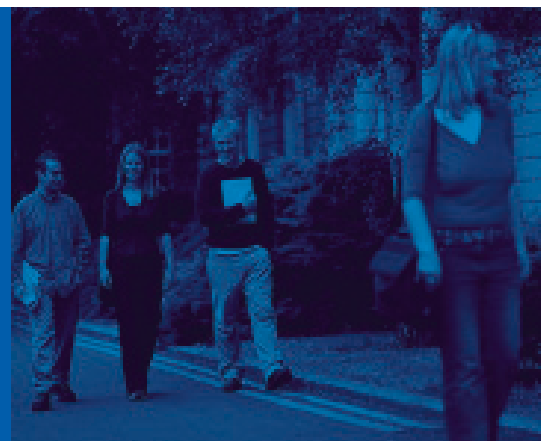# 5

Supporting the Strategy

5.1   STAFF - OUR PRIMARY RESOURCE

The realisation of UCD's strategy requires an unprecedented commitment to staff: the strategic recruitment of new staff and the facilitation of the fullest development of current staff. Our success in relation to supporting the strategy through our staff will result in UCD being a place where the individual is valued and nurtured, and where performance is assessed in an appropriate and structured manner, supported by appropriate opportunities for personal and professional development.

More specifically UCD will be an institution where:

- Respect for the individual is a central theme of the organisation's culture;

- Equality of opportunity is demonstrable;

- Opportunities for career advancement and skills development are open to all staff;

- The dynamic between the development of current staff and recruitment of new staff will be planned carefully so as to facilitate the development of new staff through mentoring while allowing the introduction of new competencies to grow new skills amongst current staff;

- Performance is evaluated against externally-validated and internationally-relevant metrics and achievement and excellence are rewarded;

- The contributions of all staff (academic, administrative, technical and support) are recognised equally, and where all staff have appropriate personal and professional development opportunities, promotional pathways, and mechanisms to recognise and reward achievement and performance.

VALUE THE INDIVIDUAL

At the heart of UCD's strategy on staff development is a commitment to equality, fairness and respect for all of our staff members. UCD will:

- Ensure that it is seen as being at the forefront amongst Irish employers in terms of equality and fairness in our recruitment and staff development policies;

- Demonstrate respect for the individual through specific policies and the promotion and development of a respectful culture.

Key actions

- Drawing on the recently published Employment Equality Audit, develop a programme to ensure that UCD meets the highest standards in terms of equality and fairness. This will be based on measurable achievement over a defined period;

- Review and renew policies on respect for the individual and implement cultural reform where necessary to ensure these policies are adhered to.

REVIEW, REFOCUS AND REDEVELOP STAFF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

The achievement of organisational goals will be dependent on a workforce, both academic and administrative, whose skills are developed to meet the challenges of changing demands within a changing environment. In order to capitalise on these opportunities significant investment will be made in the development of key skills.

Specifically UCD aims to:

- Punctuate the value that it attaches to the individual by fostering an institutional and operational unit culture that builds teams and encourages cross-boundary contributions in a way that extends beyond academic interdisciplinarity;

- Ensure that staff at all levels have the opportunity to develop the range of interpersonal and functional skills that they need in order to do their current jobs excellently;

- Provide development and transitional support to enable staff at all levels to build competencies in anticipation of, and in conjunction with, assuming positions with greater and different responsibilities;

- Ensure that financial investment commensurate with leading European universities is made in skills development;

- Employ a wide range of skills development approaches including the use of e-learning tools.

Key actions

- Develop optimal skills requirements profiles for staff in all categories based on leading European universities;

- Match the skills profiles of UCD staff to the optimal skills requirements profiles;

- Develop a comprehensive training plan to deliver required skills with a focus on delivery through e-learning processes where appropriate.

FORMALISE EVALUATION OF STAFF PERFORMANCE

All UCD staff will have their performance evaluated against defined, specific objectives on a regular basis. Career development and progression and the reward of excellence can only operate effectively and fairly in an environment where performance is measured and evaluated. Specifically, UCD will:

- Develop a workload model for academic staff which ensures fairness, transparency and productivity are realised;

- Ensure that the workload model recognises disciplinary differences and particular staff needs of professional programmes;

- Develop for all groups of staff, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, staff performance criteria which underpin the delivery of the university's goals;

- Recognise and reward those who demonstrate high levels of performance against defined criteria.

Key actions

- Define, develop, implement and monitor the evaluation process;

- Define, publicise and subsequently demonstrate reward for high performance.

DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A PROGRAMME OF STRATEGIC RECRUITMENT

The attainment of strategic objectives across all key areas of university activity from research to teaching and learning and administration will be critically dependent on developing and/or recruiting new and diverse skill sets into UCD. Specifically we will:

- Recruit leading researchers in areas of identified high priority and expand the number of Professorships to create critical mass;

- Design flexible remuneration packages to enable UCD successfully attract excellent staff internationally;

- Develop recruitment strategies to support priority programmes that have a need for major curriculum reform and where there is a skill set deficit amongst existing staff;

- Develop administrative and organisation capabilities through strategic recruitment from professional, public service, industrial and commercial sectors.

Key actions

- Clarify target areas for recruitment of senior researchers and utilise search and selection activities as well as traditional recruitment approaches;

- Establish appropriate mechanisms for the recruitment of more junior academics, including a clear and transparent tenure-track mechanism;

- Evaluate the development of teaching programmes and develop recruitment plans to meet these requirements;

- Develop a strategy for the reorganisation of technical, administrative and support staff which, in the context of a proposed reform of UCD's academic structures, enhances the effectiveness, training, development and promotional opportunities for such staff;

- Critically evaluate the administrative and organisational areas in which UCD wishes to excel and develop recruitment plans to develop these capabilities.

5.2 INFORMATION SYSTEMS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

SYSTEMS DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT

In keeping with leading international practice, significant IT and administrative supports will be put in place to underpin our student support, our research, teaching and learning and management processes. The emphasis should not merely be on the provision of information services, but also on the use of information and performance indicators to inform academic, research and management decision making.

We will:

- Continue to implement and extend the transactional and infrastructural support and services that are offered to students and staff in accordance with UCD's comprehensive IT strategy;

- Redefine our ambition in the employment of IT to be aligned with that of excellent research-oriented universities against whom we will benchmark ourselves;

- Renew and extend our commitment to offer an increased range of technology interactions and supports for our students, our potential students, our staff and our academic partners;
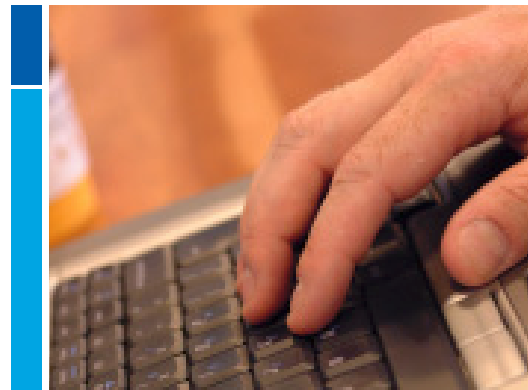
- Enhance IT literacy throughout the university community;

- Design and implement management information systems that enable us to be more effective at what we do, more understanding of the interactions between our activities and supportive of benchmarking on using comparable metrics;

- Establish an institutional research office, closely linked with quality and strategic planning functions, to optimise strategy, monitor implementation and inform decisions.

5.3 GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The composition of the Governing Authority will remain unchanged as it ensures that all of the important constituencies within the university can contribute to its governance. Building on the reform that saw the appointment of an external chair of the Governing Authority, and consistent with best international practice, it is intended to appoint an independent chair of the Finance, Remuneration and Asset Management Committee.

The objectives and actions outlined in this Strategic Plan will require the timely development of detailed policies and implementation plans. The Teaching and Learning Board, the Research and Innovation Board and a new Academic Appointments, Tenure and Promotions Board will be responsible for developing such policies and plans for debate and approval by Academic Council. The Academic Council will need to meet more often,

and streamline its procedures for dealing with routine business, if policies and implementation plans are to be approved in a realistic timeframe.

There is an urgent need to streamline academic decision making, and in the context of the proposed reforms of UCD's organisational structure (see section 6) the relative roles of Schools, Colleges, the Academic Council Executive Committee and the Academic Council itself in making decisions regarding the academic affairs of the university must be clearly defined.

5.4 QUALITY CULTURE

It is central to the vision of UCD that quality and international competitiveness will be the benchmark for all of our activities. UCD has a strong background as an early adopter of quality assurance processes. The development of a culture of quality must now be a key objective. This will involve a broadening of our quality assurance procedures, shifting the focus to quality enhancement. An expertise in institutional research will be developed providing accurate data and meaningful information on which to base academic and management decisions and quality evaluations. The quality enhancement, to be effective, must be linked to a formal strategic planning process at College and School level.

Key actions

- Establish institutional research focusing on information related to teaching and research activity, quality and effectiveness;
- Refocus quality assurance procedures to a quality enhancement approach;
- Institute strategic planning at the level of Colleges and Schools according to best practice.

5.5 COMMUNICATIONS, DEVELOPMENT AND ALUMNI RELATIONS

The success of UCD's core academic mission of teaching and research will be supported by the best resources and practices in its activities of internal and external communications, fundraising and alumni relations. These will be characterised by a commitment to the appropriate delivery of crisp and accurate messages which reflect the quality of the UCD academic endeavour, to the generation of significantly increased levels of private funding to support developments, and to building a stronger bond with generations of UCD alumni. The implementation of these goals will be characterised by the principle of subsidiarity, with certain tasks as appropriate devolving to Colleges and the central function playing key roles of leadership, co-ordination and quality assurance.

DESIGN AND IMPLEMENT A STRONG UCD BRAND

This objective signifies the commitment to create a visual image that reflects the ethos and values of the university.

Key actions

- Assess current brand(s) and provide platform for launch of a new brand drawing on relevant international experience;
- Design protocols for all UCD branding and brand deployment;
- Develop College and other sub-brands to capitalise on College and other UCD affiliations.

MAXIMISE UCD COMMUNICATIONS IMPACT TO EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

UCD is committed to communicating proactively with stakeholders in order to engage their support for the university's strategic objectives.

Key actions

- Develop high standards for all literature including student prospectus, President's Report, student recruitment material and marketing material developed for research centres and Colleges;

- Undertake revamp of the UCD website with a navigational focus on the needs of users;

- Provide support for staff involved in external communications through the provision of advice and practical assistance.

MAXIMISE UCD COMMUNICATIONS IMPACT IN RELEVANT MEDIA

This includes:

- The provision of timely, accurate and comprehensive information in response to reactive media queries;

- The development of newsworthy information for proactive promotion of UCD achievements.

Key actions

- Identify and review/renew on an ongoing basis key UCD messages;

- Identify and develop relations with key journalists;

- Develop an efficient and effective response process to media queries;

- Develop a proactive media programme to draw attention to achievements of the university, and its staff and students;

- Provide media training and other necessary resources for UCD spokespeople;

- Design and implement appropriate metrics and evaluation system for UCD communications activity at university and College level.

OVERHAUL UCD INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS STRUCTURES AND ACTIVITIES

This includes a commitment to:

- Identify deficiencies and strengths in current activity and structure;

- Define targets and performance measures for UCD internal communications activity.

Key actions

- Implement a substantial programme of structural reform in relation to internal communications to include the development of appropriate metrics;

- Provide necessary training and other resources to Associate Deans to facilitate the internal communications process.
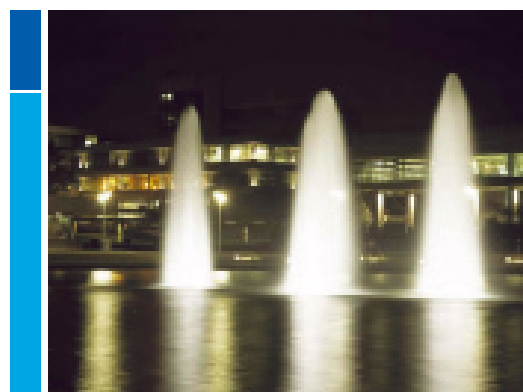
OPTIMISE UCD FUNDRAISING POTENTIAL FROM PRIVATE SOURCES

This will include the commitment to:

- Carry out major overhaul of the UCD fundraising process to include a major campaign effort;

- Identify and enlist, nationally and internationally, key donors and prospects for initial campaign.

Key actions

- Launch major UCD fundraising campaign focused on specific targeted groups;

- Recruit UCD leadership and staff required for campaign;

- Recruit volunteer leadership for UCD Campaign Board;

- Strengthen existing and develop new College-based volunteer structures such as development councils to support fundraising effort;

- Produce UCD Case Statement as key campaign document.

DEVELOP SIGNIFICANTLY ENHANCED ALUMNI RELATIONS PROGRAMME

This includes the following objectives:

- Promote enhanced level of alumni involvement across spectrum of UCD activities;

- Achieve a significant increase in alumni donations to UCD.

Key actions

- Identify and evaluate alumni perceptions of UCD through a series of structured focus groups. These groups will particularly concentrate on developing enhanced alumni involvement with the university;

- Provide UCD base for alumni;

- Enhance current range of affinity and reward offerings for alumni association with UCD;

- Strengthen existing and develop new College and School alumni initiatives.