



1

Executive
Summary

UCD and its graduates have played an unparalleled role in the development of an independent and successful Irish State. From the time John Henry Newman delivered the lectures that were to be published as *The Idea of a University*, UCD and its antecedent institutions have been committed to the ideals of building a thriving, prosperous nation and preserving and transmitting its heritage. So many of Ireland's leaders, whether in politics, the public service, the arts, sport, business or the professions, spent their formative years at UCD - a track record of which UCD can be justifiably proud and which, at the same time, it feels a duty and a responsibility to sustain.

Five years ago UCD launched a strategic plan focused on contributing to Ireland's future development as the new century unfolds. This plan has delivered:

- Radical reform of UCD's undergraduate curriculum with the launch of the modular, semesterised and credit-based *UCD Horizons* curriculum
- The establishment of graduate schools and structured PhD programmes to support 4th-level training
- The launch of a new research strategy and support system with a particular focus on the development of large thematic multidisciplinary research programmes
- A complete overhaul of academic recruitment, development and promotion systems
- The formulation of a new campus development plan.

This plan sets out the strategic direction for UCD for the next five years, a time which will be among the most challenging in our 155-year history. A defining characteristic of the plan is to build on our excellence in teaching and research and to place greater emphasis on the impact which these activities have on the economic, environmental, social and political life of the nation. Now, in a time of national and global difficulty, UCD is once again committing its intellectual resources to the rebirth of economic prosperity in Ireland.

It is critical in these challenging times that Ireland maintains and develops the outward-looking, internationally aware focus which has been a hallmark of our development as a nation in the recent past. UCD will be in the vanguard of this development. While remaining distinctively and uncompromisingly Irish, UCD will provide opportunities for both students and staff to gain experience in the wider world, will actively welcome international students and staff to Ireland and will provide a resource for the Irish diaspora worldwide. In particular, UCD will play a lead role in the continued

development of Ireland's relationships in North America and Asia. The UCD Confucius Institute Ireland, the first of its kind in this country, will serve as a ready-made channel to develop relationships with China.

This plan will establish innovation as a third, constitutive pillar of UCD's activity and identity, building on the achievements in education and research. This will simultaneously challenge our teachers and researchers to translate excellent education and research into contexts where they may be expected to have a high impact, all the while supplementing more traditional educational concerns with the development of innovative and entrepreneurial capacity amongst our students. The University's ambition to link education, research and innovation more effectively will enable an increasing number of students to convert knowledge, ideas and inventions into the development of life-enhancing products, services and policies in a manner that will enrich all aspects of social and economic life in Ireland and beyond.

“What an empire is in political history, such is a University in the sphere of philosophy and research. It is...the high protecting power of all knowledge and science, of fact and principle, of inquiry and discovery, of experiment and speculation.” John Henry Newman, *The Idea of a University*

A key element of this foregrounding of innovation is the establishment of an *Innovation Alliance* in partnership with Trinity College, Dublin (TCD), including unprecedented levels of collaboration with government and industry. The *Innovation Alliance* itself is intended to be part of a wider national recovery programme leading to, in the government's own terms, a 'Smart Economy', within which our students and graduates will flourish.

A related element of UCD's Strategic Plan to 2014 will see UCD building on its major all-island and international collaborations. We will work closely with Queen's University Belfast (QUB), building on a tripartite agreement signed by UCD, TCD and QUB, in a way that will add value to UCD's academic programmes and advance the twin aims of increased social cohesion and economic development on this island. Through UCD's membership of the *Universitas 21* network of global research universities, we will develop programmes which will offer unprecedented opportunities in terms of student mobility, global research collaborations and development of university management expertise.

Throughout the period of the Strategic Plan to 2014, research at UCD will be focused strategically on four priority themes:

1. Earth Sciences, Energy and the Environment
2. Global Ireland
3. Health and Healthcare Delivery
4. Information, Computation and Communications.

This focus will both capture the range of current UCD research activity and boost significantly this activity through the creation of interdisciplinary synergy and the further mining of an already rich seam of national and international collaboration.

As already mentioned, this plan is being written at a time of global economic turmoil and uncertainty, and its content will inevitably reflect that wider context to a certain degree. While determined to keep the University on a solid financial footing during the period of this plan, we will continue to invest strategically in and to seek government and private support for priority academic activity and development. UCD is committed to playing its part in the achievement of national recovery through developments which will enhance our agenda-shaping education programmes and transform our research and innovation programmes.

One of the critical elements of this plan is a commitment to the achievement of balance. This will see UCD strike an appropriate balance between contributing to the regeneration of economic prosperity and offering a vision which goes beyond immediate constraints to develop new knowledge and challenge accepted truths.

Our plan is not an end in itself but rather marks a milestone in our continuous and self-correcting strategic planning process. We are committed to service through excellence in education, research and innovation. This document, informed by the views of our community of stakeholders, sets out our current thinking on how best to deliver on that commitment.



1.1. Summary of key initiatives

Over the lifetime of this plan, UCD is committed to delivering key initiatives:

1.1.1. Education

- Further develop the *UCD Horizons* undergraduate curriculum, strengthening programmes, fostering student engagement and fully exploiting the flexibility of the modular curriculum
- Ensure all newly appointed staff receive appropriate training and professional development in university teaching
- Mainstream assessment of teaching quality and feedback on the student experience (as a signal of the importance UCD attaches to ongoing enhancement of teaching quality and student engagement it will be the norm that professors contribute to the teaching of first-year undergraduates)
- Focus on stimulating creativity, innovation, entrepreneurship and active citizenship in all our students
- Ensure that the UCD environment and its curriculum prepare graduates for life and work across international borders
- Create a unique set of opportunities and supports for highly talented students through the establishment of the *UCD Ad Astra Academy*
- Establish the *UCD Institute for Learning Innovation and Academic Development* to support UCD's growing community of teaching innovators and educational researchers and to highlight and disseminate, nationally and internationally, UCD's achievements in learning innovation and academic development.

1.1.2. Developing UCD's profile

Over the lifetime of this plan, UCD will realign its institutional profile by:

- Growing and developing graduate education, particularly through the expansion of the taught masters portfolio and the development of doctoral programmes, so that by 2014 one-third of our student body will be graduate students
- Building on our success in widening participation, in particular by ensuring our programmes can be pursued part-time, so that by 2014 students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds, mature students, students with disabilities and part-time students will together comprise 25 per cent of our student body
- Attracting greater numbers of international students with the ultimate objective of 25 per cent of our students being international students.

1.1.3. Research and PhD training

- UCD has prioritised four major research themes which build on the University's established or emerging research strengths, dovetail with national research policy objectives and contribute to the preservation and exploration of Ireland's cultural heritage and the development of solutions for current global challenges. The priority themes are:
 - Earth Sciences, Energy and the Environment
 - Health and Healthcare Delivery
 - Information, Computation and Communications
 - Global Ireland.
- UCD will support the ongoing development of scholars and research programmes in these areas through strategic use of intramural funding and diversification of its extramural funding sources.
- With the support of UCD's graduate schools, structured PhD programmes will be built around major research programmes with a view to developing the talent pool that will underpin the future growth and wider impact of these research initiatives.
- UCD will further refine its research-institute model as a means of fostering large multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary research programmes, including the development of three new institutes:
 1. UCD Earth Sciences Institute
 2. UCD Complex Adaptive Systems Laboratory
 3. UCD Charles Institute (for dermatological research and training).
- The University will develop a new masterplan for the archival, information and communication technologies (ICT) and physical infrastructure required for ongoing support of UCD's humanities and social sciences research.
- While supporting the development of strategic and applied research programmes, UCD will continue to be a vocal advocate for the importance of unfettered enquiry as a critical feature of a successful research-intensive university.

1.1.4. Innovation

- UCD will produce a new breed of innovative, entrepreneurial PhD graduate through the *UCD-TCD Innovation Academy*.
- We will establish a new UCD-TCD joint venture in enterprise development which will act as a one-stop shop supporting commercialisation of university-generated research findings, assisting development of spin-in companies and fostering partnerships with Irish-based industry.
- UCD will develop strategic partnerships with relevant government agencies, local authorities (particularly in Dublin) and other stakeholders to maximise the impact of the State's investment in research on economic development.

1.1.5. Finance

- UCD will expand revenue from academic (graduate and international), commercial and philanthropic areas and thereby lessen reliance on state funding sources.
- UCD will provide better alignment of our cost base with available revenues through prioritised recruitment and aggressive management of non-pay costs.

1.1.6. Human resources

- Building on work already completed during the period of the last plan, UCD will further develop career pathways and opportunities for academic and non-academic staff alike.
- UCD will build on the initial investment the University has made in staff performance and development through the Performance Management Development System (PMDS) process and leadership and mentoring programmes.

1.1.7. Campus infrastructure

- UCD will use of the new Gateway Campus Masterplan to guide the development of Belfield as a living, green and sustainable campus which is both a laboratory for and an exemplar of energy-efficient building design and landscaping.
- UCD will complete the recently launched €300 million capital development programme that includes:
 - Re-development of UCD's Science Centre
 - UCD Sutherland School of Law
 - UCD Charles Institute
 - New Student Learning, Leisure and Sports Centre
 - Development of a new support facility for UCD's international and graduate students
 - Refurbishment and expansion of student residences
 - National Institute for Bioprocessing Research and Training (NIBRT) (in partnership with the IDA).
- UCD will complete a masterplan for and begin redevelopment of the UCD Newman Library Complex and the UCD Michael Smurfit School of Business.
- UCD will further develop the 'leveraged model' for funding of capital development which sees the University partnering with the State and with philanthropists to put in place the key infrastructure necessary to maintain UCD's international competitiveness and to maximise its impact on Ireland's future development.