relationship between students and professors is key to our unique ethos. The campus is located in the heart of Cork city, the European Capital of Culture 2005, which was cited by the Lonely Planet Guide as a top ten location to visit, for its “unshakeable self-confidence and innate sense of pride”.

2.2 The campus is set in beautiful grounds with impressive gardens and riverside walks. The historic Main Quadrangle is surrounded by original buildings, designed in the mid-nineteenth century by Sir Thomas Deane and Benjamin Woodward, which are of international architectural significance. The inspiring hiberno-romanesque Honan Chapel (1916), the modern Boole Library (1983) with its postgraduate extension (2007), and the iconic Glucksman Art Gallery (2004) all combine to bring a sense of artistic movement to the campus.

2.3 The unique tapestry of the university is woven from its cosmopolitan character, diverse student population that includes a large proportion of international students, successful outreach and access programmes, the highest of academic standards in undergraduate and postgraduate curricula, and its outstanding record of internationally recognised research, not to mention the most up-to-date sports facilities and a broad range of societies and social activities. Together these create the fabric of an exceptional university experience.

2.4 UCC consistently attracts a disproportionately high number of top school leavers in the country and offers honours bachelor degree programmes across the Arts, Humanities, Social Sciences, Business, Law, Engineering, Architecture, Science, Food Science, Medicine, Dentistry, Pharmacy, Nursing and Clinical Therapies. There are 18,000 full-time students: 14,000 of these follow undergraduate programmes, while 4,000 are engaged in postgraduate study and research. UCC’s diverse student body includes 3,000 international students representing 100-plus countries worldwide. The University’s Centre for Adult Continuing Education serves 2,200 part-time students. The University is one of the larger employers in the region employing 2,800 people.

2.5 We take pride in being one of the best-funded research universities in Ireland, with internationally recognised programmes across the full range of humanities, business, science, engineering and medicine. We boast several of Ireland’s elite research centres including the Tyndall National Research Institute (microsystems, photonics, nanotechnology), the Alimentary Pharmabiotic Centre (alimentary health, functional foods), both recognised as global leaders, and the emerging Beaufort Laboratory (coastal management, wave and marine renewable energy). Our researchers work at the leading edge of innovation, commercialisation, and industry collaboration.

2.6 UCC hosts the Irish National Academy for the Integration of Research, Teaching and Learning (NAIRTL) which promotes excellence in research-inspired teaching in an environment of mutual esteem between teaching and research.

2.7 We are committed to adopting a global perspective in all of our activities, and the pan-university Centre for Global Development, provides a context in which we recognise that global challenges can only be addressed in collaboration between the developed and developing worlds. Closer to home, we are actively engaged with our local community through staff and student partnerships and volunteering activities, with a range of social and civil society organisations. A recent innovation sees students receive course credit for community-based research activities.

2.8 Our 165-year history is hallmarked by the ethos of excellence which we proudly maintain at University College Cork. Here a unique university community is inspired and empowered by its ambition to deliver national leadership and global impact.

1. QS Stars Ranking System
CONTEXT
Performance in the 2009-2012 Strategic Plan period

Our future plan is informed by our performance during the period of our last Strategic Plan. During this period, despite the constraints of challenging economic circumstances, we have achieved significant success by delivering outstanding quantifiable results. Specifically, in this period:

1. UCC enhanced its reputation as a leading Irish university for the student experience. We now offer over 4,000 on-campus student clubs and society events annually. Our attention to first year students has seen our first year retention rate increase to 91%, a level well above international norms. In 2012, a comparative survey of 208,000 international students from 238 universities globally, undertaken by the independent International Graduate Insight Group, ranked UCC’s sport’s facilities, international office, IT services and graduate studies as first in Ireland, while UCC’s International Office and Careers and Work Placement Service were ranked in the top three globally. UCC was also voted the safest campus in Ireland and one of the safest in the world.

2. We increased the number of students participating in work placement by 20% and over 3,800 students participated in work-based, clinical and international placements in 2012. We graduate 5,500 degree students annually, 42% at postgraduate level. The percentage of our graduates in employment or further study at 91% in 2011 is above average for the sector.

3. According to HEA data in 2012, UCC is the leading Irish higher education institution for social inclusion and ‘equity of access’ with a greater number of students from under-represented groups studying at UCC than in any other higher education institution in the country. We continue to exceed national targets for the provision of part-time education primarily through the strengths of our Centre for Adult and Continuing Education (CACE), and in 2012 over 20% of new undergraduate entrants were enrolled on part-time courses. Our outreach and CACE programmes now extend across 23 locations nationwide and graduate over 2,000 students annually.

4. We have transformed the nature of graduate education at UCC, we have grown the cohort of students pursuing postgraduate degrees from 19% to 22% of the student population and we have seen the number of registered doctoral students increase by 30%. The number of doctoral graduates has increased by 66% and we now graduate in excess of 220 doctoral students annually, more than double the number of 2003. With the establishment of four graduate schools across UCC, all doctoral students can now avail of a wide range of training modules to develop research skills and improve employability. A wide range of supports and initiatives is in place for postgraduate research students and a new framework of support and professional development is now available for research supervisors.

5. UCC is now ranked in the top 2% of universities worldwide based on the quality of our research output and peer esteem. In the five years to 2012 the number of citations per journal publication has grown by 30% and 62% of Ireland’s most highly-cited researchers are from UCC. UCC is ranked second in the world for probiotics research. Research funding from EU sources has increased by over 200% in the two years to 2012, reinforcing UCC’s position as the joint top university in Ireland in terms of successful Framework Programme 7 (FP7) applications and success rate. UCC researchers now collaborate with close to 700 of the world’s top universities across 110 countries. Despite adverse economic conditions UCC’s research investment reached €79m in 2011/12 including €22m from non-Exchequer sources.

6. Our new business and job creation activities have increased significantly. An entrepreneurship education module is now available to all students. In 2011 UCC’s Ignite Graduate Business Innovation Centre was established to give students and recent graduates professional help with business start-ups and by 2012 27 companies had participated. Gateway UCC, also launched in 2011, is the University’s dedicated incubation service for technology-based start-ups. Since 2009, nine high-potential start-up (HPSU) companies providing 60 jobs were established arising from UCC’s investment in research.

7. Significant new strategic partnerships and alliances have been established. Internationally we created a new MBIS Asian Business programme in collaboration with the Farmleigh Fellowship and with Nanyang Business School in Singapore. All students on the programme are sponsored by Irish multi-national companies operating in Asia. We welcomed the first intake of 50 medical students under UCC’s partnership with the Allianze University College of Medical Sciences (AUCMS), Malaysia and we were selected as the university-of-choice for providing a comprehensive continuing professional development programme for senior managers from Shanghai University.

2. Source: QS university ranking 2012
3. Source: Essential Science Indicators (Thomson Reuters)
4. Source: ISI Thomson Highly Cited
5. Source: http://sciencewatch.com/ana/st/probiotics/institution/
8. Nationally, we announced an alliance with the Irish Strategic Plan 2013 – 2017.

9. We have received global recognition for our focus on Asia. In 2012 UCC’s Confucius Institute, in partnership with Shanghai University, was named ‘Confucius Institute of the Year’ of the c.400 institutes worldwide. It has taught more than 4,000 students since its inception in 2008 and it now delivers Chinese language and culture teaching in 33 Irish schools. It has also created a Chinese curriculum for transition year students in Ireland and the first Chinese curriculum for Irish higher education institutes. UCC is the only Irish university to have established Chinese Studies systematically from undergraduate level through to PhD degree level and to have established a School of Asian Studies incorporating institutes of Chinese Studies, Japanese Studies and Korean Studies.

10. Our commitment to fostering meaningful relationships with the developing world resulted in the establishment of the Centre for Global Development which works in partnership with National Governments, researchers and NGO’s on researching and developing impactful policy programmes. The University is now represented on the advisory board of Irish Aid, the Irish Government’s development agency.

11. Progressive internationalisation has brought significant benefits to student life. Our student population now includes 3,000 international students from over 100 countries while a third of our staff is from overseas. We continue to pursue growth in the proportion of students travelling from their home countries to study at UCC. This has increased to 12% of students.

12. We have demonstrated leadership in new initiatives to enhance cultural, social, economic and educational development regionally and nationally. Our strategic alliance with CIT with whom we award joint degrees in Architecture and Biomedical Sciences is the first such model in the Irish higher education sector and is a unique model nationally in the nature of its jointly-financed shared facilities and services, joint academic governance structures and the sharing of staff. The UCC-CIT alliance is an exemplar of the higher education partnerships envisaged in the National Strategy for Higher Education. In 2010 we signed a memorandum of understanding to deepen this alliance further. We launched the Community-Academic Research Links (CARL) initiative to facilitate students undertaking research projects that address ‘real world’ issues submitted by local civil society organisations. Based on the ‘Science Shop’ model, CARL is the only dedicated community-based research initiative among Irish Higher Education Institutions. Our junior conferring initiative has opened up the doors of UCC to over 20,000 primary school children since 2008 and in 2009 we led an initiative to optimise access to higher education opportunities for the unemployed in collaboration with CIT, Institute of Technology Tralee, FÁS, Cork Chamber, Department of Social and Family Affairs, Cork County and City Enterprise Boards, Enterprise Ireland, Irish Business and Employers Confederation, the Industrial Development Authority (IDA), trade unions and the Cork Vocational Education Committee.

13. Despite a 32% reduction in Government funding since 2008, we have strengthened our financial position significantly. Historical recurrent deficits have been eliminated and we have reduced our capital deficit by €28m to manageable levels. With restrictions on staff recruitment and with incentivised early retirement schemes, staff numbers have decreased by 10% to meet Government requirements with the consequence of increased student-staff ratios. The contribution from Exchequer funding to income has reduced from 84% to 68%.

14. Capital building projects completed between 2009 and 2012 include the €100m Western Gateway building, the €50m extension of the Tyndall National Institute and the €15 million extension of our indoor sports facilities at the Mardyke providing UCC with a world-class sports centre at its central campus location. In 2012 an additional 50 acres was acquired to develop the regional centre of excellence for sport which in turn will facilitate the development of the Cork Science and Innovation Park at our grounds in Carrigaline.

15. We have improved information services by upgrading our human resources information system, by investing in a new financial management system and a new Institutional Research Information System (IRIS). Our data-warehouse initiative has enabled the ready availability of information to support improved decision making. Our library collections continued to grow with the addition of a significant volume of e-books and a number of important special collections. Our library now has 18,500 registered users and 2,900 reader places. It has 25,000 research journal subscriptions and a collection of one million volumes.

16. We have achieved and demonstrated a world leadership position in the ‘Green’ agenda for sustainable energy processes. UCC is the first university in the world to be awarded the esteemed ‘Green Flag’ by the Federation for Environmental Education, Copenhagen and the first university in the world to achieve certification to the ISO 50001 standard for its energy management systems. It remains the only Irish institution to be honoured in this way. UCC is ranked fourth greenest university in the world by the UI Green Metric University ranking® of 2011.
The External Environment
The following are among the factors influencing national and international higher education which shape our university plan:

- OECD countries are putting considerable emphasis on the central role of universities in meeting regional development needs and supporting economic needs

- The EU framework programme for Research and Innovation, Horizon 2020, aims to secure Europe’s global competitiveness by creating new growth and jobs. Horizon 2020 will run from 2014 to 2020 with a budget of €80 billion

- There is an ambition to produce a greater volume of internationally recognised research

- The Irish Government’s Report of the Research Prioritisation Steering Group (2012) identifies 14 priority areas that will become the focus of future State investment in research and innovation. Targeted areas aim to ensure that Ireland is a top-tier location for knowledge and innovation intensive enterprises and jobs for the future

- Entrepreneurship, technology transfer and the greater commercialisation of research have become high priorities for national economic growth as documented in the Government’s Action Plan for Jobs 2012

- Students are increasingly mobile and international competition to attract the best staff and students is intensifying. The growing global transnational education market is crucial to Ireland’s international profile as detailed in Ireland’s International Education Strategy 2010-2015 ‘Investing in Global Relationships’

- The Bologna Process, creating a European Higher Education Area, has a primary focus on rigorous quality assurance and lifelong learning

- Universities in Ireland are central to national strategic directions as evidenced by the National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030

- Government and the public demand greater accountability, compliance, measurable achievement and “value for money.” Performance-based funding is being introduced progressively by the Higher Education Authority (HEA)

Key Assumptions
In developing our strategy, a number of key assumptions have been made relating to the future of higher education sectors in Ireland and internationally:

- Higher education will remain a high national priority to ensure economic development and social cohesion within the higher education environment. Collaboration with other higher education providers will be required to maximise opportunities for students across the full range of post-secondary qualification levels

- Irish universities have a vital role to play in national economic recovery and specialised skills delivered through higher education will continue to be required to meet economic and societal needs. Generic workplace and life skills will be increasingly sought by employers and by students

- The value of autonomy of universities to society will continue to be recognised and accountability will be enhanced

- Diversified income streams will be required to offset falling exchequer funding and growth in support for research will increasingly have to be met from non-exchequer sources. Exchequer funding will be increasingly based on performance and outcomes

- The ability of the higher education sector to sustain current activity and meet increases in demand will be constrained by economic forces

- The numbers of students aspiring to third and fourth level will continue to grow: student demand will be constrained by economic factors

- Increasing national and international student mobility will result in greater competition from other institutions. Private and online providers and Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) will become more prominent

- Advances in information and communications technology will continue to exert considerable influence over the functioning of higher education institutions and the engagement of students with learning

The Planning Process
This plan was developed by an inclusive University-wide process through extensive consultation with students, staff, alumni, external agencies and other key stakeholders. It is aligned with the objects of the University under the Universities Act, 1997 and it is informed by international trends, national policy and by the University’s quality improvement and risk management processes. The plan details:

- our mission
- our five key goals to help us achieve our mission
- our strategies detailing how we will achieve our goals
- our key projects outlining the priority tasks to put our strategies into action

We have focused our actions to 2017 on twenty two key projects, each to have clear ownership and timelines. An annual operational plan will specify the implementation plan each year and cross university teams, where appropriate, will be formed to ensure successful delivery. We will remain responsive to changes in our operating environment throughout the plan period and our plan will be refreshed annually as required. Progress on implementation will be reviewed every six weeks at the University Management Team meeting and updates to the plan will be communicated regularly to the University community. We will conduct an annual review of our performance against our key performance targets and we will continually improve our planning processes in line with best practice.

Supporting strategic plans have been developed for the University’s colleges and major administrative units. These underpinning plans are available at http://www.ucc.ie/strategicplanning.
Vision
To be a world-class university connecting our region to the globe.

Mission
University College Cork inspires creativity and independent thinking in a research-led teaching and learning environment. Our students are our highest priority. Through our research excellence we create and communicate knowledge to enhance the intellectual, cultural, social and economic life regionally, nationally and internationally.

Values
Our essential values are those of leadership, excellence, accountability and collaboration. We aim to work to the highest standards and encourage initiative, creativity and innovation in all of our activities. We are committed to the intellectual growth, social formation and welfare of our students. We recognise the strength that we derive from diversity among our students and staff and we commit ourselves to a global focus in all of our activities.

Leadership
Energy in taking initiatives, improving results and managing risks for the good of the University

Excellence
Commitment to a dynamic intellectual community with the highest possible standards of teaching, learning and research

Accountability
Responsibility and ownership for decisions, actions and results. Accountable for what is accomplished and how it is accomplished

Collaboration
Partnership and teamwork to enhance the overall contribution that UCC makes in Ireland and internationally, to the mutual benefit of all partners

Integrity
Adherence to honesty and the highest ethical standards in the exercise of all our obligations and responsibilities

Innovation
Creative and independent thinking, innovation and discovery, in which the University’s strengths are used to the full

Diversity
Maintaining a diverse and globally-oriented academic community

Our key strategic goal is to be Ireland’s leading university and to sustain our position in the top 2% of universities globally by:

1. Delivering research-inspired teaching and learning with a world class student experience
2. Being a premier European university for research, discovery, innovation and commercialisation
3. Being pre-eminent in internationalisation, external engagement and contribution to society
4. Applying best international practice to attract, develop and retain staff of the highest quality and to enable all staff to reach their full potential
5. Strengthening our infrastructure and resource base
The following are our leading actions for achievement by 2017:

1. We will ensure the continued financial sustainability of the University by significantly increasing non-Exchequer income and by continuing to exploit cost savings opportunities.

2. High quality research-led teaching is at the core of our mission. We will strengthen the integration of research, teaching and learning through the greater engagement of researchers in teaching activities and by maximising opportunities for students to participate in research programmes throughout their undergraduate studies. Up-to-date research, practice and knowledge will continuously inform our curriculum. We will increase the proportion of students studying for postgraduate degrees from 22% to 30%.

3. We will continue to pursue excellence in teaching, learning and the student experience. We will strengthen our capacity to deliver teaching qualification programmes to greater numbers of staff and we will promote and recognise excellence in teaching. We will continually improve the quality of the student experience by acting on student feedback and on recommendations for quality improvement. Improved supports for student learning, personal and employability skills development will be provided through the development of our state-of-the-art student “hub” building. We will provide opportunities within each programme for student placement either through volunteering activities, international placement or work placement so that all UCC students have the opportunity to develop the generic and transferable skills needed for effective engagement in the workplace and society.

4. We will develop greater opportunities for part-time and flexible learning. We will provide the necessary ‘future-proofed’ infrastructure to improve the provision of research-informed, open access Technology Enhanced Learning at UCC. Improved opportunities for life-long learning including continuing professional development and executive education will be developed in collaboration with the Irish Management Institute and with our strategic partners nationally and internationally.

5. We will establish an innovative business school created by building on existing business strengths and with expertise in identified niche areas.

6. We will strengthen our capacity for research to meet national economic and social development needs, to engage critically with major national and global challenges and to contribute to excellent scholarship. We will foster innovation and entrepreneurship and we will continue to develop UCC as an entrepreneurial university to create jobs and to strengthen our key role as a catalyst for attracting foreign direct investment to Ireland. UCC’s Innovation Platform will ensure the coherent and efficient delivery of innovation and job creation initiatives including an enhanced model for technology transfer and commercialisation, the development of a Healthcare and Technology Innovation Cluster, delivery of the National Health Innovation Hub, the further development of the Ignite Graduate Business Innovation Centre and improved delivery of entrepreneurship education university-wide. Our participation in IMERC, together with CIT and the Irish Naval Service, will deliver innovation and jobs in the maritime and energy domains. We will continue to play a leadership role in the development of the Cork Science and Innovation Park in cooperation with Cork County Council, Cork City Council, CIT, the IDA and Enterprise Ireland. With these developments we will enhance interdisciplinary collaboration between the arts, humanities and social science disciplines, and science, technology, medicine and health in a holistic approach to “science”.

7. We will enhance internationalisation by strengthening our partnerships with universities of similar vision and by embedding a global perspective in all our activities. We will deliver on the key initiatives of our internationalisation strategy by strengthening the global UCC alumni network, exploiting further opportunities for the overseas delivery of our programmes and by increasing our international student cohort to 17%.

8. Active community and regional engagement is central to our role as an “engaged university” and is embedded in our mission. We will engage proactively at a national level to increase the capacity of the Irish higher education system to operate in a more competitive globalised environment. We will strengthen Cork as a city of learning and we will build a more cohesive regional learning cluster by deepening our partnership with CIT and other education partners. We will develop new initiatives in a multiplicity of domains including that of the Irish language, to engage more actively with our city and regional community.
DETAILED OBJECTIVES OF OUR STRATEGIES, PROJECTS AND TARGETS

GOAL 1 – Deliver research-inspired teaching and learning with a world class student experience

Strategies

Our strategies to achieve this goal are to:

- Deliver strong student-focused support services which address the physical, psychological, spiritual, social, cultural and welfare needs of students by focusing on the students’ transition into UCC, time in UCC and transition out of UCC
- Continue to improve flexibility in the delivery of our programmes including strengthening the provision of online programmes
- Provide programmes to support and challenge outstanding students
- Further develop interdisciplinary programmes across traditional academic boundaries and collaborate with other institutions in joint programmes
- Make our graduates more world-ready and work-ready by further developing language and other transferrable skills in our students
- Create further opportunities for increasing participation in outreach, lifelong learning and continuing professional development
- Continue commitment to enhancing accessibility for all students and widening participation through an inclusive environment that embraces diversity and equality
- Promote the professional development of teaching staff and foster the further use of quality assurance tools in teaching programmes according to European standards
- Continue to lead NARITL and encourage staff to engage with the opportunities it provides
- Improve the engagement with students in the evaluation of their learning experiences
- Extend the range of non-academic student activities that take place on the campus and enhance creative arts, sports and recreation facilities to give all students a greater opportunity to participate

Projects

1. Strengthen the integration of research, teaching and learning by (a) mapping out the extent of student involvement in research in current undergraduate programmes and identifying areas for improvement, and (b) ensuring that all undergraduate programmes contain student-involved research from first year onwards.

2. Enhance the quality of teaching, learning and the student experience by (a) offering a greater range of staff development opportunities to ensure that staff have the skills to teach in an informed way that maximises learning for the students, (b) embedding a regular review of the student feedback process to ensure that recommendations for quality improvement are implemented, and (c) providing student placement opportunities within each programme either through volunteering activities, international placement or work placement.

3. Develop and implement a new Student Hub to accommodate the following major aspects of a world class student experience:
   - A learning and teaching centre incorporating flexible learning spaces facilitating formal small group shared learning and informal social learning in a technology-rich environment.
   - A student development, employability and support centre to aid student personal development, peer support, employability skill development and academic success.
   - Facilitated student-led services and voluntary care initiatives with facilities for the integration and delivery of student activities in a student-centred environment.
   - An integrated student administrative interface (both physical one-stop-shop desk and e-based enhanced student information management system).

4. Develop greater opportunities for part-time and flexible learning by (a) providing the necessary infrastructure to improve the provision of Technology Enabled Learning in areas of UCC’s unique strengths and building a greater blend of distance and on-campus learning into UCC’s programmes, (b) developing improved opportunities for lifelong learning including continuing professional development and executive education in collaboration with the Irish Management Institute and with partners nationally and internationally, and (c) prioritise the provision of lifelong education and training to the healthcare professionals in the region.

5. Establish a uniquely developed business school created by building on existing business strengths and with expertise in identified niche areas.

Targets

- Increase the proportion of high achieving Leaving Certificate students choosing UCC from 21% to 24%
- Increase the recruitment of students from outside Munster by 50%
- Achieve a university first year retention rate of 93%, up from 91% in 2012
- Achieve a participation rate of 60% of first year students in Student Societies, Sports Clubs, Students Union or Voluntary Activities
- Increase the proportion of students at postgraduate level from 22% to 30% and aim for 45% of annual graduates to graduate with a postgraduate degree

- Increase part-time and flexible learning provision to 15% of students
- Continue to achieve national participation targets for students from socio-economic disadvantaged backgrounds, students with disabilities and mature students
- Continue to achieve a student satisfaction score of 90% in the University Student Survey
- Continue to achieve a score of 91% of primary degree graduates in employment or further study
Strategies

Our strategies to achieve this goal are to:

- prioritise research resources in areas that are producing research at the highest international levels
- consolidate cognate research activities through clustering to establish critical mass in organised research units while enabling the individual researcher
- promote and support large scale interdisciplinary research projects and new emerging areas of research that are consistent with national and international priorities
- develop an infrastructural and policy environment that maximises the research potential of all UCC researchers and ensures the highest level of compliance with research ethics
- enhance and consolidate research infrastructural support for Arts, Humanities, Social Sciences, Business and Law
- achieve national leadership in our key strategic research areas, as defined by measures of research impact, according to disciplinary norms
- leverage national investments in research through participation in, and leadership of, large research projects at European level
- improve the international profile of UCC as a centre of excellence for research training and ensuring that UCC is a location of choice for internationally competitive junior and senior researchers
- increase the proportion of research funding from non-Exchequer sources, specifically targeting EU funding and industry sources

- further enhance the quality of doctoral education by providing the best tailored structured training, support and environment to students including national and international linkages where appropriate, and by ensuring that UCC provides the best practices and quality of supervision possible
- ensure that our doctoral graduates are prepared, through our training and support, for a wide range of high-level successful careers in society
- partner with Irish and international institutions to deliver excellence in research, commercialisation and knowledge transfer
- drive the commercialisation of research and technology transfer, through mechanisms such as licensing, patents, creating spin-out companies and supporting external start-up companies
- engage proactively with government, development agencies, professional organisations, business and industry and the wider community, to stimulate economic, social, and cultural development
- instil a strong culture of entrepreneurship and innovation throughout the University and ensure coherence between all elements of innovation across the University, including entrepreneurship, commercialisation, knowledge transfer, education and consultancy
- improve UCC’s position as a provider of choice for research consultancy services in key areas

Projects

6. Expand UCC’s research mission through (a) the continued growth of major research initiatives including the Tyndall National Institute, the Alimentary Pharmabiotic Centre and the Environmental Research Institute (ERI), (b) the consolidation of emerging interdisciplinary initiatives such as the Institute for Social Sciences in the 21st Century (ISS21), (c) the development of new potentially world-leading research centres delivered via a process of resource allocation, prioritisation and alignment with external funding opportunities and (d) the enhancement of existing research clusters in areas of specialised expertise.

7. Ensure the sustainability of research in UCC by diversifying funding sources by (a) establishing a cost-neutral European Project Support Office, (b) identifying new funding sources, (c) expanding the pool of researchers that secure external funding and (d) delivering an enhanced and proactive research support service.

8. Develop UCC’s Innovation Platform to meet national economic development and job creation needs through the coherent delivery of innovation and entrepreneurship initiatives including (a) an enhanced model for technology transfer and commercialisation that engages the UCC research community in the innovation agenda, (b) the development of a Healthcare and Technology Innovation Cluster, (c) the further development of the Ignite Graduate Business Innovation Centre, (d) enhanced delivery of entrepreneurship education, (e) delivering on the National Health Innovation Hub initiative and (f) leadership in the development of the Cork Science and Innovation Park in cooperation with Cork City Council, Cork County Council, CIT, the IDA and EI.

9. Exploit research and innovation opportunities across traditional disciplinary boundaries by delivering processes that enable interdisciplinary collaboration, by incentivising new interdisciplinary engagement and by developing the interface between the humanities and social sciences, and science, medicine and technology.

10. Develop key areas of emerging research expertise including (a) establishing the Beaufort Laboratory on the IMERC Campus as the largest marine energy research facility in the world, (b) developing UCC as the leading Irish university in the new field of Data Science (c) establishing a Digital Academy to exploit the humanities-sciences interface as a unique feature of UCC research, and (d) strengthening and focusing the health research base by investing in gastro intestinal health, cancer research, women and children’s health, public health and simulation research with the aim of achieving institute status for these five proven research themes within five years (“Five in Five”).

Targets

- Increase annual research income from €79m in 2012 to €90m
- Increase non-Exchequer research funding from €22m in 2012 to €30m
- Increase the number of staff supervising PhDs by 10%
GOAL 3 – Pre-Eminence in Internationalisation, External Engagement and Contribution to Society

Strategies

Our strategies to achieve this goal are to:

- develop a small number of key strategic alliances with prestigious universities abroad, establishing overseas campuses and study schools with a particular focus on Asia, United States and the developing world
- partner with other Irish universities where there are complementarities and synergies that can lead to enhanced strengths and efficiencies and deepen our alliances with other Irish higher education institutions
- further the pluralist, multicultural yet Irish nature of the campus community
- adopt a targeted approach to national and international communications and exploit the power of digital marketing technologies
- forge stronger relationships with employers, professional bodies, industry and the community to anticipate their future needs in relevant courses, programmes and expertise
- establish ourselves as an independent, articulate voice in public debate while working closely with Government in playing a prominent role in setting the future agenda for higher education within Ireland and Europe
- facilitate access to the campus for as wide an audience as possible by broadening the range and scope of our outreach programmes
- develop regional and community relationships through partnership, guidance and support, in social, cultural and community projects, and through high profile public events on campus
- enhance our interaction with the public by hosting lectures, concerts, exhibitions and other events to increase the profile of the visual and performing arts and to make the University’s rich collections available to the community
- act as a catalyst for change and creativity, sparking new connections, partnerships, practices, and exchange of ideas and expertise, particularly in the domain of the creative arts and culture, cultural heritage and Irish language and literatures
- promote the Irish language within the region and on campus
- enliven global alumni networks to stimulate a more active relationship and commitment to the University in volunteering, fundraising and provision of expertise to the University community
- implement a regional learning cluster in conjunction with Cork Institute of Technology and other regional education, community and business partners to provide improved progression pathways between institutions to meet economic and social needs.
- combine our hospitals and UCC’s College of Medicine & Health into a single integrated Academic Healthcare Centre to improve the provision of clinical care, health education, training, research and innovation and to achieve an increase in the quality of service to the region. A key component of this development is the successful embedding of the Clinical Research Facility.
- mark the significant national, historical and cultural centenaries of the events of the early 20th century by working with international and national partners and by drawing upon scholarship across the disciplines of the University. Establish a tangible legacy that contributes to ongoing research and scholarship.
- achieve an international leadership position as an ‘engaged university’ through community engagement and corporate social responsibility by (a) more actively communicating our achievements in our existing environmental, educational, social and engagement activities and (b) further developing UCC’s Community-Academic Research Links (CARL) to facilitate students undertaking research projects that address ‘real world’ issues submitted by local civil society organisations.

Key projects by 2017

11. Deliver on the key initiatives of our university-wide internationalisation strategy by strengthening our partnerships with universities of similar vision, strengthening the global UCC alumni network, exploiting further opportunities for the overseas delivery of our programmes and by increasing our international student cohort to 17%.

12. Implement a regional learning cluster in conjunction with Cork Institute of Technology and other regional education, community and business partners to provide improved progression pathways between institutions to meet economic and social needs.

13. Combine our hospitals and UCC’s College of Medicine & Health into a single integrated Academic Healthcare Centre to improve the provision of clinical care, health education, training, research and innovation and to achieve an increase in the quality of service to the region. A key component of this development is the successful embedding of the Clinical Research Facility.

14. Mark the significant national, historical and cultural centenaries of the events of the early 20th century by working with international and national partners and by drawing upon scholarship across the disciplines of the University. Establish a tangible legacy that contributes to ongoing research and scholarship.

15. Achieve an international leadership position as an ‘engaged university’ through community engagement and corporate social responsibility by (a) more actively communicating our achievements in our existing environmental, educational, social and engagement activities and (b) further developing UCC’s Community-Academic Research Links (CARL) to facilitate students undertaking research projects that address ‘real world’ issues submitted by local civil society organisations.

Targets

- Increase the proportion of students from overseas to 17%
- Continue to achieve or improve on the 2012 score in the International Graduate Insight Group student survey
- Increase the percentage of courses with international content or themes by 20%
- Every academic to demonstrate tangible evidence of a significant international engagement annually as reported on UCC’s Institutional Research Information System (IRIS)
Key projects by 2017

16. Focus the University’s staff development activities, with a greater emphasis on (a) leadership development to support Heads of School, senior academics and heads of major support services, (b) targeted project management training and (c) mentoring of staff.

17. Finalise the implementation of researcher career structures.

18. Examine administrative support structures across comparator universities to enhance support staffing models across the University.

19. Develop and implement a plan for staff wellbeing and welfare.

Targets

- Ensure 90% of staff in leadership roles complete the leadership development programme
- Increase the proportion of staff holding academic positions to at least 50%
- Increase the proportion of academic staff with doctorate qualifications from 72% to 85%
- All new academic staff to be tenured or established only on achievement of a doctorate qualification or equivalent
- Achieve 100% of research staff aligned within the research career structure
GOAL 5 – Strengthen Our Infrastructure and Resource Base

Strategies

Our strategies to achieve this goal are to:

- diversify income streams and increase non-Exchequer income
- work with the government and other stakeholders to create a sustainable funding model for higher education
- maximise efficiency and value for money by all initiatives possible
- develop the campus to further enhance the UCC experience and to contribute to the cultural attractiveness of Cork
- improve the condition, safety and accessibility of our buildings and pursue campus development to the highest standards to achieve national and international norms for space provision
- further enhance UCC’s reputation as Ireland’s ‘Green University’
- strengthen library collections and services, maintaining a balance of acquisitions across subjects and languages, in paper and electronic format, to meet the requirements of users and taking account of the distinctive heritage and cultural functions of UCC Library
- further integrate information systems and develop improved IT services across the University
- ensure effective, transparent and accountable governance

Key projects by 2017

20. Ensure the continued financial sustainability of the University by (a) significantly increasing non-exchequer income to include €32m income from non-EU student fees (b) developing and embedding a ‘whole of university’ approach to philanthropy to generate €14m over the period of the plan (c) continuing to exploit cost savings opportunities including procurement savings of €2.75m (d) developing a plan to eliminate the remaining capital deficit.

21. Introduce and apply structured lean practices to the key enabling processes of the University to ensure optimum efficiency, effectiveness, agility and responsiveness to internal and external needs. Prioritise the application of ‘lean’ to the programme approval, financial management, intellectual property and contracts processes.

22. Progress priority capital projects including the Student Hub and a Creative Hub to function as a dedicated space to bridge the academic work of the University with the Irish creative arts, technologies and culture networks.

Targets

- Increase non EU income by 50%
- Diversify income sources to increase non-Exchequer income from 32% to 50% of total income
- Grow philanthropy income to fund four Chairs by 2017
- Reduce energy consumption by 3% annually in support of the national target of a 33% reduction in carbon emissions by 2020 versus levels in 2000
- Invest €4m annually in improving the condition of the University’s buildings