

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE CORK SPORTS STRATEGY 2019-2022



UCC

University College Cork, Ireland
Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh



**UCC
SPORT**



Mardyke Arena

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE CORK

Vision

The globally renowned go-to university for sport and physical activity in Ireland

Purpose

Realise and unleash the potential of UCC sport and physical activity

Mantra

Pride on our chest. Belief in our heart. Sport in our bones.

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FOREWORD

University College Cork has a deep and proud history of sporting achievement, and strong ambitions for the future. The importance of sport goes much further than empowering people with health and wellbeing – sport teaches life lessons of confidence, teamwork, respect, ambition, discipline, integrity and it provides a source of great enjoyment. Through sport we learn that, no matter what the result, we must persevere and not give up.

UCC is a connected university, and sport plays an important role in connecting student and alumni communities, and engaging with the wider community. Sport is a powerful tool that brings people together to develop connections that transcend language and cultural differences.

This ambitious strategy is dedicated to unlocking the power of sport and physical activity across all areas of participation, representation and achievement. It aims to promote participation in sport by all students and staff at UCC, and to support competitive and high-performance athletes: many tribes, one team.

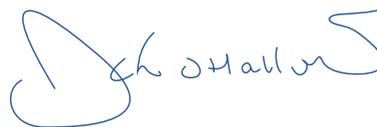
This strategy for sport supports the development of graduate attributes beyond the classroom for all students at UCC. It will enhance the student experience while contributing to students' health and wellbeing, building life-wide skills and lifelong friendships.

Sport and physical activity underpins UCC's *Strategic Plan (2017–2022)* to build and develop world-class sports facilities, to attract and inspire high-performance athletes, and to support all students in physical recreation. This transformative strategy will deliver a connected future for sporting and educational opportunities and will enable a joined-up approach

between our clubs and coaches; the Department of Sport and Physical Activity; Mardyke Arena, our sporting facilities; and a range of academic disciplines and research activities. The scholarship of sport, in the context of UCC's tradition of research and teaching excellence, will sharpen our edge to push the boundaries of sport through education, research and innovation.

It gives me great pleasure to introduce this strategy for sport, which sets out 27 specific actions to be implemented across six priority areas over the short, medium and long term. This strategy will provide the enabling framework to ensure that sport at UCC is supported, elevated and celebrated. I look forward to working with students, staff and partners to implement the transformative objectives and priorities of this strategy to enhance our sporting future and to make UCC an even better place, to learn, research, grow and thrive.

Is mór againn an cúnamh lách a fuaramair ónár gcuid mac léinn, ónár bhfoireann, agus ónár bpáirtithe leasmhara, agus an Straitéis Spóirt seo á ceapadh againn. Táim ag tnúth go mór le sinn go léir a bheith i bpáirtíocht le chéile i gcaitheamh na gceithre bliana atá romhainn.



PROFESSOR JOHN O'HALLORAN
Deputy President and Registrar

UCC SPORTS STRATEGY: SUMMARY

PRIORITY	1 Ignite the UCC community of sport	2 Maximise our brand's potential	3 Create a culture of holistic development
OUTCOMES	<p>Ensure sport and physical activity in UCC is an inspirational and central part of the student experience, and drives the connections and engagement with our alumni, wider community and stakeholders.</p>	<p>Make sport and physical activity in UCC one of the highest profile, identifiable, dynamic, engaged and online destinations in university sport.</p>	<p>Grow and increase sport and physical activity in UCC to be the most active campus; have more participants; better players, clubs, coaches and volunteers; and have sought after graduates.</p>
KEY ACTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1 Develop and launch UCC Sport for Life Club. 1.2 Establish visible and consistent communications. 1.3 Democratise the power of sport in UCC and with our wider community 1.4 Maximise Cork's passion for sport. 1.5 Launch initiative to build global connections. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1 Build a brand and commercial marketing team to develop the Skull and Crossbones brand. 2.2 Push UCC Sport brand to its full strength. 2.3 Become a destination online brand. 2.4 Create sustainable value for UCC Sport and its community; merchandise, rewards, sponsorship and online platform for the wider community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3.1 Promote a sustainable culture of development (participants, players, coaches and volunteers). 3.2 Solidify a culture of excellence (teams, clubs and community). 3.3 Embrace a culture of wellness and participation in physical activity in UCC and with our wider network of schools, clubs and community.

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Sharpen our edge

Be a global centre of excellence and innovation for participating in performing, excelling, learning and teaching sport and physical activity.

- 4.1 Develop and execute our performance strategy.
- 4.2 Build sustainable partnerships to raise the bar and expand our horizons in research and innovation.
- 4.3 Prove the value of sport.
- 4.4 Review and redefine our scholarship offerings.
- 4.5 Launch UCC as a destination for development and performance.
- 4.6 Advance and expand learning, discovery, and innovation in UCC sport and physical activity academic courses.

5

Develop world-class facilities

Deliver a network of world-class sports facilities in UCC, contributing to Cork being a leading city and destination for physical activity, lifestyle and sport.

- 5.1 Implement a new sports facilities master plan.
- 5.2 Maximise the management and operation of facilities.
- 5.3 Lead the way in the creation of world-class network of sport and physical activity facilities in Cork.
- 5.4 Develop innovative operational training and facilities management initiatives and courses.

6

Create success through leadership

Unify, strengthen and transform the leadership, governance, culture, ethos, operations, business and academic programmes of sport and physical activity in UCC.

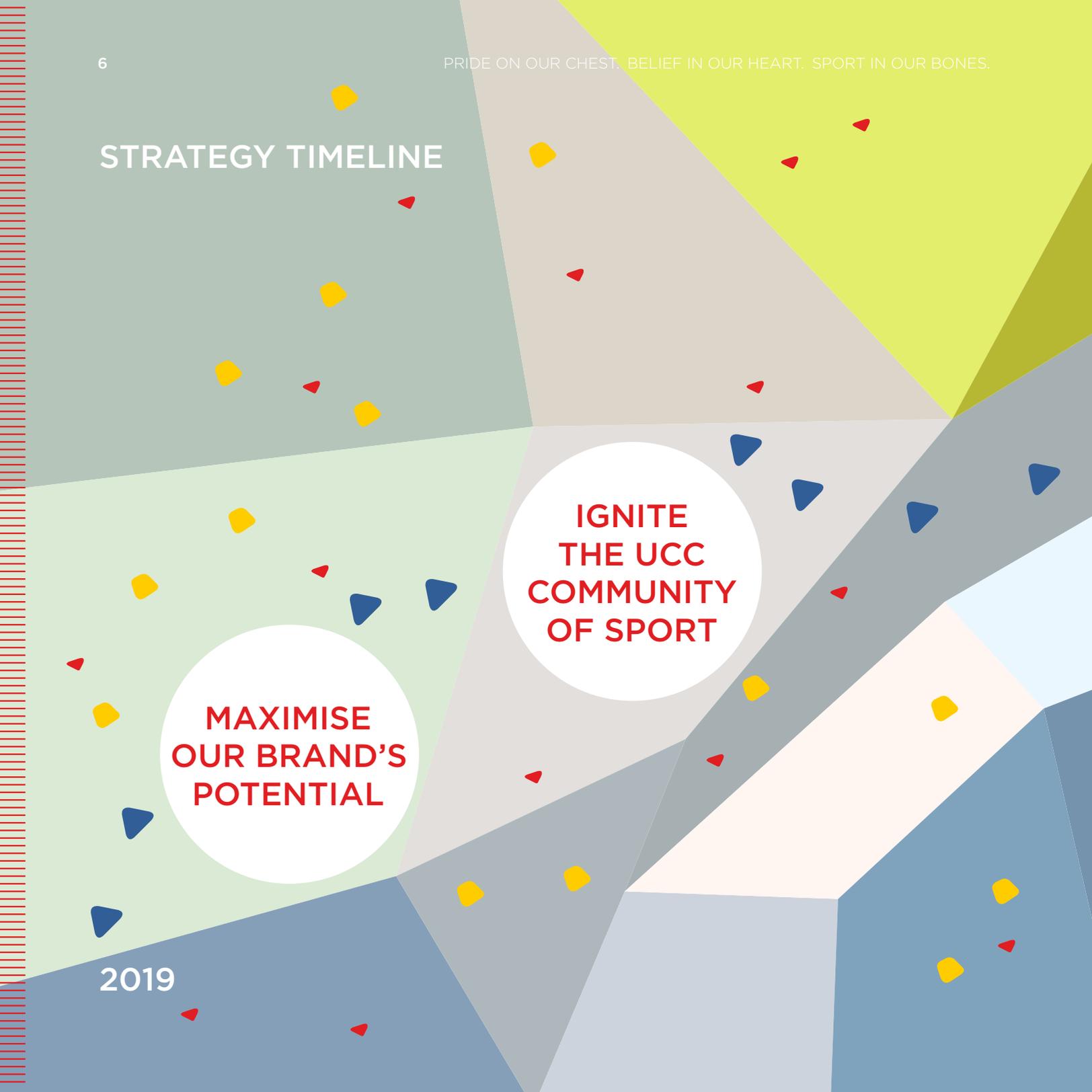
- 6.1 Create a new joined-up leadership model (SLT – Sports Leadership Team).
- 6.2 Implement a three-year transition plan for sport and physical activity in UCC.
- 6.3 Establish a connected operating model to maximise our resources and talent (including a facilities operational model).
- 6.4 Develop and implement a robust financial plan for UCC Sport.
- 6.5 Ensure an active contribution to the delivery of the *UCC Academic Strategy 2018-2022*.

STRATEGY TIMELINE

**IGNITE
THE UCC
COMMUNITY
OF SPORT**

**MAXIMISE
OUR BRAND'S
POTENTIAL**

2019



**DEVELOP
WORLD
CLASS
FACILITIES**

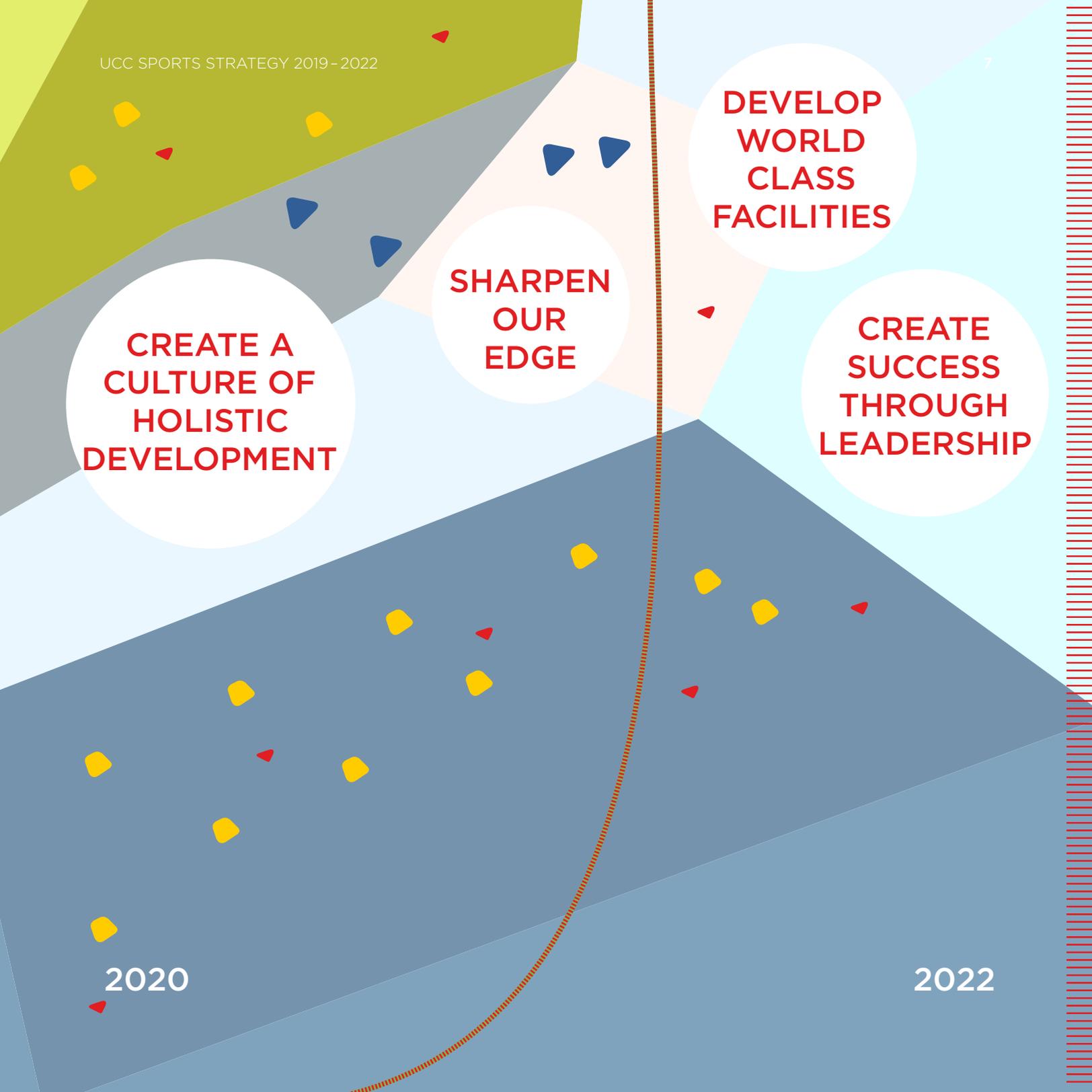
**CREATE
SUCCESS
THROUGH
LEADERSHIP**

**SHARPEN
OUR
EDGE**

**CREATE A
CULTURE OF
HOLISTIC
DEVELOPMENT**

2020

2022



INTRODUCTION

This strategy for sport and physical activity sets our vision and priorities for the next four years. It will provide the platform to enable us realise and unleash our huge sporting potential in UCC. UCC is experiencing a period of unprecedented growth and development, with over 21,200 students and 3,000 staff in the university. This is now an opportune time to set our vision, seize UCC's opportunities in sport and physical activity and maximise our sporting potential.

This strategy supports the vision, goals and values of the UCC Strategic Plan 2017-2022: Independent Thinking, Shared Ambition. The implementation of this strategy will enhance sports and recreation facilities to give all students a greater opportunity to participate. For elite performers, the achievement of the priorities in this strategy will provide the catalyst for such athletes to reach their potential. This strategy for sport and physical activity in UCC looks at ways to facilitate new ways of engaging with the alumni network and the wider community.

This strategy also supports the *UCC Academic Strategy (2018-2022)* which sets out to deliver an outstanding student-centred teaching and learning experience with a renewed, responsive and research-based curriculum at its core. UCC strives to be a Connected University with enhanced synergy between teaching, research and innovation, that offers a distinctive educational experience, promoting lifelong and life wide learning. We strongly believe that participation in a wide range of sport and physical activities will greatly add to the student experience and provide additional opportunities to develop the core values and attributes enshrined in the UCC academic strategy.

Sport has long been the social language and currency of the city of Cork, its county and Munster, a cultural muscle strengthened by the unspoken belief that might is greater than size.

A unique and powerful corner of sporting prowess in Ireland with a legacy as rich as it is deep - a city defying its size through its breadth of sport; a historical and modern-day Democratic Republic of Sport; a prolific performer across many codes. Where expectation, grit and success flow through the blood in its sporting veins, symbolised in the vibrant red of the shirts and jerseys of players and supporters alike. With pride of place at the centre of the city, it is only right that UCC has mirrored its native city's sporting pedigree and must continue to do so.

The UCC community of sport wears its red and black shirts and jerseys with passion, belief and pride. With heads held high, its tribe of warriors stands just that little bit taller for the badge of honour it has worn on its chests since 1872: the Skull and Crossbones.

A symbol of pride, belief and certainty in a time of doubt, it is more than a logo; it is a call to participate; it is a shout-out to get active; it is a battle cry for success. Perhaps most importantly, it is a symbol of unity.

With a growing population along with increasing pressures on our students and society at large, coupled with the global threat of inactivity; it has never been more important for our community to have a North Star to follow.

We believe UCC sport and physical activity can be just that. But, in order to do so, we will need to realise and unleash our true potential for the benefit of our growing family of students, staff, volunteers, alumni, neighbours and partners.



People are beginning to awaken to the idea that the body is a very important portion of humanity. Happily there now seems to be a general feeling that mind and body ought to be developed to the utmost, for the mental and corporal capacity are to a certain extent an expression of one another and that a fine and well-developed frame is the natural associate of a powerful intellect.

Source: The Constitution Newspaper, Cork, 1877 (Courtesy of: Where Finbarr Played, by John A. Murphy).

UCC SPORTS STRATEGY PLANNING AND CONSULTATION PROCESS

The objective of the strategic planning process was to build a vision and a plan for UCC sport and physical activity - with, of and for its student - that is befitting of its potential, its people, and its place, in what is a unique and powerful corner of sporting prowess in Ireland.

The following six guiding principles ensured we stayed on track throughout the project, and will guide the overall implementation of the plan going forward:

1. **The vision and plan for sport and physical activity at UCC must be student-centred;**
2. **It needs to be future-ready and able;**
3. **It will need to create space and stand-out on a national and international stage;**
4. **It must be rooted in the DNA of UCC/UCC Sport/Cork's culture of sport;**
5. **It must be democratic in its appeal and inclusive in its draw;**
6. **It must complement and contribute to the delivery of the *UCC Strategic Plan 2017-2022* and the *UCC Academic Strategy 2018-2022*.**

This strategy is the culmination of a process which began in July 2018 and involved more than 600 students, 100 staff, and 30 external stakeholders from Sport Ireland and National Governing Bodies (NGBs) through to commercial partners and neighbours.

UCC defines sport and physical activity in line with the *National Sport Policy* (July 2018) which states that Ireland has adopted, and adapted, the Council of Europe's definition where "sport means all forms of physical activity which, through casual or organised participation, aims at expressing or improving physical fitness and mental wellbeing, forming social relationships or obtaining results in competition at all levels."

UCC SPORTS STRATEGY CONTEXT

OUR MISSION

To be a leading university of independent thinkers

OUR VISION

Creating, understanding and sharing knowledge and applying it for the good of all

OUR VALUES

Our core values guide and underpin our actions and our processes

CREATIVITY
RESPECT
FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION
TRANSPARENCY
RESPONSIVENESS

INTEGRITY
EQUALITY
DIVERSITY
SCHOLARSHIP

UCC Strategic Plan 2017-2022

The *UCC Strategic Plan 2017-2022* provides the key context for this sport and physical activity strategy.

The university is growing rapidly and the UCC strategic plan highlights how growth of students is planned to increase to over 23,000 by 2022. The strategic plan further highlights the need for UCC to create value for our community, strengthen our infrastructure base and to enhance sports and recreation facilities to give all students a greater opportunity to participate. This strategy for sport and physical activity in UCC strikes to the heart of these imperatives.

UCC Academic Strategy 2018-2022

The second key reference for the sport and physical activity strategy is the *UCC Academic Strategy 2018-2022*.

The implementation of the *Academic Strategy*, which includes the development of a Connected Curriculum, endeavours to restore and build connections by putting the academic mission at the centre of what we do.

The strength of our disciplines is core to the success of our strategy and the combination of disciplinary excellence and transdisciplinarity will enable our students and staff to seek solutions to global challenges.

The core principle of a Connected Curriculum is that students, at all levels of study, from undergraduate to doctoral levels, can benefit in multiple ways by engaging actively in research and enquiry. The Connected Curriculum at UCC will engage students in a distinctive education, where the curriculum is visibly linked to research, employability, civic engagement, sustainable development goals, other disciplines and the wider world. Curriculum principles and a programme architecture that support the development of a Connected Curriculum will be designed with a view to preparing students for their future, developing academic excellence, character, professionalism and the capacity for critical, creative and independent thinking. The curriculum will facilitate students to develop values, skills and aptitudes that promote civic participation, social inclusion, sustainability, digital fluency and impactful, global citizenship.

UCC Graduate Attributes

As a socially-minded, civically-engaged institution, our core values and graduate attributes are the bedrock of our student experience. Graduate attributes refer to the skills, knowledge and abilities of our graduates, beyond academic knowledge, that are applicable in a range of contexts in their lives. They advance the development of academic, specialist and technical skills. Based on extensive consultation with stakeholders, the following core values and graduate attributes were prioritised for the lifecycle of the academic strategy.

Sport is a key part of the student experience in UCC and can play an important part in delivery of the academic strategy. We know and believe that sport and physical activity can play a key role in supporting our students to develop these attributes and experience these values and in particular through their participation in sport and physical activity.

Graduate Attributes

- **Creators, evaluators and communicators of knowledge**
- **Independent and creative thinkers**
- **Digitally fluent**
- **Socially responsible**
- **Effective, global citizens who recognise and challenge inequality**

Values

- **Respect:** for self, others and the environment
- **Ambition:** aims high, displays exemplary work ethic and strives to succeed
- **Compassion:** empathic, demonstrates care for self and others
- **Resilience:** perseveres, shows capacity for problem-solving and personal well being
- **Integrity:** trustworthy, ethical and dependable

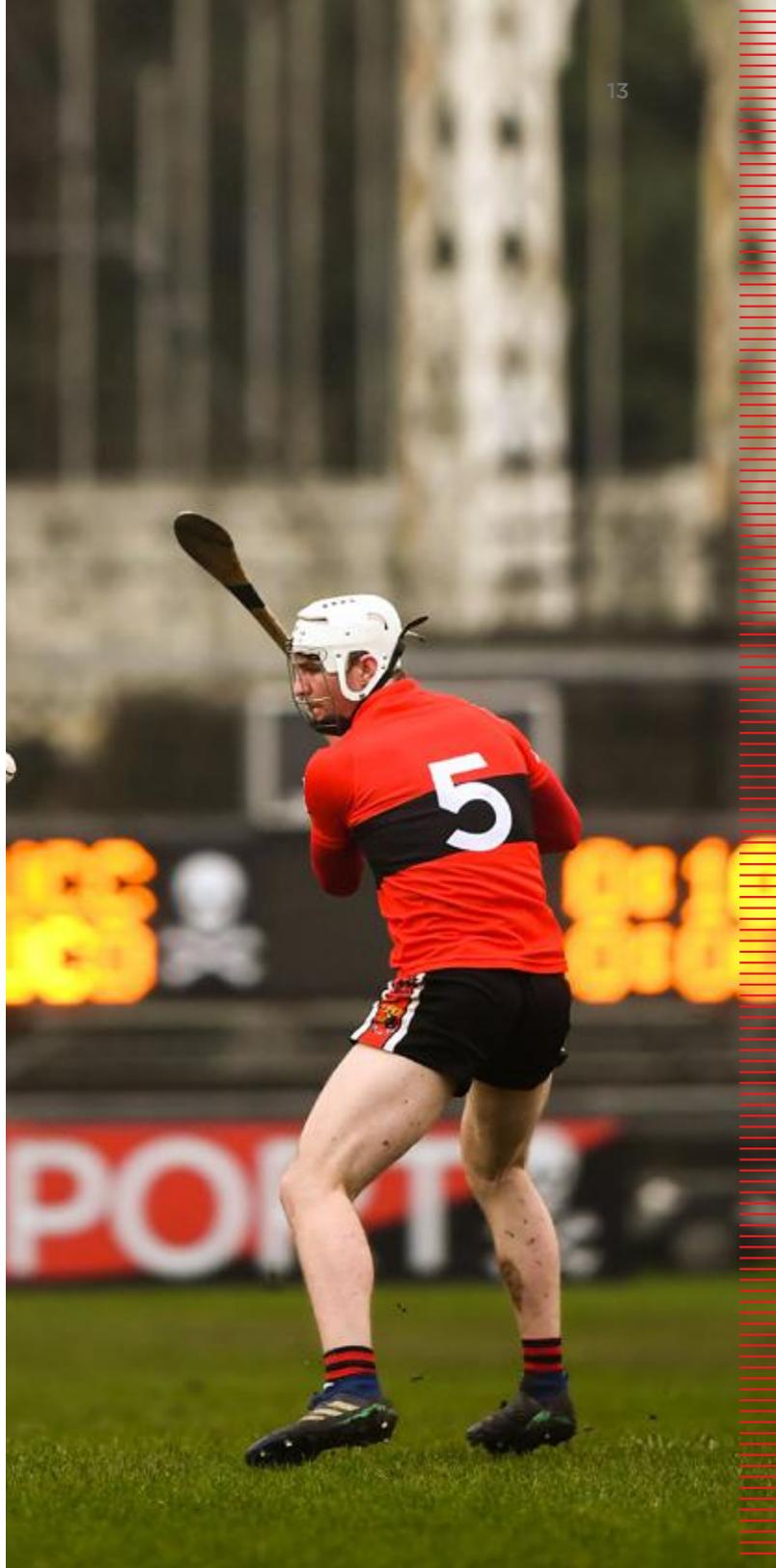
Sport and Physical Activity in UCC

UCC has long been committed to the provision of an extensive and wide variety of sport and physical activity experiences. We have 55 recognised clubs with a combined membership of over 4,000 students. We have a dynamic student population driving and leading sport and the UCC clubs, supported by the Department of Sport and Physical Activity, the Clubs' Executive and the Mardyke Arena. We have a leading academic programme offering a degree in sports studies and physical education. Our foundations are deep and strong and poised to expand.

The Mardyke is the home of sport and activity in UCC and will celebrate its 300th anniversary in 2019. UCC has sported and played there since 1911 and has a long and proud tradition of participation and excellence and many historic sporting achievements. We have new opportunities to strengthen and develop our relations and connections with the local authorities in Cork, sporting organisations and agencies to create a unique zone of sport, activity and culture following the River Lee from the edge of the harbour, into the city and expanding out into the suburbs of Cork. A sporting district such as this would be unique in Ireland and UCC will play a key role at its core.

“Every educational institution must recognise and has recognised that the athletics of the students are only second in importance to their educational requirements and that a number of strong healthy men and women must, for all sorts of reasons, be provided with adequate opportunities for healthy exercise.”

Source: UCC Governing Body meeting, 14 November 1911, recommending ‘the purchase of the lease of the Mardyke Athletic Grounds’



Role of Clubs

Our clubs are the backbone of sport in UCC.

The summary position is:

- **55 clubs** in UCC, more than the national average on a pro-rata basis (i.e. per 100 students).
- **17% of students** participate in a club sport in UCC, compared to a national average of 15%.
- There are **4,414** club memberships in UCC taken out by **3,598** distinct students.
- There are **387** distinct students that hold committee positions in a UCC Club, **58% male, 42% female**.
- There are **147** students who volunteer in a club outside of their usual committee roles (i.e. coaching).
- **41.6%** of memberships are in team sports.
- More than **50%** of students train recreationally rather than competitively.
- There are more than **6,500** training sessions per year across the **55 clubs** (Sept-Aug).

Club Categories	% Total Clubs Membership
9 Martial Arts	12.1
6 Water Sports	8.8
3 Board or strategic game	1.6
17 indoor (11 individual + 6 are teams)	28 (22.35 + 5.64)
20 outdoor (7 individual + 13 teams)	49.5 (13.5 + 36)

We will continue to develop and expand our student led and centred clubs, supported by excellent coaches and a committed cohort of volunteers and alumni.

High Performance Sport

UCC has a long tradition of performing and winning in sport. Our athletes, squads and teams compete annually at the highest levels in Irish and global sport. This strategy will seek to build on our proud traditions and support our athletes to perform to their full potential. The summary success over the past three years is highlighted below:

Competition	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Awards	Representation
Total	458	203	202	90	146
International - Individual	3	6	6		
International - Team			1		
Intersarsity - Individual	128	77	68		
Intersarsity - Team	67	40	35		
League - Individual	4	2	9		
League - Team	6	4	1		
Local - Individual	53	24	16		
Local - Team	55	5	5		
National - Individual	49	23	35		
National - Team	46	17	15		
Provincial - Individual	2	1			
Representative - County	34	1	1		51
Representative - International	9	3	8		51
Representative - Student/Universities	2		2		44
UCC students gaining Sport Awards (national level)				90	

Facilities

We have some excellent facilities in UCC. The Mardyke Arena is an indoor facility comparable with those of leading universities worldwide. All students are members of the Arena and participate extensively in the programmes and activities in one of the biggest indoor facilities in the country. A recent analysis of Mardyke Arena usage reveals that 83% of its fitness class attendees are drawn from the UCC student body. We will continue to develop our facilities at the Mardyke to create a world-class hub for sport and physical activity.

Although UCC provides a wide range of outdoor spaces, these are now outdated and require urgent investment to bring them to the required standard to cater for a growing number of teams and participants. Through building and developing world-class outdoor sports facilities which supplement the Mardyke Arena's indoor offerings, UCC can attract and inspire high-performance athletes as well as supporting students at all levels in physical recreation. We will develop an inspiring destination for outdoor teams at a new UCC Sports Park in Curraheen to replace our present facilities at the Farm. We will also work with key stakeholders, sporting organisations in the region and the agencies in Cork to support the provision and access to a quality network of community, sporting recreational and performance facilities.

Scholarship Programmes

UCC provides sports scholarships to over 90 students annually through our flagship Quercus Talented Students' Programme, the UCC Sport scholarships and other programmes provided by external agencies. This is a vital support in the recognition and attraction of talented students to help them excel in their academic and sporting ambitions.



Challenges and New Opportunities

- Responding to increasing student numbers and staffing numbers across the university;
- Managing growth and demand across a wide variety clubs, teams, individuals to participate in sport and physical activity;
- Addressing the requirements to increase investment in sport facilities and services as other universities in Munster and nationally increase their investment in new modern facilities (indoor, outdoor, artificial surfaces and high performance programmes);
- Recognising that our outdoor facilities need a step change in provision and quality;
- Attracting the next generation of students, parents and community to UCC who increasingly value the role that sport and physical activity can play in supporting their academic choices and options;
- Increasing the supply of academic courses to meet new opportunities in the areas of sports management; marketing, technology, law, research, physical activity performance, nutrition, health and fitness;
- Working with and developing partnerships with Sport Ireland, the National Institute of Sport, Coaching Ireland, Student Sport Ireland and National Governing Bodies;
- Raising our profile, communicating and connecting with our students, staff, partners and alumni in rapidly changing digital and online sporting world;
- Supporting the evolution of sport in Cork and the wider Munster region to ensure we are to the fore of learning, research and innovation in all areas of sport and physical activity;
- Maximising the resources of our Connected University including its world-class research community and the wide range of expertise across many different disciplines.

National/International Policy Context for Sport in UCC

This strategy for sport and physical activity in UCC is written during a period of expansion and growing recognition of the sector in Ireland, in Europe and globally. A wide range of policy documents, strategies and data have informed the development of this plan and shaping our vision and key strategic priorities including:



- *The UCC Strategic Plan (2017 – 2022), the Academic Strategy (2018 – 2022), the Teaching & Learning Strategy (2017- 2022) and the Research & Innovation Strategic Plan (2017- 2022)*
- *The National Sport Policy (2018 – 2027)*
- *Sport Ireland Strategic Plan*
- *Economic and Social Research Institute (ERSI) Reports on Physical Activity for Sport Ireland*
- *National Development Plan 2040*
- *World Health Organisation policies and data (2018, 2010, 2006)*
- *Student Sport Ireland Strategic Plan (2017- 2020)*
- *Student Sport Ireland – Student Sport Activity and Sports Study Ireland (2016)*
- *Olympics Agenda 2020 (IOC 2014)*
- *Top 5 Global Industry Trends – Nielsen Sport (2018)*
- *Six Trends Expected to Disrupt and Dominate the Sports Industry – Deloitte (2018)*
- *World Trademark Review 2017 – study on the global value of sport business*

Some key points to consider in the context of this strategy are:

Sport In Ireland

- The 2015 *Healthy Ireland* report found that 56% of 15–24 year old males and 34% of 15–24 year old females were highly active. Student activity levels decline by more than 3% with each additional year of age.
- 32% of students participate in sport and physical activity within their college.
- 14% of students participate in sport and physical activity within their college only.
- 15% of all students are members of college sports clubs.
- 58% of college sport and physical activity facilities have access for students with a disability.
- 53% of students participating in college only had taken up a new activity since starting their third-level education.

(Sources National Sport Policy 2018 – Get Ireland Active 2016 Student Sport Ireland SASSI report 2016)

Impact of Sport

- Sport-related spending contributes €1.8 billion in value added to the Irish economy, equivalent to 1.4% of economy-wide Gross Domestic Product (GDP);
- A 2010 Indecon report found that: Irish households spend €1.9 billion annually on sport and sport-related goods and services, equal to 2% of the value of consumer spending in the Irish economy;
- KPMG reported that the entire global sports market – including infrastructure, events, and training and sports goods – is estimated to be worth between \$600-700 billion year and its growth outpaces the GDP growth of most countries.
- Taking into account revenues from sporting goods and licensed products, health and fitness clubs, and other non-event activities as well as events, the sports market generates \$600 billion to \$700 billion, or roughly 1 percent of global GDP
- Physical inactivity costs ‘€80.4 billion per year to the EU-28 by 2030 we could reach annual costs of over €125 billion’ (International Sport and Culture Association (ISCA)/Centre for Economics and Business Research (CEBR), 2015, p.6).
- The impact and benefits of sport and physical activity have been well documented – the UK government defined five simple but fundamental outcomes: physical health, mental health, individual development, social and community development and economic development.(Sporting Future 2016)
- More women, ethnic minority communities and emerging markets populations will engage with sport, changing the complexion of sports media and marketing.

(Sources: National Sport Policy 2018, Sporting Future 2016, WTR Review, Nielson Sports 2018, Deloitte Review 2018)

VISION FOR SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN UCC



Our vision is crafted on what makes UCC different and unique when we are at our very best. It is built on 10 key truths:

1. **UCC and Cork can be considered a Democratic Republic of Sport**
2. **We have legacy and pride in our soil and in our blood**
3. **Our belief is greater than our doubt**
4. **UCC sport and physical activity *is* for everyone**
5. **Our breadth and depth is our strength**
6. **Sport and physical activity is a release valve from the pressures of modern university life**
7. **We are thriving through sport and physical activity**
8. **We have citizenship at heart**
9. **We are many tribes and one team.**
10. **The Skull and Crossbones is more than a logo**

We are a proud university and we believe that our best is yet to come. We believe that we have it in us—in our disparate parts and in our many tribes—to galvanise and unify to make UCC a destination for sport and physical activity for students, staff, the media, commercial and sporting bodies and agencies; to be a destination for companies seeking graduate talent; to be a catalyst for the future growth and development of sport in UCC and in Cork.

So now is the time to realise the full potential of UCC sport and physical activity as a joined-up, go-to force to be reckoned with.

Vision

The globally renowned go-to university for sport and physical activity in Ireland

Purpose

Realise and unleash the potential of UCC sport and physical activity

Values

Ambition and Grit · Unity and Respect

Resilience and Betterment · Discovery and Innovation

And to help us realise our vision, our entire community of sport and physical activity will galvanise behind a North Star mantra that will, perhaps for the first time, lend words to the meaning of our brand:

Mantra

Pride on our chest. Belief in our heart. Sport in our bones.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

To help us achieve our vision on behalf of our students, we have set out an ambitious plan against six strategic priorities:

PRIORITY 1

Ignite the UCC community of sport

PRIORITY 2

Maximise our brand's potential

PRIORITY 3

Create a culture of holistic development

PRIORITY 4

Sharpen our edge

PRIORITY 5

Develop world-class facilities

PRIORITY 6

Create success through leadership

Through the implementation of this strategy we strive for the outcomes identified in each priority section which follows. We will use the identified key performance indicators (KPIs) to establish baseline measures, clear targets and report on progress against our strategic priorities.

PRIORITY 1:

IGNITE THE UCC COMMUNITY OF SPORT

KEY ACTIONS

1.1 **Develop and launch the UCC Sport for Life Club: Many Tribes - One Team to connect our players, volunteers, sponsors, supporters and alumni through their pride and belief in UCC Sport.**

- a) Develop a multi-layered business plan and strategy for launch with all audiences.
- b) Create a #SIOB (Sport in Our Bones) social badge for students, staff and alumni to wear with pride on all online platforms.
- c) Recognise our alumni through a yearly UCC Sport Hall of Fame Day to reward their part in our continued legacy and to engage with the alumni community in a new way.
- d) Explore the idea of a new UCC Sport Club House for all new engagements around sport and physical activity and the UCC Sport for Life Club.

1.2 **Create a university-wide ripple effect of pride and support in the pursuits and achievements of the Skull and Crossbones community through visible and consistent communications at multiple cross-campus touch points.**

1.3 **Continue to democratise the power of sport for one and all:**

- a) Continue to drive the development of clubs and participation in sport and physical activity in UCC and in wider network of schools, clubs and community.
- b) Align to all university strategies and activities to continue to support community engagement.
- c) Develop UCC Social Sport Programme, encouraging recreational participation in sport as an alternative to other social options for our students, e.g. one-off sampling activities, out of hours recreation (e.g. lunchtime sport, Friday night five-a-side, Saturday Night Scrimmage).
- d) Launch a new Sport for All initiative to increase opportunities and accessibility for all members and the wider community in Cork.

1.4 **Use the power of the Skull and Crossbones to maximise Cork's passion for sport:**

- a) Relaunch UCC's Festival of Sport to engage the entire community in the social and cultural power of sport each year.
- b) Continue to support local community engagement to spread the positive benefits of sport to where it's needed most.

1.5 **Launch a new initiative to build global connections, partnerships, events, competitions, opportunities and strategic alliances with like-minded, networked universities in line with the UCC's Strategic Plan 2017-2022.**



OUTCOME

Ensure sport and physical activity in UCC is an inspirational and central part of the student experience; drive the connections and engagement with our alumni, wider community and stakeholders.

KPIs

- Levels of engagement of students, staff, alumni, neighbours with sport and physical activity in UCC.
- Satisfaction levels with sport and physical activity in UCC.
- Engagement with and partnerships with external sporting agencies and organisations by UCC.

PRIORITY 2:

MAXIMISE OUR BRAND'S POTENTIAL

KEY ACTIONS

2.1 Build a brand and commercial marketing team to realise the potential of the UCC Sport brand through co-ordination of resource and management, in alignment with UCC's marketing strategy.

2.2 Push the UCC Sport brand to its full strength:

- a) Explore and define the appropriate branding strategies across the Department of Sport and Physical Activity, the Mardyke Arena, Sports Studies and UCC Sport for Life Club.
- b) Re-visit and build on unified UCC Sport brand guidelines to drive consistency of branding and applications of our logo at every point of contact.
- c) Develop a brand communications plan including social media strategy (#SIOB - Sport in Our Bones) to deliver the energy and traction that will help us become the globally renowned go to university for sport and physical activity in Ireland, and to maximise on key media opportunities.

2.3 Become a destination online brand:

- a) Build and launch an innovative online UCC sport platform as a go to destination for all activity, communication, research, education and innovation in sport and physical activity.
- b) Grow our global online community of fans, students, alumni, corporate partners using #SIOB (Sport in Our Bones) social badging to create standout and scale.

2.4 Innovate to create sustainable value for UCC Sport and its community:

- a) Create a desirable new line of UCC Sport Skull and Crossbones branded apparel to fulfil the desire of our students, alumni, community and visitors to wear the Skull and Crossbones with the pride it deserves and to capitalise on the commercialisation potential of the UCC Sport brand.
- b) Develop a UCC Sport brand currency to incentivise and reward participation in sport and physical activity (in partnership with/ redeemable in on-campus and local businesses).
- c) Develop a sponsorship strategy to ensure maximisation of the value of our ambition through potential kit sponsorship and other commercial opportunities.



OUTCOME

Make sport and physical activity in UCC one of the highest profile, identifiable, dynamic, engaged and online destinations in university sport.

KPIs

- Unified brand agreed and operational.
- Brand recognition growth and commercialisation.
- Profile of sport and physical activity in UCC and related activities.
- Increased commercial investment.
- Growth in online platforms and activities.

PRIORITY 3: CREATE A CULTURE OF HOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT

KEY ACTIONS

3.1 Promote a sustainable culture of development to enable our people, clubs and participants to reach their full potential:

- a) Provide support, investment and training to develop and promote our network of clubs to grow participation in sport and physical activity.
- b) Design player pathways to ensure we are strategically developing our talent.
- c) Design and implement a Coach Development Plan (in line with Sport Ireland Coaching and NGBs) to develop and strengthen our coaches for the benefit of themselves, their players and teams.
- d) Create a volunteer strategy to ensure we are screening, recruiting, training, monitoring to maintain quality and standards, and rewarding our volunteers in return for their dedication and involvement.
- e) Develop the UCC Sport Mentor Scheme for the UCC Sport community to harness the invaluable experience of UCC alumni (in business, in coaching, in sport, etc.) in preparation for life after university, guided by the Connected Curriculum framework.
- f) Measure student-athlete graduate attributes through the Self-Assessment Spike Profile provided for in the *UCC Academic Strategy 2018-2022*.

3.2 Solidify culture of excellence:

- a) Co-create a UCC Student-Athlete Creed with our Student-Athletes (and in line with the university's graduate attributes as outlined on page 12), and then share, sustain, and uphold.
- b) Define and complete a club success framework to define club success, progress, standards, and goals (performance, participation, recreation, community engagement, etc.).
- c) Support community engagement strategies in partnership with Cork Sports Partnership, the City Council, the County Council and other agencies.

3.3 Embrace a culture of wellness and participation in physical activity.

- a) Launch the UCC sport and physical activity State of Mind Programme in connection with the 5 Ways To Wellbeing programme/State of Mind programme.
- b) Design and launch #ActiveUCC to co-ordinate and promote physical activity through all our programmes (including our campus-wide UCC Made2Move programme), and to co-ordinate physical activity and health enhancing initiatives with the aim of being Ireland's first university green and active flags and most active campus.
- c) Reward and recognise participation to demonstrate UCC's belief in the value of health and wellbeing.
- d) Work with the extended community in Cork and the region – ie schools, CIT, local agencies, sports groups, outdoor education and adventure sports sector to promote and develop sport and physical activity.



OUTCOME

Grow and increase sport and physical activity in UCC resulting in the most active campus; more participants; better players, clubs, coaches and volunteers; most sought after graduates.

KPIs

- Participation levels in sport and physical activity (indoor, outdoor, health and fitness).
- Number, quality and investment in recognised UCC clubs.
- Membership + activity levels of clubs - teams/individuals.
- Number of quality full time and part time UCC coaches.
- Level of training and support for coaches and volunteers.
- Evidence to demonstrate value of sport and physical activity in the recruitment of UCC graduates.

PRIORITY 4: SHARPEN OUR EDGE

KEY ACTIONS

4.1 Develop and execute our performance strategy:

- a) Define and implement our performance strategy for success at club, individual and elite levels.
- b) Define our Athlete Development Programme.
- c) Define a Coaching Performance Charter to ensure we are consistently monitoring the performance and progress of our coaching team.
- d) Maintain our Emerging Talent Programme in line with and feeding in to our Performance Strategy.
- e) Lead the way in research, performance and Innovation in the areas of sports medicine and physiotherapy, sports science, technology and other related areas.
- f) Establish Student-Athlete Academic Liaison Programme to enable and support student-athletes to perform to their academic and sporting potential, learning from the success of the Quercus Talented Students' Programme.

4.2 Build sustainable partnerships to raise how we perform in sport in UCC:

- a) Ensure there is a new focus on research and innovation linking with the other UCC schools and departments, in particular Sports Studies + PE, Sports Medicine, Physiotherapy, Sports Science, Nutrition and the wider UCC research community, through the ethos of the Connected Curriculum.
- b) Engage in partnerships with Sport Ireland Institute, Sport Ireland Coaching, sporting bodies and agencies and local clubs to develop and implement our performance strategy.
- c) Build connections with external commercial partners to create opportunities for research and development and innovation.

4.3 Prove the value of sport to UCC:

- a) Conduct breakthrough research to prove the value of sport and physical activity on performance as students, staff, and employees.

4.4 Review and redefine scholarship offerings:

- a) Innovate and create a leading edge UCC Sports Scholarship 2.0 programme to enhance our current offering.
- b) Maximise and support on-going investment in the Quercus Talented Students' Programme.

4.5 Launch UCC as a destination for development in the off-season:

- a) Establish off-peak residential UCC High Performance Camps for teams, schools, colleges, coaches and others to support sports development, create student employment and commercial opportunities.
- b) Design and deliver Corporate Wellbeing Camps with UCC Student Health Services, the Mardyke Arena and others to enhance corporate performance and generate new streams of revenue.
- c) Develop UCC as a go-to destination for high performance events and competitions for external companies, teams, and agencies.

4.6 Advance and expand learning, discovery, and innovation in UCC sport and physical activity academic courses:

- a) Develop a suite of bespoke, research-informed and practice led academic programmes for undergraduates and continuing professional development for sport and physical activity related professions.
- b) Utilise signature learning-centred pedagogies and assessment tools in face-to-face and blended learning settings.
- c) Become a global centre of excellence for learning and teaching in sport and physical activity.



OUTCOME

Become a global centre of excellence and innovation for participating in, performing, excelling, teaching and learning sport and physical activity.

KPIs

- Increase in and recognition of the number of performance level athletes, teams and programmes in UCC.
- Number and investment in scholarships awarded (UCC Sport/Quercus/other).
- Success and winning performances in third-level, regional, national and international competitions.
- UCC athletes on county, provincial, international representative teams and squads.
- UCC participants and success in Olympic Games, World and European events.
- Growth in sports related academic courses/programmes and number of students.
- Growth in research and innovation in sport education, sports medicine, sports physiotherapy, sport science, sports technology and physical activity.

PRIORITY 5:

DEVELOP WORLD CLASS FACILITIES

KEY ACTIONS

5.1 Develop and implement the new master plan for all sports facilities in UCC.

- a) Implement plans to invest in and develop a network of new world-class outdoor sports facilities at the new UCC Sports Park, Curraheen which support UCC and our partners recreational, training, competitive, performance and academic requirements there and at the Mardyke.
- b) Continue to provide and develop world class indoor recreational, training, competition, performance and academic facilities and services at the Mardyke and other locations as required.
- c) Design the branding and mapping of our facilities on campus, the UCC Mardyke Sports Hub, UCC Sports Park in Curraheen and at other locations to promote and increase sustainable participation in sport and physical activity and wellness.

5.2 Maximise the management and operation of our facilities.

- a) Ensure effective management, operation and ongoing maintenance in our sports facilities with a focus on meeting the needs of students, clubs and teams.
- b) Ensure we can also operate our facilities to be available to external users and partners.

5.3 Engage with key stakeholders to lead the way in the creation of world class network of sport and physical activity facilities in Cork.

- a) Work in partnership with Cork City and County Council, Cork Sports Partnership, schools, other local agencies and the community to create and brand a unique city centre sports and physical activity zone from the mouth of the River Lee to the Mardyke, down to the Lee fields and out to Curraheen
- b) Create partnerships with National Governing Bodies and leading sporting organisations in Cork to develop, share and explore the future development of world-class training, competition and performance facilities which support the requirements of UCC and their participants.

5.4 Develop new innovative operational training and facility management initiatives and courses.

- a) Utilise and maximise the experience we have in UCC to train and develop the next generation of facilities operatives/managers.
- b) Maximise and lead in the innovation of technology and initiatives to manage, monitor and track participation and engagement in sport and physical activity.
- c) Explore and develop ideas and design of facilities and services which meet the lifestyle challenges of our students and the wider population to increase and sustain participation in sport and physical activity.



OUTCOME

Deliver a network of world-class sports facilities in UCC, contributing to Cork being a leading city and destination for physical activity, lifestyle and sport.

KPIs

- Provision and usage of a quality indoor, outdoor sport and physical activity facilities and space.
- Satisfaction levels with facilities and services.

PRIORITY 6:

CREATE SUCCESS THROUGH LEADERSHIP

KEY ACTIONS

6.1 Establish a new, joined-up leadership model:

- a) Create a new SPORTS LEADERSHIP TEAM (SLT)
 - a unified nine member board for sport and physical activity composed of: An Independent Chair; Director of Sport and Physical Activity; General Manager of the Mardyke Arena; Head of the School of Education; Director of Student Experience; President of the Clubs Executive Sport; President of the Students Union; UCC Financial Representative; External Representative (Commercial). This team will report to the Deputy President and Registrar.
- b) Ensure the SLT is responsible for developing a robust plan and monitoring the implementation of the strategy; ensuring co-ordination, reporting and accountability for plans and programmes; approval and review of annual operational and business plans; maximisation of resources and revenues and with a new focus on research and innovation connecting to the curriculum.

6.2 Implement a three-year transition plan for sport and physical activity

- a) Prepare an implementation plan including roles and responsibilities, maximisation of resources and generation of new investment and revenues.
- b) Develop a plan for beyond the three-year transition period.

6.3 Establish a connected operating model to maximise our resources and talent:

- a) Create new joint operational model between the Department of Sport and Physical Activity; The Mardyke Arena; Sports Studies; and UCC Clubs to deliver the strategy, with key principles in a new service level agreement framework.
- b) Review and maximise existing resources to appoint lead programme managers in the areas of performance, coaching/development and physical activity.
- c) A new co-ordinated approach to marketing, commercial activity and branding to build a common approach on the UCC Sport brand, raising profile, social media platforms, partnerships and commercial opportunities for UCC sport and physical activity .
- d) Define a new facilities operational model in the context of the development of the sports facilities master plan.
- e) Ensure our digital infrastructure is fit for purpose to meet the aspirations of sport and physical activity in UCC.

6.4 Develop and manage a robust financial plan for UCC Sport to facilitate the capital investment for new facilities, the ongoing operational costs for running those facilities and delivery of all aspects of this plan.

6.5 Ensure an active contribution to the delivery of the UCC Academic Strategy 2018-2022, with a particular focus on developing the desired graduate attributes of UCC alumni through sport and physical activity.



OUTCOME

Unify, strengthen and transform the leadership, governance, culture, ethos, operations, business and academic programmes of sport and physical activity in UCC.

KPIs

- Establish Sports Leadership Team.
- Introduction of a new co-ordinated structural model for UCC sport and physical activity.
- Growth in the investment and scale of the business and operation of sport and physical activity in UCC.



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