



From the Bench to Centre Field

Celebrating 30 Years of UCD Supports
for Students with Disabilities

Bairbre Fleming & Michelle Tracey
UCD Access and Lifelong Learning



Access has been integral to UCD from the earliest days with First Rector John Henry Newman in 1855. In fact, one could suggest that access is in our DNA.

This account covers one chapter of our access story - that of disability.

The story shows how access has moved from being in one place to being mainstreamed, or part of what we now call

University for All

Our story begins...





“Besides the intern and extern members of the University, and here too with a view of opening the advantages of the University to the furthest possible extent, I have allowed studious persons to attend the lectures without entrance, on the payment of a fee”

John Henry Newman
First Rector, Catholic University

13th October 1855

“...with a view of opening the advantages of the University to the furthest possible extent”



1855



Professor Mark Rogers

UCD Registrar and Deputy President

Foreword

Thirty years ago, individual leadership coupled with a pragmatic “can do” attitude identified a need, acted on it, and started the University on a journey to support inclusion and diversity. I wonder if those involved realised the transformational impact their efforts would have in a single generation.

Today, we recognise the value of creating a truly diverse and inclusive university, a University for All, not only because it reflects our values, but because it is a fundamental requirement for educational excellence and institutional success.

University for All is underpinned by a belief that higher education should be an option for all students, realising aspirations, opening pathways, fulfilling potential where everyone works collectively towards establishing a diverse and inclusive university. Addressing diversity in our lecture halls is not something to be assigned as extra work operating in parallel to the “normal” business but is core to our values and our goals.

The changes that have occurred over the last 30 years have been gradual, each requiring effort, imagination and a belief in the vision. The contrast between the start of disability supports in UCD and our current achievements in this area are

stark when looked at in snapshot - from a single bench to a centrally positioned hub that profiles inclusion; where access and participation moves from an add-on in the strategy to a central pillar of our mission to provide “a supportive community in which every member of the University is enabled to achieve their full potential.”

I hope when we look back in another generation, our vision for an inclusive learning environment, designed for the full range of human diversity, rather than a perceived notion of a typical or so-called ‘traditional’ student, with the educational experience, supports and facilities, designed around the needs of all students will be a reality.

About this publication

Access has been synonymous with UCD since its inception in 1954.

Several initiatives and strategies have promoted the inclusion of a broad and diverse representation of students in UCD. The legacy of UCD's leadership on access is experienced across campus and in Irish society.

This book tells one chapter of this story – the emergency of disability support for students in higher education. 30 years ago

a group of individuals were on campus at the same time, and their interactions and actions provided the catalyst for change.

The story is an evolution of events which cannot be captured in one small publication. Rather, we have selected photographs, extracts and oral testimony to evoke the spirit of 30 years ago to shape and dictate inclusion. The story illustrates how we have moved our access agenda from the margins to mainstream. The individuals cited in this book act as a proxy

for the many staff and students who contributed to our access legacy.

This account is written in three sections. We offer a context of UCD and the development of the campus. The early topography of the campus was incompatible with the needs of students with a disability. Our account captures this through the experiences of students and staff on campus at that time, and the solutions-based response to the students' needs.

These solutions form the basis for our national schemes for access and the success of these early pioneers is reflected in the university strategy and structure today.

- Dr Bairbre Fleming & Michelle Tracey

“Access is in our DNA”

UCD President Andrew Deeks, 2017

John Henry Newman's vision of an open & inclusive campus has set the tone for an innovative and visionary contribution to access in Irish higher education. One such contribution has been around providing access and supports to students with disabilities. This story will illustrate how UCD took a student-centred approach over 30 years ago. This led to institutional and then national structures and entitlements which form the basis of our mainstream University for ALL.



2017

BUILDING THE CAMPUS



Turning the sod in Belfield

UCD President Michael Tierney addressing guests

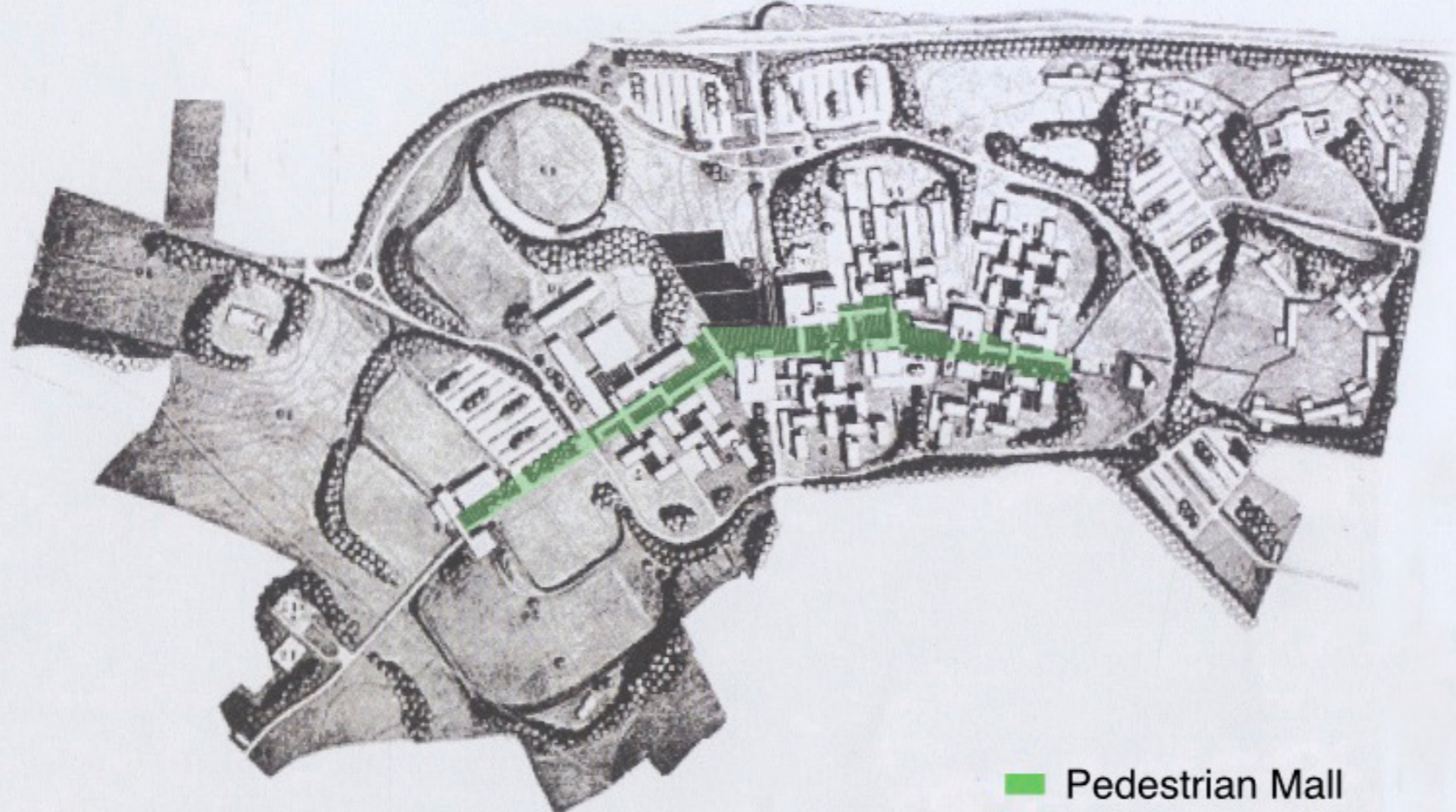



UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

SITE LAYOUT

- 1. ADMINISTRATION
- 2. STUDY HALLS
- 3. LIBRARY
- 4. STUDENT FACILITIES
- 5. ARTS
- 6. ARCHITECTURE
- 7. ARCHITECTURE
- 8. BIOLOGY
- 9. CHEMISTRY
- 10. PHYSICS
- 11. ENGINEERING
- 12. MEDICINE
- 13. GYMNASIUM
- 14. SWIMMING POOL
- 15. GYMNASIUM
- 16. DRESSING ROOM
- 17. BRICK HOUSE
- 18. MAINTENANCE BUILDING
- 19. STADIUM
- 20. PLAYING FIELDS
- 21. STUDENT HOSTELS
- 22. GATE LODGES

SCALE 1:1000



 Pedestrian Mall

UCD Belfield Plan

In 1964, Andrzej Wejchert won an international competition for UCD's new campus at Belfield. A key element of his proposal was the covered walkway, a linear element unifying a campus that would be composed of standalone buildings by different architects, constructed at different times as the university grew.



1964



Turning of the sod –
guests viewing Science
Building site

1962



Science under construction
1964

Evolving campus

There are approximately 600m covered by the walkways, running between the original Science building (Downes Meehan & Robson, 1964) and the restaurant (Scott Tallon Walker, 1970).

Wejchert envisaged that all of the buildings on the campus would be laid out on either side of a cranked spine - the canopied pedestrian walkway that he saw as the **“road of life”**

THE ROAD OF LIFE

Students with disabilities had to negotiate the 'road of life' and seek adaptations.

"I remember doing a report on disabilities for the Union with regard to the employment of people with disabilities, to highlight the areas where people could be employed. In that report I also highlighted the lack of support for people with disabilities and how dangerous the ramps were for wheelchair users. I met with Rehab to get information on how we could improve

the situation for people with disabilities, and their suggestions were included in my report. The campus in the 70s, 80s and part of the 90s would have been a nightmare for anyone with a disability.

My report was submitted to Mr. J. McHale who was Secretary of the College. Unfortunately the suggestions in the report were not taken on board, and it would be at least another 10 years before things began to change for people with disabilities."

- Orla Cosgrove



A NEED FOR CHANGE



The story of disability support in UCD centres on individuals – students and UCD staff - who acted as catalysts for change. The students and staff who are referenced here are a proxy for the many individuals who worked individually and collectively to improve access to UCD and beyond.

“The question was raised maybe on behalf of a couple of students every year, by the student reps, whether someone with an eyesight disability (or another kind) could tape lectures or classes or whatever. On behalf of the staff, I thought or maybe imagined that one or two members of staff might be suspicious and the student reps seemed to understand (not a usual thing at the time), and we agreed the best solution was for the student involved to ask permission of each lecturer in turn.

I didn't hear of any objections to the taping, aside from it being a bit of a nuisance for them, and after a year or two, we (the staff) put it on the agenda

of department meetings, and within a few more years, the taping of lectures just happened. A few students at the end of my time (2004) still came up and asked if we minded, but I don't remember that it ever became a contested issue.

The same sort of issue came up at exam time. We discussed requests for special arrangements in the department, which were (I think) never contested and then fed them forward to the central examining authorities.”

- Dr Jim Mays

THE STUDENT VOICE

**“You’re welcome –
but you’re on your own”**

Gerry Ellis - when he first arrived in UCD

1986



Gerry Ellis started his Evening Degree in 1986. Gerry is blind and needed to establish supports for his study.



Elaine Howley arrived in Belfield to study her Social Science degree in 1987. Elaine has a visual impairment and needed to identify supports for her study.

**“I’d done this all my life
– everything I ever did
in life I had to negotiate”**

- Elaine Howley

1987



LEADERS LISTEN

**“John Kelly was the
great mover and shaker
in this area”**

- Gerry Ellis

Professor John Kelly commenced as UCD Registrar in 1986 and witnessed first hand the difficulties students with disabilities had trying to navigate the campus.

In his role as Registrar he worked closely with students in addressing their needs.



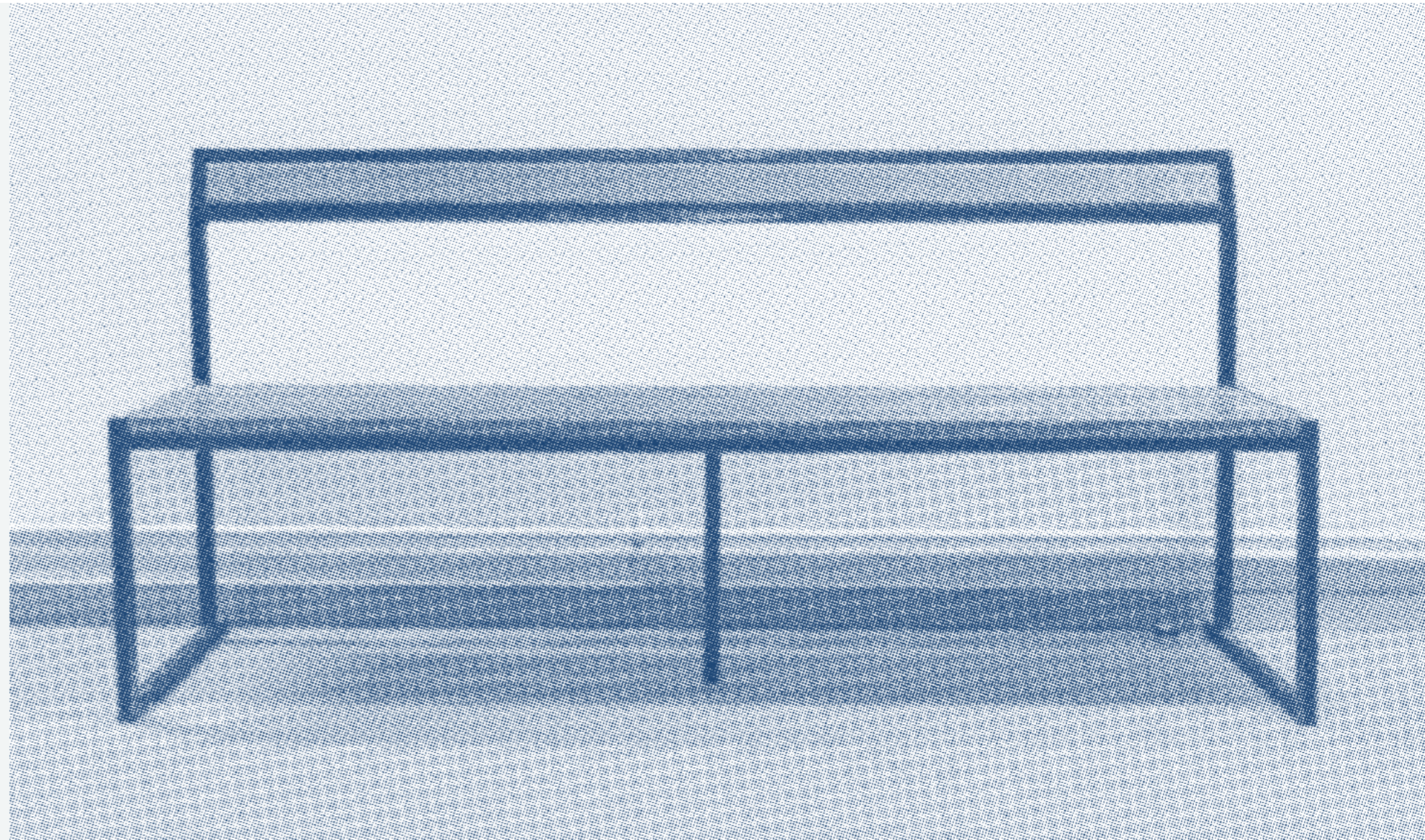
1986

“It was all about solutions”

Elaine Howley

We stuck up a sign on what ever was handy – it turned out to be a bench. We called ourselves the Society for Students with Disabilities.

It was all about solutions – what do we need to do to make this university accessible?



THE IRISH TIMES

Smoothing the way for the disabled students

– Irish Times Oct 7, 1989

“The college has been fantastic,” said Eddie. “They’ve spent three days taking us around the campus looking at everything and asking us what we need. Almost as soon as you open your mouth, a man appears with a hammer beside you and starts to build a ramp.”

1989



**“There were 650
lecturers in UCD at the
time. We wrote up some
guidelines and copied
them”**

- Elaine Howley



Thursday Club

“A group of wives of the lecturers were in a Thursday Club. They were asked to help read material into a recorder. They were great. I still have some of the recordings that Cora Hurley made for me”

- Elaine Howley

“I asked my classmates and they recorded them for me. Some of them were done in noisy backgrounds and I'd be asking them to try to record somewhere quiet”

- Gerry Ellis

... Seeking readers

– Dr Kevin Hurley and Cora Hurley

“Cora clearly recalls reading texts for Elaine, whom she both grew fond of and admired for her great qualities. This was a response to the invitation issued by the then Registrar (and my boss) John Kelly - who was a great champion of access for students with a disability - seeking readers to record texts for students who

were visually impaired. Being aware of the invitation, I brought it to the attention of Cora who immediately responded. At that time she was working afternoons and so would read in the mornings while our children were at college or school and deliver the tapes to Elaine’s mum who lived en route to work and collect new material.”

Another solution was to provide books in Braille. This was a significant service in the early years.

Spot-checking the disability parking spaces for 'illegally' parked cars was a regular lunchtime task (or perhaps habit) of the Disability Officer & his assistant in those early days!



1989

The first University Access Programme Established

- First University Access course is set up in collaboration with REHAB

1989

NEWS RELEASE

Issued by
PUBLIC RELATIONS OF IRELAND LIMITED
31 LOWER MOUNT STREET, DUBLIN 2
TELEPHONE 605574/605907/605429. TELEX 12878. FAX 605716

UCD/REHAB ACCESS PROGRAMME

University College Dublin in co-operation with the Rehabilitation Institute, today (Monday, 23rd January, 1989) launched a programme designed to encourage and assist people with disabilities to proceed to third level institutions. A specific objective of this programme is to encourage young school-goers with disabilities to realise that, if they pursue their studies, third level education is as much a possibility for them as for any of their school friends.

Three specific initiatives will be incorporated in the overall programme to meet the various needs arising at different times.

* Once a student is accepted on a course, he/she may require specific environmental, social, technological and

able-bodied and disabled students together
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the UCDDSAF
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and able-bodied
studying hard in

In 1989 UCD opened its doors to disabled students. Unlike many projects set up in our state UCD welcomes students with many different disabilities. Money was needed to provide physical access into many of the buildings throughout the college. This money was raised by Professor John Kelly, and the physical structure of the college began to change. Once physical changes began to take place the number of students with special disabilities began to grow and special services needed to be provided.
With the employment of a Liaison Officer and a Care Attendant college became even more accessible both physically and academically. The harmony between able-bodied and disabled students grew as integration became more natural. In 1991 both able-bodied and disabled students fund-raised £2,500 to provide an electric wheelchair for one of our fellow students. This highlighted the need for a special fund to be set up for students with disabilities. Unfortunately disability puts extra burdens onto people financially and in many cases the students cannot gain access to money badly needed to make life easier or more accessible.
The access fund set up in 1991 is again a project for all in UCD to get involved in. With continued help of many Societies the Special Access Fund can continue to provide help for students with disabilities. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all who are involved, with a special thanks to Professor John Kelly without whose commitment and understanding of disability the Access Programme would not have come about.
This year the Arts Society with the help of disabled student and the Access Office are continuing to fund-raise. Special thanks goes to Gavan Doherty and Mary Cahill whose hard and continued work gives great support to students with disabilities.

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“UCD welcomes students with many different disabilities”

- Eddie Walsh

Answering questions

UCD's Registrar Professor John Kelly and UCD staff member Carmel Bevan established a proactive and supportive approach to addressing student needs, but they didn't stop there...

Minister for Social Welfare,
Aras Mhic Diarmada,
Dublin 1.

6 February 1990

Dear Minister,

Re: Programme for Disabled Students in UCD

You very kindly suggested at the one day conference on "Disabled Students in Higher Education", that if we had any specific needs for disabled students in the College, to let you know and you would see what you could do.

Our strategy in the College has been simply to consider and attend to the particular needs of each disabled student as it arises. The alternative would be to redesign and equip the entire College so that it would be "user friendly" to all disabled students and this, absolutely, is not realistic.



1990

“Such facilities were at that time not available”

30 Years later – what was unrealistic is now reality

“One event stands out in my memory: the Erasmus visit of Prof. Aldo Costantini of the University of Venice Ca’ Foscari in 1990-91. He expressed admiration and amazement at our facilities for disabled students in the Newman Building. Wheelchair access to all lecture theatres by lift plus the presence of the ‘Box’ access to the large theatres (P and Q) on the ground floor. Such facilities were

at that time not available in the historic buildings housing Italian universities. His report was circulated throughout Italy, resulting in an increasing demand from Italian students to visit UCD on various Erasmus programmes.”

– Dr Deirdre O Grady

“...I only joined UCD towards the end of the 90s, having previously worked at two large universities in the US. I vividly recall the contrast between UCD’s approach and that of my former employers in the States. That is to say that while both... may have had such services (and I assume do so now), I don’t recall as an academic ever being made aware of them. In contrast, support for students with disabilities were promoted as a resource from virtually the first day I joined UCD, and I availed of

the staff’s expertise in Disability Services as needed. Even the practice of giving students with disabilities more time to complete examinations was novel to me when I joined the staff at UCD. In retrospect, that provision is a “no-brainer” and I trust other supports are viewed likewise.”

- Dr Bill Magette

“Support for students with disabilities were promoted as a resource from virtually the first day I joined UCD”



“One hell of a legacy”

- Gerry Ellis

MOVING AHEAD



Association for Higher Education Access & Disability

“John Kelly expanded the vision from creating solutions for UCD students to considering a national approach to inclusion in all Irish universities. This national movement became the organisation that is now 30 years old - AHEAD”

- Ann Heelan, Executive Director AHEAD



Fostering a community

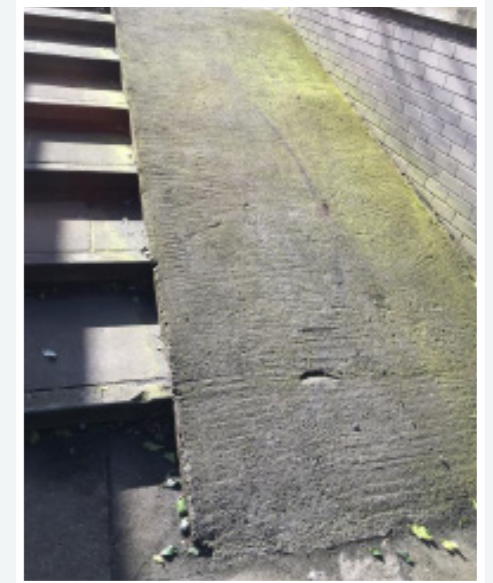
UCD appointed the first dedicated Liaison Officer for Students with a disability, which helped foster a community.



Then & now



Contemporary access feature



Ramp from the 1980s

THERE TO HERE



National Seminar on
**ACCESS
TO HIGHER EDUCATION
FOR PEOPLE
WITH
DISABILITIES**

Saturday,
18th November, '89.



New Engineering Building, University College, Belfield, Dublin 4.

PROGRAMME :

9.30 am - Registration.
10.00 am - Opening session:
 Chair: Professor Desmond Swan, Professor of Education, U.C.D.
 Welcome:
 Professor John Kelly, Registrar, U.C.D.
 Background to Seminar:
 Mr Peter Davies,
 Director, National Training College,
 Rehabilitation Institute.
 Official Opening:
 Dr. Michael Woods T.D.,
 Minister for Social Welfare.
10.30 am - Plenary session:
 Issues in Access:
 Physical issues: Ms. Monica Wilson,
 Northern Ireland Council on Disabilities.
11.00 am - Coffee.
11.15 am -
 Administrative issues: Mr. Gerard Bretns,
 Open University.
 Academic issues: Mr. Derek Child,
 Open University.
12.15 pm - Discussion.
12.45 pm - Luncheon.
2.15 pm - Discussion groups.
3.45 pm - Panel Discussion:
 Chair: Mr. Desmond McCluskey, Department
 of Sociology, U.C.D.
 Panel: Professor John Kelly, Mr. Peter Davies,
 Ms. Monica Wilson, Professor Desmond Swan
 Mr. Roger Acton, (U.V.O.H.), Mr. Gerry Ellis,
 (U.C.D. graduate).
5.00 pm - Close of Seminar.

Sponsored by The Higher Education Authority.



From the Bench to Centre Field

Celebrating 30 years of UCD
services for students with
disabilities

UCD Access Symposium
31st May 2018
www.ucd.ie/all



twitter.com/UCDforALL

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instagram.com/UCDforALL

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, DUBLIN IS CARRYING OUT A SURVEY ON THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES (e.g. PHYSICAL DISABILITIES (HEARING LOSS, VISUAL IMPAIRMENT) WITH A VIEW TO IMPROVING FACILITIES FOR THEM IN THE COLLEGE.

WE WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR HELP WITH THIS SURVEY BY COMPLETING THE FOLLOWING BRIEF QUESTIONNAIRE:

- HAVE YOU A DISABILITY? YES NO
- IF YES, INDICATE BRIEFLY THE NATURE OF YOUR DISABILITY
- IF YES, INDICATE ANY SPECIAL NEEDS TO WHICH THIS DISABILITY MIGHT GIVE RISE.

NAME _____

FACULTY _____ YEAR _____

STUDENT NUMBER _____

1988 – Students with a disability

COLLEGE SURVEY
PHYSICAL DISABILITIES AMONG STUDENTS

Survey Method: A simple questionnaire to all undergraduate students during registration. Sample attached.
Response: A total of 191 affirmative responses.
Summary of responses: A variety of disabilities were reported, most notably in the area of visual impairment. The following table summarises:-

DISABILITY	NUMBER OF STUDENTS	REQUESTS	NO REQUESTS
Sight	143	44	99
Hearing	19	10	9
Mobility	9	5	4
Other	20	12	8
TOTAL	191	71	120

OTHER DISABILITIES	NUMBER OF STUDENTS	REQUESTS	NO REQUESTS
Asthma	5	2	3
Diabetes	3	-	3
Kidney failure (on regular dialysis)	2	2	-
Handwriting impairment	3	3	-
Miscellaneous (epilepsy, claustrobia etc)	7	5	2
	20	12	8

DISABILITY OF SIGHT	NUMBER OF STUDENTS	REQUESTS	NO REQUESTS
Myopia	93	26	67
"Visual impairment"	39	12	27
Dyslexia	3	3	0
Partially blind	5	1	4
Seriously blind	3	2	1
TOTAL	143	44	99

DISABILITY OF HEARING	NUMBER OF STUDENTS	REQUESTS	NO REQUESTS
Serious disability (Total deafness in at least one ear)	5	3	2
Minor disability (Hearing loss)	14	7	7
TOTAL	19	10	9

100

In 1994 UCD had 100 students registered with a disability, representing 0.66% of the total student population

1623

In 2017 UCD had 1,623 registered students with a disability, including part-time students, representing 10% of the total student population

The new Access and Lifelong Learning space, and accessible signage project



Single student



Mainstream



From the bench...



...to Centre Field



The original vision of the 'path of life' has evolved into a vision in 2018 of a University for ALL



“Don’t dis my ability”

- Amy Hassett

UNIVERSITY FOR ALL



- Dr Anna M. Kelly
Director, Access and Lifelong Learning

University for All - the odyssey continues...

We stand on the shoulders of the trailblazers whose pioneering spirit resulted in the development of a new chapter in UCD history. Thirty years on, we recognise the value of a diverse and inclusive University for All that embraces, respects and values difference.

University for All challenges us to 'own' inclusion by weaving access, participation and success into the fabric of the University. It requires that we design our programmes, teaching, supports and campus facilities so that they can be accessed, understood and used to the greatest extent possible, removing all barriers. Students should be able to access and succeed, regardless of background, personal circumstances, age, disability, or pace of study. In such an inclusive university, all students will feel that they are welcome, they belong and are valued.

UCD has laid solid foundations, and developed systems to enable further

progress. The Strategic Plan 2015-2020 centrally positions diversity and inclusion. The UCD Widening Participation Committee oversees this ambitious goal. UCD Access & Lifelong Learning provides expertise and advice, and together with faculty, professional staff and student representatives, are systematically mainstreaming access, participation and success.

The University for All initiative was formally launched in November 30th 2017 by the Minister for Higher Education, Mary Mitchell O' Connor, T.D. who commended the University's vision and ambition, noting that 29% of the University's under-

graduate population was drawn from under-represented student cohorts.

We consider University for All as the gold standard. It requires change in all facets of campus life, and when fully achieved, it has the power to transform the University, eliminate discrimination, and promote equality. The next step in this odyssey is to move from enlisting “good citizens” to a more structured approach at local level. Applying the ripple effect, local priorities will be identified, and action plans to address these issues will be devised and implemented.

In the University, we have many examples of good mainstreaming practice, which we will continue to nurture. We will extend opportunities to develop confidence and expertise to mainstream inclusion, recognising that in UCD, it is everyone’s business.



Recognising UCD’s achievements in supporting members of the University community with disabilities, we still cannot be complacent. An inclusive approach recognises that we all have needs and that we should take the positive steps which enable us to meet the needs of all.

- Professor Colin Scott
Vice President for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

I think of how far UCD has come in supporting students to participate fully in University life. I was a UCD student in the late 1970s and 1980's, the era of "The Bench" displayed. Being banished for the most part to what was the old "Veterinary College" in Ballsbridge, our community was probably lagging, in terms of inclusivity, behind our peers on the main campus in Belfield. I vividly recall, on one occasion, a (male) classmate asking if I was "seriously going to practice as a vet?" - I can only assume on account of my comparative lack of stature and

muscular development. I also remember another classmate receiving no academic consideration or accommodation upon falling below the pass mark in an examination scheduled one week after the death of her father. Happily, we both defied expectations to graduate and become established members of our chosen profession.

Today, having moved from this era "to Centre Field" – our university provides a more supportive environment to our diverse student body. As an academic, and

latterly as Chair of the UCD Widening Participation committee, it is an important part of my work – and all our work – to make sure we continue to strive for an even playing field – Cothrom ne Féinne – for all. For sure, there is more work to be done – and our approach to inclusivity will continue to evolve and improve.

- Professor Grace Mulcahy, Chair, University Widening Participation Committee



University for All 2018

Guiding Principles

1. Mainstreaming Inclusion is the job of the entire University community and is the responsibility of all.
2. Everyone has the right to equal participation and engagement in Higher Education.
3. Our student body entering, participating in and completing higher education must reflect the diversity of Ireland's population.
4. Widening Participation means ensuring all students can access Higher Education and that they have an equal opportunity to progress and succeed within and beyond University.
5. To achieve University for All we must engage with everyone—students, faculty, practitioners, community partners, educators, researchers and policy makers.
6. Our University believes that excellence is achieved through diversity

Contributors to our trip down memory lane

Ciarán Benson

Orla Cosgrove

Gerry Ellis

Aine Galvin

Ann Heelan

Elaine Howley

Cora Hurley

Dr Kevin Hurley

Anna Kelly

John Kelly

Owen Lewis

Tina Lowe

Kathleen Lynch

Bill Magette

Jim Mays

Grace Mulcahy

Patricia O'Callaghan

Deirdre O'Grady

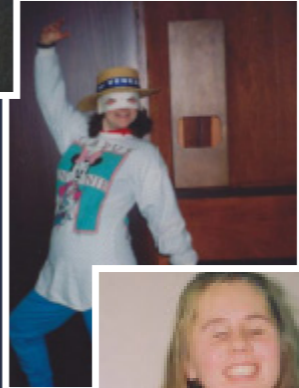
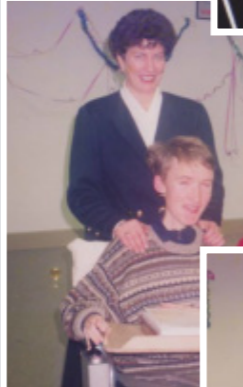
Cearbhall O'Meadhra

Mark Rogers

Colin Scott

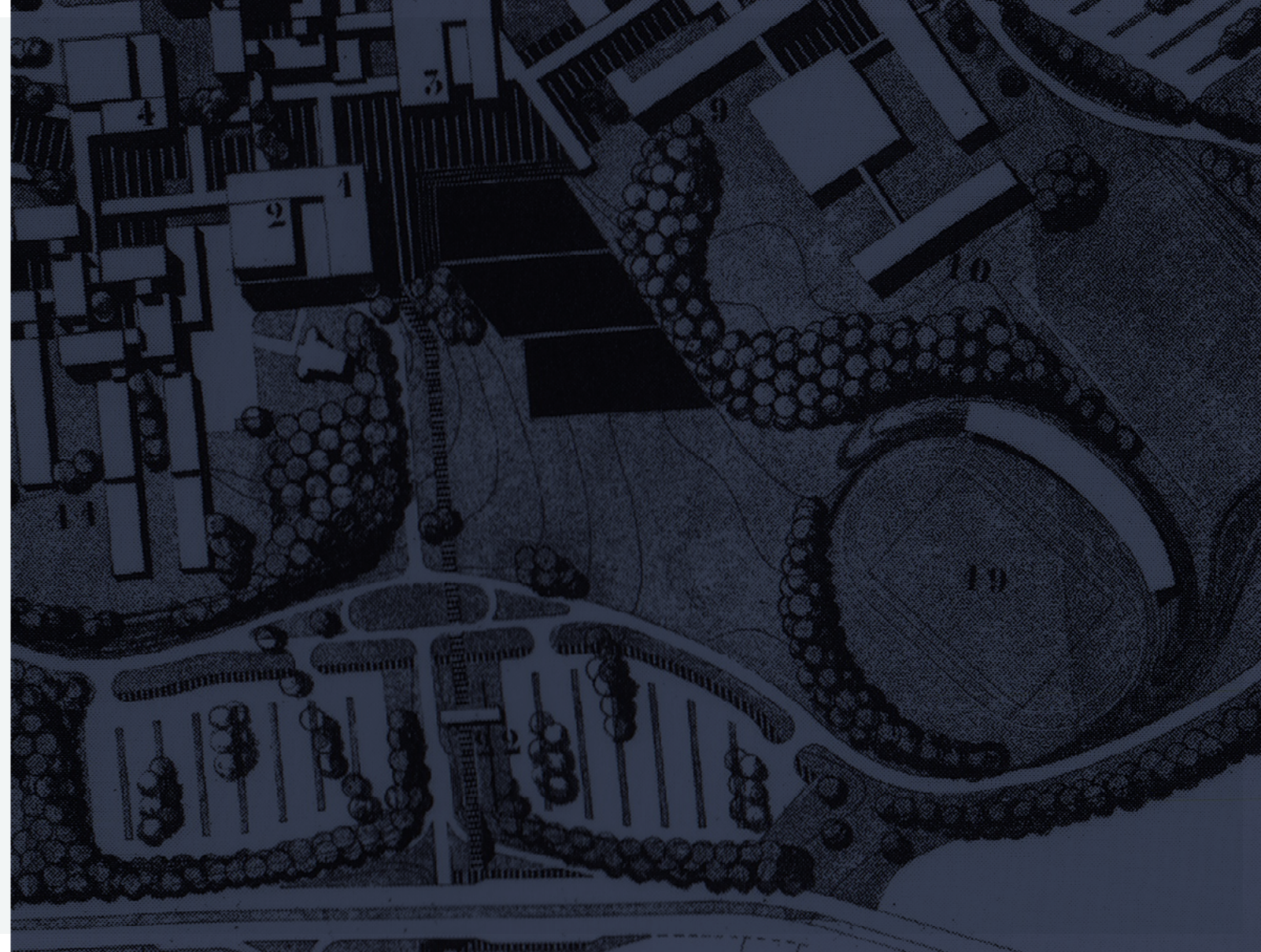
Fiona Sweeney

Mike Timms





UCD Access and Lifelong Learning
James Joyce Library Building
University College Dublin





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