University College Dublin
University for All

A Decade of Action shaping a University for All - Celebrating Ten Years of UCD Widening Participation

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A decade...

...of action

Section	Author	Page
Foreword	Prof Barbara Dooley, Registrar and Deputy President	1
Widening Participation: Looking Ahead	Prof John Brannigan	2
Reflections on Widening Participation at UCD	Prof Grace Mulcahy	5
	Prof Colin Scott	10
Creating Shared Ownership of Widening Participation in UCD	Dr Anna Kelly	15
Access & Lifelong Learning as Drivers of Change	Foundations & Scaffolding - Dr Anna Kelly	23
	Pillar 1: Teaching & Learning, Programme & Curriculum Design - Dr Lisa Padden	30
	Pillar 2: Student Supports & Services - Dr Bairbre Fleming	42
	Pillar 3: Physical Campus & the Built Environment - Tina Lowe & Fiona Sweeney	53
	Pillar 4: IT Services & Infrastructure - Emily Smith	60
Programme Boards		65
Arts & Humanities	Dr Mary Farrelly	66
Engineering	Prof Mark Flanagan	70
Science	Assoc Prof Siobhan McClean	74
Medicine	Assoc Prof Suzanne Donnelly	76
Law	Prof Gavin Barrett	80
Social Science	Dr Graham Finlay	84

Section	Author	Page
Academic Affairs	Dr Bairbre Fleming	87
Public Health, Physiotherapy, Performance and Sports Sciences	Assoc Prof Caitriona Cunningham	92
Veterinary Medicine and Veterinary Nursing	Dr Arun Kumar	96
Architecture, Planning & Environmental Policy	Dr Ellen Rowley	100
Policy/Support		105
IT Services	Genevieve Dalton	106
Career Development and Skills	Dr David Foster, Leonie Phipps & Aradhna Mathur	113
Library	Philip Russell	120
Communications and Marketing	Mary Staunton	126
Admissions	Jill O'Mahony	129
Teaching & Learning	Dr Sheena Hyland	132
Bursar's Office	Grainne Keane	136
Estates	Tadgh Corcoran & Thomas Hamill	139
Students		147
Student Access Leaders	Eleanor Ronan	148
Co-opted		150
Equality, Diversity & Inclusion	Rory Carey and Marcellina Fogarty	151
EDI University of Sanctuary	Dr Muireann Ní Raghallaigh	153

Foreword

Professor Barbara Dooley

Acting Registrar & Deputy President, UCD

I am delighted to present this publication – "A Decade of Action shaping a University for All - Celebrating Ten Years of UCD Widening Participation": a most valuable addition to our knowledge bank. The Widening Participation Committee is shaping and guiding the implementation of UCD's University for All.

In UCD, over one third of undergraduate students are drawn from under-represented groups. This diverse student population illustrates UCD's commitment to inclusion, and demonstrates our commitment to creating a universally designed, inclusive learning experience for all students.

This publication chronicles how the Committee steered this change and transformation project over the last ten years. Showcasing actions and approaches to embedding and mainstreaming student access, diversity, and inclusion featuring a range of institution-wide examples of inclusive practice.

This innovative publication offers readers a diverse array of formats, content and contributors. Formats include essays, images, poetry, and collage. Authors are drawn from all corners of the University with contributions from academic and professional staff serving to underscore the nature, size and institutional complexity of UCD and highlight the role of the entire university community in the process.

UCD is fortunate in the Committee leadership, and greatly values their work to place the ethos of inclusion at the heart of everything the University does. We are indebted to the Widening Participation Committee members, who generously gave their time to ensure that a range of perspectives and viewpoints informed and guided thinking. We appreciate the role played by UCD Access & Lifelong Learning, whose pioneering work is enabling the University and wider higher education sector to create universally designed, inclusive learning for all students.

I am delighted to share this publication with you and hope that it will inspire your practice and offer novel inclusive educational approaches.

Widening Participation: Looking Ahead

Professor John Brannigan

Chair, Widening Participation Committee, Head of the School of English, Drama and Film

The idea of widening participation in universities is perhaps as old as the oldest universities. The history of UCD itself, first in its foundation as the Catholic University, and then its re-designation as the National University, is a history of widening the remit of access to higher education. The principle of UCD as a University for All, and the university-wide commitment to widening participation, is a more recent phenomenon, and in this publication we celebrate the achievements of a decade of our endeavours to make this principle a reality in our university.

There is no part of the University that is not affected by the commitment to a University for All. It involves everything on campus from the design of a classroom to the price of a cup of coffee, and it involves everyone from the children who attend the university creche to the hundreds and thousands of our alumni. In every part of what we do as a university, there are steps we can take to enable all students to access and participate fully in the opportunities which higher education creates.

Over the last ten years, there have been many notable achievements which have flowed from our commitment to widening participation. They include more diverse entry routes for accessing higher education, better financial supports to facilitate wider participation, dedicated academic, personal and digital supports to reduce inequalities in the classroom and on campus, and the development and roll-out of training in inclusive education methods across the University.
Underpinning all these achievements has been the leadership, enthusiasm and hard work of the Access and Lifelong Learning team, and the commitment of the whole university to an evidence-based, all-encompassing approach to mainstreaming inclusive practices.

Over the next ten years, we will continue to work hard to ensure that each and every student feels welcome and valued in UCD, and that we practise inclusivity in everything we do. There are particular challenges we will seek to address.

There have been remarkable achievements over the past ten years in increasing access and participation for students with disabilities, and students from disadvantaged backgrounds, but a significant decline in access rates of mature and part-time students. The headline achievements in increasing access rates may also be masking problems for particular groups of students with engagement, retention and progression. We know that there are particular barriers for disadvantaged and disabled students to enjoying the same opportunities to avail of internships, to study abroad, and to progress to graduate study.

To meet these challenges, the University is committed to building more flexibility into our programmes to enable multiple modes of enrolment, and multiple forms of engagement. We are also seeking to develop greater longitudinal data on how students from diverse backgrounds progress into, through, and beyond higher education, so that we have better understanding of and responses to differential rates of progression and career building. As we increase our focus on equal opportunities for participation, we also need a more holistic understanding of the cultural as well as material factors which inhibit participation, and we will seek to develop more qualitative data on how students gain, or struggle to gain, a sense of belonging and inclusion.

In closing, I would like to pay particular tribute to Dr Anna Kelly, Director of UCD Access and Lifelong Learning, who has inspired the University to focus on proactively shaping the inclusive educational community we aspire to be. As she moves on from this role, we will miss her leadership, but her legacy is one of building bridges as well as removing barriers, and this will remain the ethos of our continuing efforts to widen participation in the University.

Reflections on Widening Participation at UCD

Grace Mulcahy

Full Professor of Veterinary Microbiology and Parasitology. Former Chair, 2017-2022.

This committee was and is very much the brainchild of the redoubtable Dr. Anna Kelly, Director, UCD Access and Lifelong Learning, and her team. I had the privilege of acting as Chair for six years, commencing during the 2015/2016 academic year I vividly remember my initial meeting with Anna, to plan how the committee would operate. The first thing that struck me was her remarkable charisma, along with her firm conviction in relation to the power of access initiatives and widening participation. We discussed the details of committee dates, agenda, committee composition etc., but the parting comments were to the effect that Anna and colleagues would do the hard work required to ensure the committee ran smoothly and received all necessary support. Indeed, that proved to be very much the case, and throughout my tenure every agenda item, minutes of each meeting, event organisation and all requests for support were attended to promptly, with attention to detail and good humour.

Committee members also, representing academic and non-academic units, demonstrated a very high level of commitment, and gave of themselves unstintingly in support of Widening Participation. I know this will have come at personal cost given the myriad other demands on people's time across the University. I can truly say that committee members, together with ALL staff, made my time as Chair truly a pleasant and rewarding experience.

Turning to what the WPC did during my tenure, I hope that it did go some way to achieving the overall objective of serving to mainstream responsibility for widening participation throughout UCD – The Ripple Effect as Anna Kelly would call it.
Under that umbrella, my first thoughts on taking up the reins were that our University's excellent statistics, track record and achievements in student access and inclusion were not generally matched by the impression of those external to the University. The WPC resolved to encourage, therefore, more efforts to highlight UCD's work as a leader and innovator in student Access and Inclusion. Indeed, sticking with the communication

theme, it quickly became clear that improved clarity and granularity of communication was also relevant internally, within the University community. As a result, and thanks to the ingenuity and resourcefulness of ALL colleagues, a new data visualisation method and dashboard was developed which allowed programme representatives to present clear data on how individual programmes, and groups of programmes, were faring in their widening participation objectives, as compared with other UCD programmes. Programme-specific data has also been provided for the last few years in Annual Reports of the WPC. Overall, and in hindsight, my assessment is that our internal communication of access and life-long learning data and priorities is now excellent, but that we need to still continue to work on our external communications.

One of the projects on which I really enjoyed working during my tenure as Chair was delivery of the PATH 2 and 3 Programmes, commencing in 2018. Additional funding for Access and Inclusion activities under these programmes was provided nationally for institutions collaborating in local clusters, rather than individually, to deliver on Access objectives. It was a real pleasure to have the opportunity to Chair the group which drew up our successful proposal, together with our UCD colleagues and those from IADT, Marino Institute for Education, NCAD, and TCD. The PATH 2 element of the proposal provided for administration of enhanced Scholarship support – 1916 Bursaries – for students from under-represented cohorts. In parallel, it was really gratifying to see that recipients of UCD's own internal scholarships, awarded to students from under-represented cohorts, no longer distinguished from other scholarships, recognised as truly "merit-based", and included the recipients, as well as their schools of origin, recognised in the University Awards Ceremonies on the same basis as recipients of other categories of awards. Truly, this was equity in action.

Ten Years is a good period of time over which to comment on the evolution and development of UCD's approach to Access and Inclusion. As the National Access Plan and institutional activities developed in Ireland, there was, as one would expect, a clear progression from registering students, through to monitoring and supporting their progress to graduation and beyond. However, also discussed on the WPC was the expectation, for many career paths, of a Master's level higher education qualification. It has become increasingly clear to me that Widening Participation activities need to take account of levelling the playing field not only at undergraduate level, but also for graduate taught and graduate research programmes. Happily, the Pathways to

Professions programme, another innovation of UCD Access and Lifelong Learning, goes some way to recognising and providing supports to under-represented cohorts who continue to be excluded from graduate programmes and some career pathways. I might also mention at this point that there is an interesting synergy between Widening Participation, and the effort in which I now find myself involved, on Research Culture (How we do research, how we relate to each other in delivery of research outcomes, how we value contributions to research), which affects our entire community, in a Research-intensive University, including our research graduate students. At time of writing there is a National Consultation on state supports for PhD students, which currently are not adequate to support the living costs and other expenses of such students, especially in our capital city. It is true, therefore, that students who have experienced disadvantage are less likely to embark on doctoral work , at great loss not only to those individuals, but to our civil society. Providing adequate supports for these students is essential for the widening participation agenda, and I sincerely hope that we will see real progress in this domain, both in UCD and nationally, in the near future.

Just as we recognise the importance of higher degrees for entry to many career pathways, we must also acknowledge the influence of co-curricular activities – clubs, societies, internships, study abroad opportunities, on student success. I think that there is much work yet to be done in ensuring equity in relation to these opportunities, for all of our students, and I look forward to hearing about the continuing WPC influence in this area.

The final student cohort I will mention as I look back on the Ten Years, are those who come to UCD for asylum seekers, those with leave to remain or refugees. UCD became a University of Sanctuary in 2018 and has since developed a comprehensive and generous scholarship programme for those who seek sanctuary in Ireland and also wish to commence or complete their higher education here. It is important to mention that supporting these students placed considerable strain on the already-stretched ALL team, who rose magnificently to the challenge. It is fair to say I think that the experience taught everyone concerned much about access, inclusion and levelling the playing field.

I could not possibly conclude this reminiscence on the UCD WPC without mentioning Cake. Invariably, whenever and wherever there is an ALL event, with WPC members, among others, in attendance, there is a magnificent cake. Sometimes, indeed, if seasonally appropriate, there is ice-cream as well. During COVID, this aspect of the WPC method of working was, of course, sadly missed. However, to those of you currently engaged in the Committee, or considering becoming so in the future, I urge you to take this into account.

Thank you Anna, Bairbre, all of the brilliant ALL Team, Professors Mark Rogers and Colin Scott for articulating UCD's vision for Access and Inclusion, and all of my WPC colleagues. It has truly been a fantastic experience working with you.

Professor Colin Scott

College Principal, College of Social Sciences and Law,
Vice-President for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.
Former Chair, 2014-2017.

I chaired the University Widening Participation Committee from 2014-2015 taking over the reins from my predecessor as Principal of what was then UCD College of Human Sciences, Professor Brian Nolan, the inaugural chair. There was a strong national framework for widening participation in place and UCD was already taking a lead in growing numbers and enhancing supports to students from groups which had traditionally been underrepresented in the undergraduate student population.

I remember being excited by the opportunities presented by Widening Participation for a number of reasons. First, through my work as academic adviser and teacher to law students at universities in the UK and Ireland over more than two decades I could see the enormous potential to transform the lives of students through growing the numbers of students coming to us from under-represented groups, enhancing the supports we offered to the students, and thereby also transforming wider society all the better achieve to UCD's mission and vision. Second, I had worked closely with colleagues from UCD Access and Lifelong Learning during my tenure as Dean of Law from 2011-2014 and was already familiar with the passion and expertise they brought to the job of working with deans on why enhancing numbers of underrepresented cohorts should be prioritised and advising on the appropriate steps to widen participation and enhance supports to our students. Whilst, on the one hand I had had to build commitment in the then UCD School of Law (subsequently renamed UCD Sutherland School of Law) to increasing access student numbers (assisted by systemic data showing the very strong performance of access students), I also had excellent support in the School, for example with a new strategy for interviewing and selecting mature access entrants into Law programmes. Third, I had the pleasure and privilege of welcoming our new access students into the Law programmes each year in what I regarded as perhaps my most significant role as Dean of Law. Meeting the new access students, telling them they had earned their place and fully belonged with us, and how proud the School was they had

chosen to study with us was very important. If some of the students were shy in their first days at UCD then the impact of learning in UCD was made clear by the remarkable contribution of access volunteers amongst higher year students who came to speak with me and to address our Law alumni milestone reunions about the difference that learning and the wider student experience at UCD had made to them. The centring of the student voice in feedback and decision making on key widening participation initiatives has been a key commitment of widening participation at UCD.

The Widening Participation Committee was a wonderful group, filled with widening participation champions from across all the programmes of the University, each highly committed to a common purpose. But, it was clear to me from conversations with many colleagues that the widening participation agenda was too much at the margins of the concerns of some programme boards. The inspiration for the work of the Widening Participation Committee during my time as Chair came from Bairbre Fleming and other colleagues in UCD Access and Lifelong Learning. Bairbre spoke to me and to the Committee about how we could and should take the challenge of enhancing numbers of students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds, students with disabilities and mature access entrants to the programme boards and begin a process of encouraging the programme areas to bring widening participation from the margins to the centre of their concerns. I vividly recall months of traversing the campus with Bairbre to address the programme boards. Bairbre developed vivid imagery to indicate to colleagues in programme boards how they were doing on widening access relative to what they could actually achieve. I offered the simple message that if the experience of higher education is transformative for all those who can experience it, then the experience is even more transformative for those from under-represented cohorts.

From these early days it has been wonderful to see the progressive development of a Widening Participation strategy under the leadership of Dr Anna Kelly, Director of UCD Access and Lifelong Learning. Anna's vision in developing the University for All programme fosters and mainstreams a culture of inclusion that values, respects and supports the unique contribution of every individual student enabling each to flourish and meet their potential. A particularly impressive aspect of the University for All programme and related initiatives has been the commitment to publish highly impactful reports, for both internal and external guidance. Many steps have been taken to raise awareness on campus, including the construction of the bespoke Access and Lifelong

Learning space at the centre of the campus, adjacent to the Library, and a distinctive UCD University for All pin, which I was involved in developing, and which I proudly wear.

As Chair of the University Management Team Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee since 2015 and UCD's first Vice President for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion since 2017, I have maintained close contact with the ambitions and achievements of Widening Participation at UCD. I thought it a very important step when the then Deputy President and Registrar, Mark Rogers, agreed to mainstream the presentation of the growing numbers of Access Scholarships at the main Entrance Scholarship Ceremony in 2018. These Scholarships, supported by alumni giving through the UCD Foundation, were renamed Cothrom na Féinne Scholarships, reflecting UCD's Irish language motto and concerns to level the playing field. These awards provide a platform from which major gifts and programmes can be developed, such as Sutherland Opportunities, supported by Mayson, Hayes and Current, offered by UCD Sutherland School of Law. Sutherland Opportunities supports current law students from underrepresented groups with scholarships and bursaries to access key learning opportunities such as study exchange and also draws in future students from schools in disadvantaged areas to learn what studying at UCD is like. Recognising that many of our graduates increasingly require graduate qualifications to support their professional choices, all schools in UCD College of Social Sciences and Law have begun supporting graduate access scholarships to enable postgraduate study.

The Access and Lifelong Learning team has proved itself adaptable and resilient in the face of new challenges establishing a distinct entrance route, fee waiver and scholarship for refugees, asylum seekers and those with subsidiary protection or humanitarian leave to remain in response to recommendations from a Working Group chaired by myself and Grace Mulcahy, a former Dean of Veterinary Science who herself served a very impactful term as chair of the University Widening Participation Committee. The Sanctuary Scholars scheme, administered by UCD Access and Lifelong Learning, typically has around 50 students benefiting from its support in access, undergraduate and masters programmes, and is a key underpinning of UCD's University of Sanctuary recognition in 2018, renewed in 2021.
A key aspect of mainstreaming of underrepresented cohorts has been achieving parity of esteem between the wide variety of entrance routes into undergraduate education in

UCD. Standard CAO entry for school leavers presenting leaving certificate qualifications has been supplemented by the Higher Education Access Route for those from socio-economically disadvantaged groups, the DARE programme for entry for those with disabilities, Mature access for those aged over 23, entry with qualifications under Further Education and Training (FET-QQI) route, entry via taking modules in UCD's Open Learning and Access Programmes. I have seen the expansion and mainstreaming of access routes up close as Dean of Social Sciences and was keen to fully integrate the FET-QQI, Open Learning and Access Programmes into the governing board and admissions activities in Social Sciences as part of wider reforms of Social Sciences undergraduate education launched in 2018. With strong commitment from both Law and Social Sciences Governing Boards I have been delighted to see up to ten percent of new entrants in many of the programmes coming via the FET-QQI route.

Just as important as the methods to support the broadening of entry into undergraduate programmes have been the wide-ranging activities to support students once they have started on their studies at UCD. UCD Access and Lifelong Learning has led on wide ranging activities to orient new students, to raise awareness and to campaign for mainstreaming of access students, to support learning within programmes and working with Writing and Maths Support Centres (located at the heart of UCD's learning campus in the Library) and with systems for identifying necessary accommodations, working with faculty and professional staff to implement these. UCD Access and Lifelong Learning is pioneering a step change in support for student learning through promoting Universal Design for Learning (UDL) as a core set of educational principles in teaching and learning and student/learner support and engagement. Training and development for academic and professional staff across the University and at a variety of levels is rapidly embedding UDL as a mainstream educational practice at UCD which enables the widest range of students to be well supported in their learning and to thrive. The work of UCD Access and Lifelong Learning is complemented by the professional training and wider initiatives of UCD Teaching and Learning towards implementing the UCD Education and Student Success Strategy, including a strong focus on inclusive teaching and learning practices with all who teach at UCD.

The ambitions and remarkable achievements of the University Widening Participation Committee, UCD Access and Lifelong Learning and the University for All initiative cannot be taken for granted. It is significant that the University strategic plans 2015-20 and 2020-2024 committed UCD to the core value of Diversity and the objective to recruit, develop and retain an excellent and diverse cohort of students. It is necessary to maintain leadership and vigilance in identifying and dismantling barriers to equality in educational attainment and to work towards fully inclusive educational practices. Widening participation requires constant commitment, learning, collection of evidence, and adaptation to changing conditions and opportunities. I believe UCD has, over the past decade and longer, established a depth of expertise, leadership, and innovation, with robust management and governance, to ensure that the journey continues with ever deepening commitment to preparing students from underrepresented groups for life with transformative educational experiences.

Creating Shared Ownership of Widening Participation in UCD

Dr Anna M. Kelly

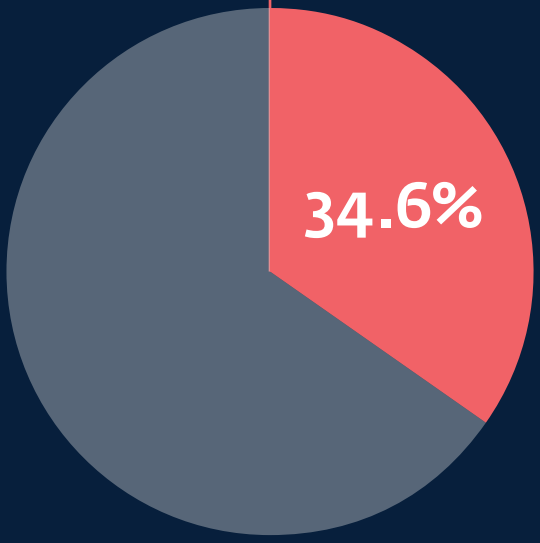
Director, Access and Lifelong Learning

A decade of action – most certainly! Over this period UCD has shaped, reimagined, and redefined student access and inclusion in higher education, culminating in the development of UCD's University for All initiative. Truly a decade of action!

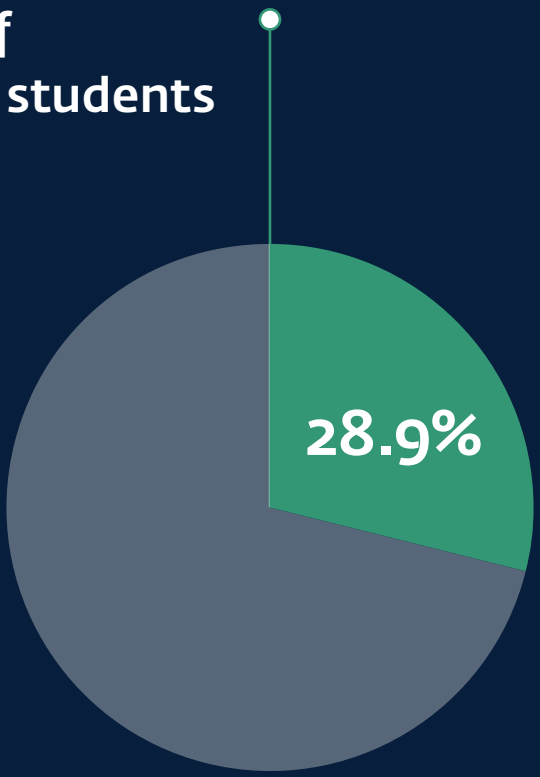
As is often said, 'the proof of the pudding is in the eating": performance rather than rhetoric. And, yes, we have 'proof'! This decade of action is underpinned by data and evidence showing that UCD has diversified the student population, with one third of undergraduate students (34.6%) being drawn from targeted under-represented groups (Fleming et al., 2022). Together with 28.9% international students (UCD, 2021b), we are justifiably proud!

This significant achievement did not happen by accident, however. Rather, it is the result of a systemic approach, key governance and structural changes adopted by the University (Kelly et al., 2023). One such key action was the decision to address how ownership and buy-in of widening participation issues could be promulgated throughout the University. Historically, this work had been seen as the primary responsibility of access professionals. However, the start of the 'tens' decade, witnessed the emergence of the concept of mainstreaming in Irish higher education (Kelly, 2017). This emergence was informed by national policy, which emphasised the integration of access and inclusion into the "everyday life of the HEIs so that it permeates all faculties and departments and is not marginalised as the responsibility of the designated access office" (HEA, 2015, p. 25). This vision clearly anticipated that access and inclusion would move from being an institutional 'add on', to being considered integral to higher education institutions. Informed by this thinking, the University set about developing a contextual approach that would embed student access and inclusion as an institutional core belief. In other words, it would become a value practised and demonstrated by the entire University community. A laudable objective, but uncharted waters in third level education, nevertheless.

Percentage of undergraduate students rom targeted under-represented groups



Percentage of international students



We know that higher education institutions are complex organisations, with different traditions, missions and structures, competing priorities, external pressures, and financial constraints. In such circumstances, the creation of a shared ownership approach is both complex and multifaceted. The development of 'Opening Worlds', UCD Access & Lifelong Learning strategy offered a stepping stone, and provided "the university roadmap for increasing diversity and widening participation and aspires to develop an inclusive education environment" (UCD, 2010, p. 4). In particular, this strategy committed to establishing a "Diversity Advisory Committee, to advise the President and University Leaders, on policy and best practice, the university's strategic direction and the promotion of UCD as an inclusive university"... [with] an external Chair and members drawn from the university and beyond (UCD, 2010, p. 25).

The journey towards creating university-wide partnership and shared ownership had begun and, on 21 June 2012, the first meeting of the UCD Widening Participation Committee was held. Professor Brian Nolan was appointed as the first Chair; in 2014, Professor Colin Scott took over this responsibility. The appointment of such highly distinguished and respected members of faculty was and remains, an important lever, sending a clear message to the University community that this work is both compelling and valued. The Committee was fortunate to have experienced Chairs, who imbued members with courage and confidence, and galvanised all to action. The Committee reported to the University Management Team (UMT) Academic, and to the Academic Council, and was established for a three-year period.

College Principals and Administrative Leaders were invited to nominate members: those selected comprised individuals who had a keen interest in the issues under consideration, but who did not typically hold a formal role for widening participation with their College/Service. The minutes of the first meeting noted that members were "thanked for their interest and participation in this important area of endeavour". The minutes also record that members sought clarification regarding their role as nominees of Colleges, Schools and Units. The Chair clarified that "members bring the particular perspective of their College/Programme, which will inform the work of the Committee. Members will act as persuaders but are not expected to 'enforce' the recommendations of the Committee" (UCD Widening Participation Committee Minutes, 21 June 2012). At the end of its three-year term, a critical lookback was undertaken by the then Registrar

& Deputy President, Professor Mark Rogers, in consultation with the Chair, Professor Scott. This coincided with the decision to establish the University Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Group in September 2015, to which Professor Scott was appointed as Chair. Following this, the UCD Widening Participation Committee was re-established in 2016: Professor Grace Mulcahy was appointed as Chair. She was re-appointed for a second term in 2019. At this time, Professor Marie Clarke, Dean of Undergraduate Studies was appointed to carry out a review on behalf of the Register & Deputy President: particularly to examine governance and reporting arrangements. As the WP Committee has a student focus, and its work extends institution-wide, this Review recommended that it should report to the UMT Education Group (UMTEG). In order to ensure that the governance structures offered clarity, avoided duplication, and allowed for coherence, coordination and strategic alignment, it was also recommended that the Committee should have a 'dotted' reporting line with the UMTEDI and the UMTSEG (Student Engagement Group). These revised arrangements were adopted. The year 2022 heralded the fourth Term of the University Widening Participation Committee and Professor John Brannigan was appointed Chair.

Undeniably, the work of the Committee has been critical to 'moving the needle'; to changing thinking, to creating visibility, to building awareness. Reflecting on a decade of action, several key lessons stand out. For example, the re-alignment of the Committee with the University's academic structures proved a critical structural change: this adjustment strengthened and bolstered actions to embed access and widening participation in the academic fabric of the University (Kelly & Padden, 2018). UCD has well-established oversight structures and policy processes, which enable implementation to be devolved, thereby taking into account local contextual needs and requirements. In this context therefore, members of the re-established Committee were representative of Programme Boards, Units and Students, respectively and their role was that of local widening participation leads.

In UCD, we believe that 'one size doesn't fill all' – in a highly complex higher education institution, it is prudent to apply the principle of subsidiarity, where at all possible. In this context, the Committee offered an opportunity to discuss thinking, debate ideas and explore understanding of the issues. These ideas, their impact and implementation,

on the other hand, needed to be considered locally, taking account of particular needs, feasibility and approaches required. As such, members were invited to formally report on access and inclusion issues in their respective Programmes. This proved particularly helpful, not only in developing understanding, discussing with peers, but importantly, in sharing knowledge and practice across disciplines. This reconfigured approach is instrumental in developing a 'ripple effect', expanding awareness and knowledge; resulting in greater confidence, and an increasing sense of shared ownership throughout the University. The UCD Widening Participation Committee has successfully forged an ecosystem where members increasingly question and challenge assumptions, and generate solutions: this growing army of enthusiastic evangelists increasingly uses the lens of access and inclusion to inform local decisions and practice.

Another lesson learnt is the importance of a proactive approach to shared ownership. As already noted, historically, the work of access and inclusion was seen as the primary responsibility of the 'access office'. However, the move to 'shared ownership' caused some worry, among academic colleagues and access professionals alike. The former fearing that work would be 'dumped', while the latter worried about their roles. Over the decade, information sharing, and a developing appreciation of the complexity of widening participation issues, has allayed many of these fears. Data and evidence proved central in this regard. Incredibly, in higher education institutions there was a dearth of easily accessible data and evidence to support the work of widening participation: unsurprisingly, practice tended to be informed only by individual student stories. Recognising the value of data and evidence as levers for change, and with the support of the Director, UCD Institutional Research, we gathered and disseminated access and participation data (Fleming et al., 2022). Armed with this evidence, Committee members developed greater awareness and understanding of the access and inclusion issues, and for the first time, had reliable evidence of performance at both institutional, and local levels. This important development enabled members to interrogate trends, and confidently discuss the issues arising with local colleagues.

The value of optimising governance arrangements proved an important lesson also. The multiple reporting relationships, as noted previously, increased the Committee's visibility, which in turn led to widening participation issues becoming progressively seeded in the institution. A variety of communication channels were deployed,

including, the publication of annual reports, presentations to senior committees, hosting events and symposia, etc. Over the past decade, we have witnessed a shift in thinking: a move from 'othering' of some groups of students. Heretofore considered differently, labelled 'non-traditional', their journey to university often described as 'exceptional', conversations about these students are slowly melding into mainstream discourse. No longer do we hear the phrase, 'one of yours'! Surely, an indicator of successful shared ownership!

Two centuries after Newman's Idea of a University, UCD's University for All is shaping and informing higher education. Uniquely in Irish higher education, the University is pioneering institutional transformation to create an inclusive culture and promote system change (UCD, 2018, 2020b, 2020a, 2021a). A key lesson is that creating a universally designed, inclusive university demands an 'all hands on deck' approach. Everyone's expertise and contribution is required. Adopting a deliberate shared-ownership game plan is crucial to success. It is one of the key factors in the implementation of an inclusive university, and offers a step change to transforming practice (Kelly et al., 2023).

Margaret Fuller, the American Journalist, Critic and Women's Rights Activist, is credited with saying,

> "If you have knowledge, let others light their candles in it".

Throughout the last decade, the work of the UCD Widening Participation Committee has typified a 'sharing' culture. This Committee is an example of what it takes to shape and harness goodwill, engage others, foster trust, and build relationships. Such measures lead to common ground, with a common language and a shared goal of creating a university for all.

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Foundations & Scaffolding

Dr Anna M. Kelly

Director, Access and Lifelong Learning

> "It is not the beauty of the building you should look at; it's the construction of the foundation that will stand the test of time"
> – David Allan Coe

Context

UCD is building a University for All – a universally designed inclusive institution where all students belong. Evoking the spirit of Newman, the educational visionary who challenged us to 'turn our eyes to a hundred years from now". What would UCD look like in 2021? An education institution that is radically different? Where access and inclusion are no longer mentioned, no one knows the term mainstream, there is no access office, there are no targeted entry pathways, no reserved quotas, no one speaks about 'youngsters', the concept of fulltime and part-time students is alien, there are no special funding streams for designated groups.

From such questions a new vision emerged: this would be a university where all students are treated equitably, with no barriers to participation, where the learning experience is universally designed, and where systems and processes are configured to meet the needs and aspirations of all students. In other words, UCD's University for All! This past decade has seen the move from concept to reality. And we have witnessed the emergence of the concept of mainstreaming in Irish higher education (Kelly, 2017). This emergence was informed by national policy, which emphasised the integration of access and inclusion into the "everyday life of the HEIs so that it permeates all faculties and departments and is not marginalised as the responsibility of the designated access office" (HEA, 2015, p. 25). Notwithstanding national policy, higher education conveyed a sense of elitism, underscoring the importance of reputation and tradition and the realisation of this objective was a significant challenge. There was no roadmap for

creating an inclusive institution, until now! Over these past ten years, as the challenges and opportunities crystallised, UCD Access & Lifelong Learning developed a series of strategies, actions and resources to enable the University achieve this ambitious goal (UCD, 2010, 2017, 2020a).

Foundation-related actions

Foundations are the organisational levers that help bolster and reinforce the development of a systemic approach to access and inclusion. Levers typically include the organisational strategy, goals, structures, and a suite of policy instruments. The seeding of access and inclusion in the institution's bedrock, signals the institutional priority, ensures visible leadership support, and provides the platform to embed and mainstream. Attention to the university foundations is an integral part of a whole-institution approach to access and inclusion.

The development of the **institution's strategies** can be a powerful catalyst for change and institutional transformation. This is very much the case for access and inclusion. UCD's University for All is now embedded in university strategies, including, Rising to the Future 2020-2024, UCD Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan 2018-2020-2025, and the UCD Education and Student Success Strategy (UCD, 2018, 2020b, 2021). These documents set out a vision for inclusion, ensure that institutional values are consistent with equity of access and widening participation, and establish key measures for success.

While we experienced enthusiasm and commitment among the university community, we also encountered an absence of confidence, know-how and "ambiguity surrounding the concept and practice of mainstreaming… and how it should function" (HEA, 2018a, p. 14). The development of **Toolkit for Inclusive Higher Education Institutions: from Vision to Practice**, was developed to fill this gap, and to help move access and inclusion from the institutional margins (Kelly & Padden, 2018). This practical resource focused on the institutional 'pillars'; these are the typical strands of endeavour, including programme, teaching, and learning; student supports, built environment; and information technology infrastructure, in addition to underpinning institutional foundations.

Another foundation component that we have actioned over the decade is the availability of widening participation **data and evidence**. Heretofore, we relied on locally-maintained information: unsurprisingly, practice tended to be informed only by individual student stories, and the university community did not have ready access to information that would inform their practice. With the support of the Director, UCD Institutional Research, UCD Access & Lifelong Learning staff gathered and disseminated access and participation data (Fleming et al., 2022). The availability of this cannot be underestimated in forging change in the institution. It has led to increased awareness and understanding of the access and inclusion issues. Ready access to performance data, such as entry, participation, and success, at both institutional and programme levels proved to be a 'game changer'.

The establishment of the **UCD Widening Participation Committee** to oversee, monitor and promote the achievement of a diverse and inclusive scholarly community, characterised as 'University for All', was yet another important foundation component. This structural intervention, aligned the work of the Committee with the University's academic structures; a critical structural change that is embedding access and widening participation in the academic fabric of UCD. Governed by the University Management Groups for Education, in collaboration with the UCD EDI Committee, implementation is devolved through the academic and administrative structures, whereby Deans, College Principals and Directors hold overarching responsibility. Coordination of local implementation plans is assigned to 'Local' faculty leads. Since its inception, the Committee has been provided with expertise, guidance and logistical support by UCD Access & Lifelong Learning. This Committee's work is providing visibility for access and inclusion across the University and facilitating a ripple effect.

University **policies** guide and support activity, and are particularly important in mainstreaming access and inclusion. For example, over the past ten years, in collaboration with the Director UCD Admissions & Enrolment Planning, UCD Access & Lifelong Learning staff have put in place a coherent policy governing access quotas for a range of pathways to undergraduate degree programmes, including students from low income backgrounds, those with disabilities, mature, part-time, further education students, and sanctuary applicants. These developments maximise the access quotas, and enable flexibility in the use of reserved places, whereby unfilled places revert in

the first instance to other targeted access applicants, and only if unfilled, are assigned to the common pool. The visibility of the associated admissions data, coupled with the inclusion of access target groups in the annual Enrolment Planning process, has led to a year-on-year increase in the number of access accepted places (Fleming et al., 2022).

UCD Access & Lifelong Learning has unique **insights** in the creation of a universally designed, inclusive university and through this experience, we have amassed a unique skill set in higher education. Increasingly recognised, our assistance is frequently sought by the wider education community, who ask the 'how' question. Hence, we wrote 'Making Inclusive Higher Education a Reality: Creating a University for All' (Kelly et al., 2023). This reflection of our journey, emphasises that the creation of a university for all requires systemic cultural change, and calls for leadership, engagement with the university community, and the student voice. It offers 11 key lessons, described as Key Takeaways.

Key Takeaways:

1. Seize the day and begin
2. Have courage and accept imperfection
3. Adapt for your own context and start where you can,
4. Provide Universal Design development opportunities for all stakeholders,
5. Recognise the central role of student supports and scaffolding
6. Inclusion means moving beyond compliance
7. Apply Universal Design across the institution
8. Use and adapt the 'Toolkit for Inclusive Higher Education Institutions'
9. Use data and storytelling tailored to your audience to create a sense of urgency
10. Use the University for All Implementation Framework as a guide
11. Engage with the entire university community.

The past ten years has indeed been a decade of discovery, resilience and action across the many dimensions that comprise the creation of universally designed inclusive universities. We have learnt much in this journey. Ensuring solid foundations that underpin the approach is crucial to success. Building a university for all is a major undertaking. Emily Dickinson, who wrote 'The Props assist the House', reminds us of the importance of supports, as we build (Franklin, 1998).

The Props assist the House

The Props assist the House
Until the House is built
And then the Props withdraw
And adequate, erect,
The House support itself
And cease to recollect
The Augur and the Carpenter –
Just such a retrospect
Hath the perfected Life –
A Past of Plank and Nail
And slowness – then the scaffolds drop
Affirming it a Soul –

- Emily Dickinson

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Pillar 1 - Teaching & Learning, Programme & Curriculum Design

Dr Lisa Padden

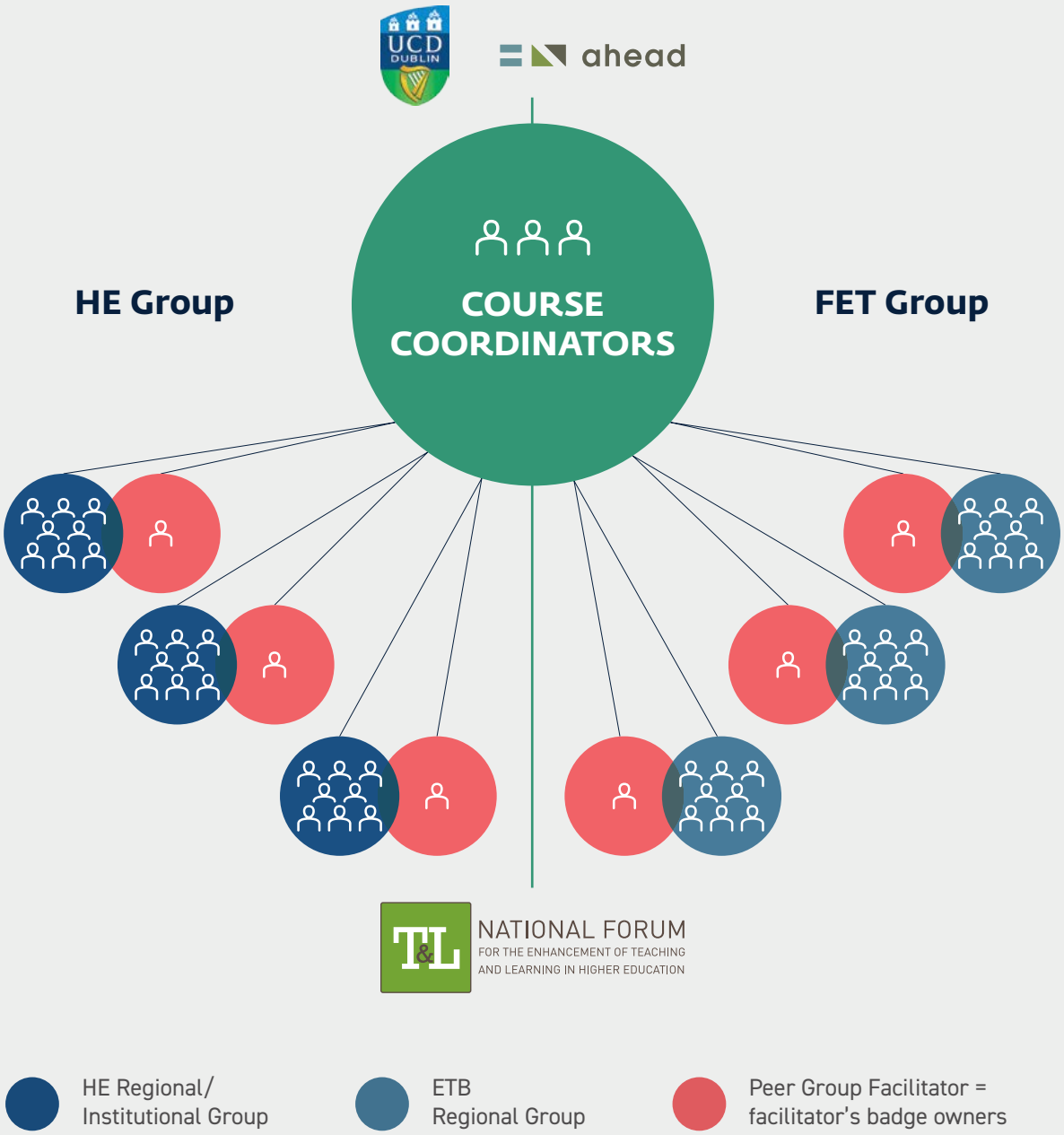
Programme Manager University for All Project, Access and Lifelong Learning Centre

Over the past ten years the teaching, learning and assessment landscape in Irish Higher Education has undergone significant change. UCD Access & Lifelong Learning and the UCD Widening Participation Committee have developed a focus on the promotion of Universal Design for Learning as a framework which offers educators a means to embed inclusion across all aspects of the curriculum and student learning experience. Here we outline some of the significant changes embedded in UCD in the past decade including UDL implementation and the mainstreaming of our University Access Programmes.

UDL Badge

The National Forum, recognising the need for light-touch professional development opportunities for tertiary educators, worked with the sector to develop a constellation of Digital Badges. These digital badges, equivalent to 1 ECT or 25 hours of learner effort, offered a 'by the sector, for the sector' approach to knowledge sharing and skill development to a faculty who were time poor but enthusiastic to improve practice.

In 2017 UCD in collaboration with AHEAD developed the Digital Badge for Universal Design in Teaching and Learning. This 10-week, 25 hour programme focuses on reflection and collaboration with peer groups working together to deepen their understanding of the UDL framework and how it might be applied This is by far the most successful digital badge developed for the National Forum with now over 3,000 recipients in Irish Tertiary Education. The high level of engagement with this badge was achieved through MOOC-style national rollouts supported by facilitators from across the country. In UCD we have over 350 badge recipients who have been working collaboratively to embed Universal Design for Learning across UCD's programmes at all levels.


UCD DUBLIN
ahead
HE Group
COURSE COORDINATORS
FET Group
T&L
NATIONAL FORUM
FOR THE ENHANCEMENT OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION
HE Regional/ Institutional Group
ETB Regional Group
Peer Group Facilitator = facilitator's badge owners

John Kelly Awards

The John Kelly Awards were originally developed by AHEAD to recognise the work of UDL Badge holders In 2021 a strategic collaboration between UCD and AHEAD saw the awards being redeveloped in order to celebrate and recognise excellence and innovation in embedding universal design in both individual practice, and more systematically through strategic collaborative action in Ireland. The awards were relaunched in 2022 with a new application and review process, with new rubrics drawn up following consultation with the national Universal Design community. Following review by an international panel of experts, six individual and four collaborative applications were selected to present their work in front of a live audience and judging panel. We were delighted to have former UCD Registrar, Professor Emeritus John Kelly present the awards at the final in October 2022.

Image: ATU's Niamh Plunkett and Maureen Haran accepting the UDL Excellence in Collaboration Award with Professor John Kelly, Dr Mark Glynn, Dr Anna Kelly and Dara Ryder.

Case Study Publications

UCD has led the way in the development of Universal Design for Learning Case Studies in Ireland. Now with four collections of case studies we have examples from across disciplines and all levels of study. These case study publications have all been collaborative projects with colleagues in UCD Teaching & Learning and/or other HEIs and academic colleagues in UCD. Having these case studies to use in training and development workshops, and being able to share them as a free resource with colleagues within and outside of our institution, moved the dial for us in embedding UDL. Colleagues seek out easy to understand examples of inclusion in action which can be picked up and implemented quickly and without the need for additional resources.

Padden, Lisa, Elliott, Daniel, Tonge, Julie and Hyland, Sheena Eds. (2023) Learning from UDL Leaders: UCD University for All Faculty Partner Case Studies. Dublin: UCD Access & Lifelong Learning.

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Padden, Lisa, Buggy, Conor and Shotton, Elizabeth (Eds) (2021) Inclusive Teaching & Learning Case Studies in Engineering, Architecture & Affiliated Disciplines. Dublin: UCD Access and Lifelong Learning.

Image: Launch of Inclusive Assessment and Feedback Case Studies from IADT and UCD at the UCD Access Symposium 2019. From Left to Right (back) Dr Therese Moylan, IADT, Julie Tonge, UCD, Dr Lisa Padden, UCD, Dr Geraldine O Neill, UCD. Front: Dr Andrew Power, IADT and Professor Mark Rogers, UCD

Image: Launch of 'Learning from UDL Leaders: UCD University for All Faculty Partners Case Studies' in the UCD University Club in February 2023. From Left to Right: Julie Tonge, Access and Lifelong Learning UCD, Daniel Elliott, University for All Project UCD, Dr Sheena Hyland, Teaching and Learning UCD, Dr Lisa Padden, University for All Project UCD.

Faculty Partnership Programme

Image: The Faculty Partnership Programme

The University for All Faculty Partnership Programme is a collaboration between UCD Access & Lifelong Learning, UCD Teaching & Learning and UCD Equality, Diversity & Inclusion. It is a strategic project funded by the Higher Education Authority's Fund for Students with Disabilities. Project support is provided by Access & Lifelong Learning.

The Programme is designed to support and accelerate the implementation of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) throughout the University. It offers a structured opportunity to undertake the Universal Design for Learning training, to qualify as a UDL Facilitator, and become a role model who will persuade and influence others as to the merits of inclusion for all students. Participation enables faculty to become recognised leaders in the field of access and inclusion and the implementation of Universal Design.

This Faculty Partnership Programme is intended to develop the confidence and skills of participants in order to support colleagues with the implementation of UDL and the creation of an inclusive educational environment for our diverse cohort of students.

Participants also have opportunities to share learning and experience from individual and programmatic perspectives and contribute to the further development of an inclusive university. 17 Faculty Partners from across the University were appointed in June 2021 with a further 9 being appointed in November 2021 and January 2022.

Mainstreaming University Access Programmes

University Access courses are one year long, part-time courses designed to prepare adults, who may not have formal qualifications, for successful study at university. The courses are an important pipeline for mature students to UCD. Until 2014 full responsibility for delivery of courses and attracting, admitting and supporting students resided with ALL. At that point and in line with the University mainstreaming agenda, governance of SEAM moved to the College of Science. Responsibility for academic teaching and assessment passed to the relevant Schools. A Board of Studies, derogated from the College of Science Programme Board, chaired by a member of Science and including representatives from ALL, Agriculture, Engineering and Medicine oversees the running of the course.

More recently, in 2018 and following a full redesign of the course, governance of AHSSL moved to the College of Social Science and Law. Responsibility for academic teaching and assessment now lies with the relevant Schools. Governance structures are such that governance may rotate between Social Sciences and Law and Arts and Humanities. Coordination and teaching of three core modules: First Steps – Introduction to Higher Education; Digital Literacy and Applied Writing continues to reside with ALL.

The mainstreaming of the access programmes integrates the teaching and learning within the programmes and gives students an authentic university experience. ALL continues to offer pre-entry guidance, student support and specific core skills. This collaborative model has been effective in enhancing the student teaching and learning experience. It has also leveraged existing structures including application, registration, timetabling and assessment.

Inclusive Teaching, Learning and Assessment in the next ten years?

This snapshot of the progress made in this pillar demonstrates the power of mainstreaming and the positive impact of empowering our colleagues to take up a leadership role in Universal Design and inclusion more broadly. In the next ten years, we hope to see this continue with disciplines taking ownership of what inclusion looks like in their classrooms and lecture theatres. Undoubtedly, we will see some focus on hybrid teaching and we wait with interest to see how Artificial Intelligence will impact this area - with great potential for positive inclusive change but also much fear and trepidation about its impact on learning and, most pressingly, assessment, our reaction to this latest development will set the stage for how students interact with their education for some years to come.

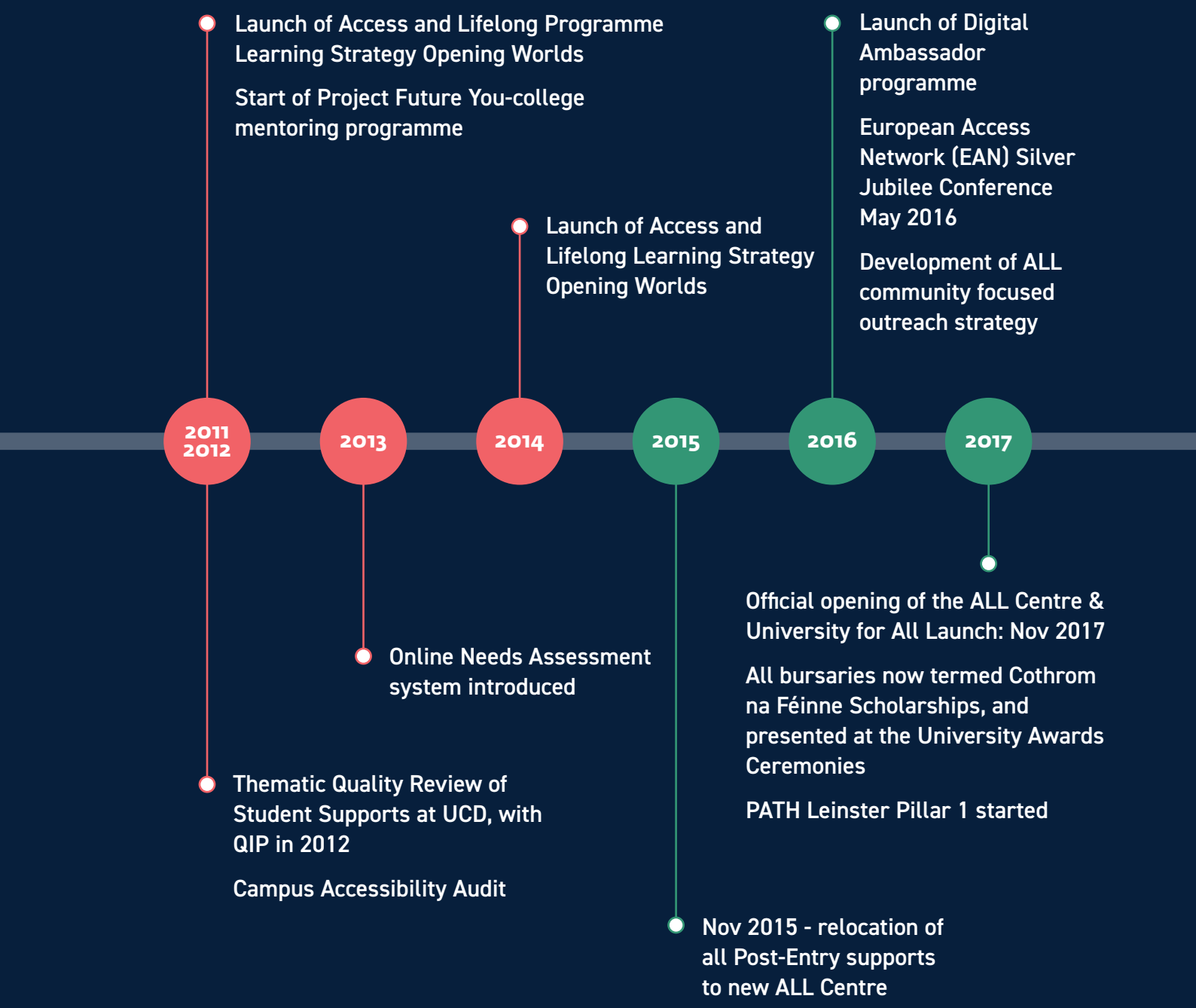
Pillar 2 - Student Supports & Services

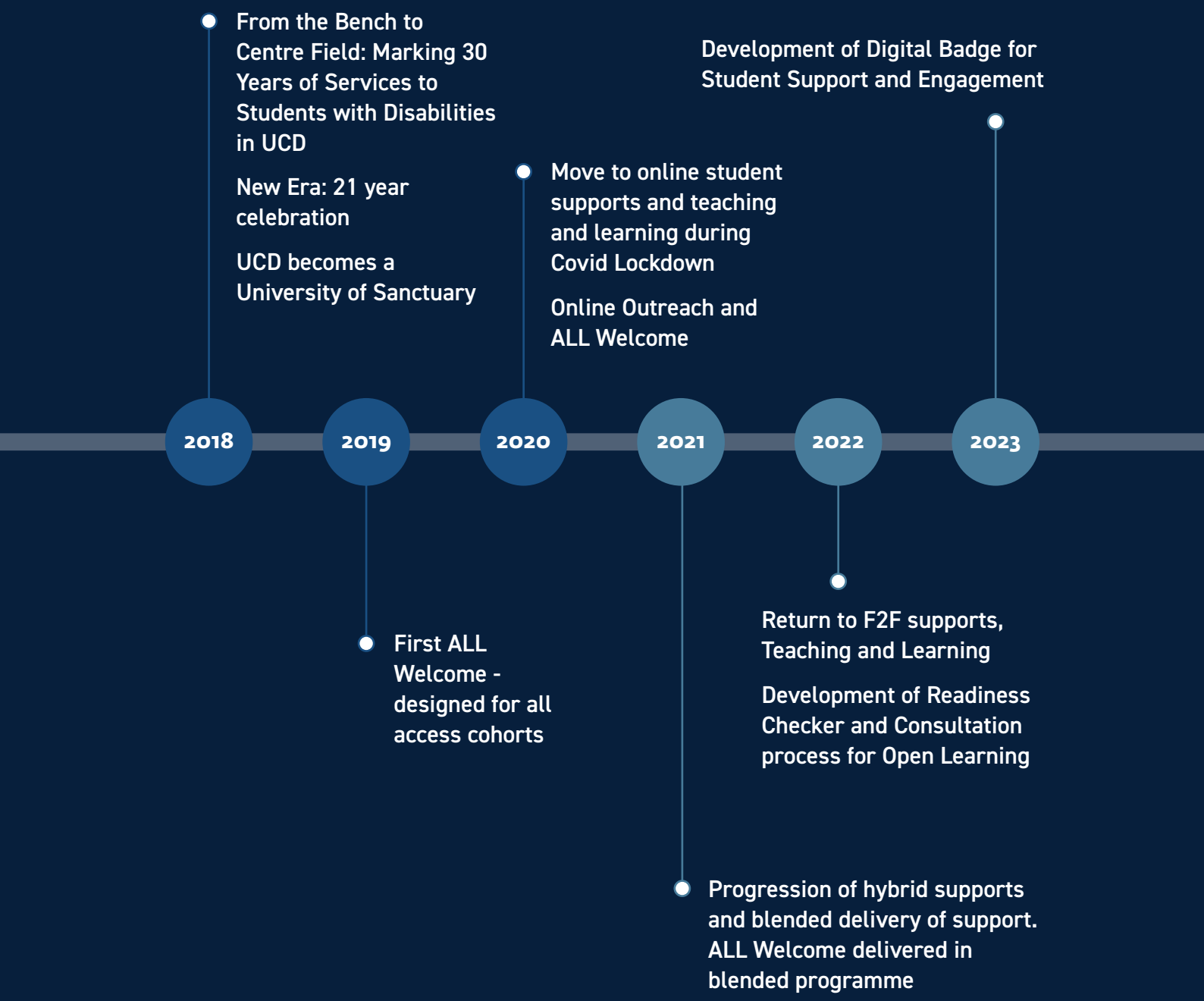
Dr Bairbre Fleming

Deputy Director of Access and Lifelong Learning Centre UCD

The last decade has altered and reshaped how we support access students. We have moved from a concierge-type service, where individual and specific needs were identified on a case-by-case basis. Our approach now involves designing supports in a universal way, so that all students can benefit. The early student supports are characterised in one example, as students gathering at a bench to outline their specific needs for disability support. The bench has now gone, and so too has the deficit framing. It has been replaced by a large team of experts in Access and Lifelong Learning who offer a blend of specialist and general supports.

A Decade of Student Support in UCD ALL




From the Bench to Centre Field: Marking 30 Years of Services to Students with Disabilities in UCD
New Era: 21 year celebration
UCD becomes a University of Sanctuary
Move to online student supports and teaching and learning during Covid Lockdown
Online Outreach and ALL Welcome
Development of Digital Badge for Student Support and Engagement
2018
2019
2020
2021
2022
2023
First ALL Welcome - designed for all access cohorts
Return to F2F supports, Teaching and Learning
Development of Readiness Checker and Consultation process for Open Learning
Progression of hybrid supports and blended delivery of support. ALL Welcome delivered in blended programme

Specialist Supports

The specialist supports will always have a role in any university, as some individuals will need a range of specific interventions to facilitate their participation and engagement. These supports involved 1:1 meetings, and with the rise in access student numbers over the last decade, there is a significant increase in the number of supports and interventions required. This increase has been matched by a change in how our work is described and developed.

Specific cohorts are assigned to a specific staff member on the Post Entry team. The work is relational, and focuses on building connections and facilitating student engagement and autonomy. There is a particular focus on engaging with students in their first year of study.

All staff offer a drop in service during the week to accommodate urgent or non-scheduled appointments. The team use a record system called Unishare to document key engagement with students.

Numbers of students being supported in UCD ALL:

Target Groups	**Numbers 2022-23**	No of new entrants - 2022-23	Other students who can access ALL supports	Comment on 1:1 engagement with students
Disability Support		556	2,211 (total #)	Approx —Needs Assessments per annum
Mature Students		94	660	
QQI/FET		195	794	
University Access		57		
Open Learners	**191**	95 students were new to Open Learning in 2022-23		
Low Income School Leavers	203	894	Other students on low income access supports – financial, academic and social	752 student support interactions. This includes 1:1 in person meetings, Zoom meetings and email support.
Refugee/ Asylum Seekers		48	Students who entered UCD through the Sanctuary Scholarship Programme and have now moved to state supports can continue to avail of access supports	1:1 meetings and ongoing support and referral
Lifelong Learners			Registrations - and ongoing	

How do we signpost?

A GENIAL Irishman.. was once asked by a pedestrian Englishman to direct him on his way to Letterfrack... The Irishman flung himself into the problem and, taking the wayfarer to the top of a hill commanding a wide prospect of bogs, lakes, and mountains, proceeded to give him, with more eloquence than precision, a copious account of the route to be taken. He then concluded as follows: '.. I wouldn't start from here" (Hibbert Journal, 1924).

The sentiment almost a century later remains familiar. Those of us working in student support tend to approach our work with the same enthusiasm as the genial man in the joke. We want to impart as much as we can to those we meet, offering them a series of directions, details, and observations. However, we should consider what message we share with students, and when we should offer these directions.
The Post-Entry support team in ALL have made several changes over the last decade to reconsider how we offer those directions or student supports, and to ensure that we provide a range of supports that are easy to access and navigate. The supports are now framed as a signpost to the range of university supports which students can access when they want, and not when we determine they should.

We have resequenced the student support materials, advice and guidance. The material is now available on Brightspace. Study skills workshops are offered at lunchtimes during the semester, and the themes reflect the student lifecycle.

We have framed our student supports as different forms of capital. In that context student supports can now be considered as a series of routes that students will need or will travel. The myriad supports are now grouped as Information (Cultural Capital), Financial Capital, Academic Capital, and Social Capital. The key messages shared with students in our university are used below as an illustration. The complexity, detail and number of supports, illustrate the density and inaccessibility of what we try to share with students at the start of their journey. Knowing that students want the information when they need it, we now offer student supports as a range of journeys and offer directions accordingly.

Student Support - designing a map

However we offer the supports, we can reassure the students that they can start from anywhere on that map, and absorb the directions as and when they are ready and relevant.

Student Engagement

During the last decade the role of students in the design and delivery of our services has become significant. Our Access Leaders are a group of exceptional students who have been selected to represent UCD and play a vital role in assisting us with our work. Their first-hand understanding of UCD's diverse entry pathways and of the journey students have taken to be here means they are uniquely placed to help incoming students adjust to their new environment. Their presence, voice, and own experiences help reassure newer students that their goals are achievable. They are also involved in advising us on aspects of our service and in giving testimony to WP representatives and programmes on their experience of diversity and inclusion in UCD.

The Covid Legacy

Covid has played a significant role for a number of years in the last decade. While the impact is well documented elsewhere, it warrants inclusion in our description of student support in UCD ALL. During the various phases of lockdown, the staff in ALL migrated supports online. They were involved in redesigning and reimagining how to support individual students and groups. Lifelong Learning classes were all moved online and specific resources were collated and generated to support and engage students remotely. Staff in ALL were also instrumental in procuring and distributing laptops and other technology to support students to work remotely. The lockdown chapters, and hybrid experiences have altered how students and staff engage with the academy. They have left us with both positive and negative legacies. The experience has shown how creative we can be with online methodologies and how our reach and impact can be greater with the addition of an online presence. However, the experience has also had a significant impact on student isolation and mental health and the global uncertainties have had a negative impact on student welfare. It has also been challenging for ALL staff to connect with students remotely, as the work of those in student support is relational, and benefits from face-to-face interactions.

Universal Design

In the last number of years we have considered the extent to which our supports are universally designed so that our students from a non-dominant background are not required to assimilate to succeed in education. This embourgeoisement has been described as being "strangers in a strange land" (Benn, 1995) or, as "Strangers in Paradise" (Reay et al., 2009b) .

Reay and her colleagues describe the arrival on campus for working-class students as being an 'out of field' experience, as the new students had no familiarity with the field (Reay et al., 2009a, p. 1110) . They are fish out of water.

In ALL we have considered the impact of this transition for some students to a strange land, with its potential for 'othering'. We have reconsidered the language and approach being used in the context of widening participation. The concept of 'raising aspirations' is vexed, as it implies that potential students could access higher education if they had aspirations (Rainford, 2021). An alternative view, of 'raising expectations' or 'realising aspirations', is a more inclusive and positive approach in our messaging to students in student support.

The alternative approaches to language around inclusion and widening participation will also impact on how we offer student support. The challenge around assumptions that we make, and the impact of our 'hostile ignorance' on student experience is a sobering one. As an illustration of the importance of the language we use, at a focus group in 2018 Access Leaders felt that they would like to be called access students rather than HEAR students, DARE students etc. This resulted in us removing the access admission label from all students, and started us referring to them as Access Students.

We have also started considering the student experience in the context of meritocracy, and how under-represented students experience the higher education landscape. We should look at the vocabulary we use to describe student groups and situations which seems to be not just unfamiliar to those students but also a little disruptive to their existing view of themselves and their situations.

The aspiration to be a University for All embraces that challenge and prompts us to use inclusive and positive languar and to consider that 'possible selves' approach in a range of mentoring, peer-support, and access leader engagement to see their possible self within our higher education institutions.

Universal Design and Student Support

In the context of a university as an ecosystem, student supports, typically, have been differentiated, with many so-called non-traditional or under-represented student cohorts supported by specialised services, e.g. mature students meet a dedicated mature student officer for all needs (Kelly and Padden, 2018) . In an inclusive higher education institution, our approach is to treat all students equitably – and to frame it that 'a student is a student', regardless of background, age, disability, and pace of study. This equitable approach, therefore, determines that all supports will be offered to all students. For example, students requiring writing support or academic advice will be able to receive this support in the same way, regardless of entry route. Similarly, part- time students will have the same access and entitlement as those who are full time. Student support is an obvious canvas for universal design. The construction of student supports as 'other' has been replaced with an emerging ambition to mainstream supports for all students. This inclusive approach is also informing teaching and learning approaches. The recognition of the importance of student supports will be further enhanced by the delivery of a national digital badge for student support and engagement that is currently in development, and is a collaboration between the higher and further education sectors.

Where supplementary supports such as assistive technology or learning support, are required, these are usually provided by specialists. In this context, these supports augment, rather than replace, mainstream services. This approach strengthens inclusion and mitigates the tendency to consider under-represented student cohorts as 'other'.

Pillar 3 - Physical Campus & the Built Environment

Tina Lowe
UCD Campus Accessibility Officer

Fiona Sweeney
Head of Outreach Engagement and Transition, Access & Lifelong Learning

> "A university where I can get around without needing to wait for someone to open a door or go the long way around away from my friends"

An accessible campus forms the third pillar of an inclusive higher education institution, as outlined in The University for all Toolkit (2018). Ensuring the built and physical campus of UCD meets the needs of our diverse student population has been central to the campus accessibility work over the last decade. Access & Lifelong Learning has led UCD on a journey from compliance towards an inclusive campus. It is fair to say that UCD is not quite there yet, however during this time the landscape of an accessible built environment has been reshaped and significant progress has indeed been made. Commitment and ownership from senior management and key staff in UCD Estates, a dedicated role of campus accessibility officer, effective collaborative working relationships, and accessibility embedded into the roles and responsibility of key campus services staff are some of the achievements of good practice that have contributed to this on-going journey.

The starting point on the journey to an inclusive campus was a practical demonstration of UCD's commitment to their responsibilities under the Disability Act 2005 with the creation of a dedicated Access Officer role, now known in UCD as Campus Accessibility Officer. The focus of this role in UCD is to create awareness of accessibility; provide

training; signpost and advise staff, students and members of the public on accessibility issues. The role of the Campus Accessibility Officer is to research and provide relevant, up to date information on national and international models of good practice and standards in Accessibility and to build collaborative working relationships within the university community. The post is based in Access & Lifelong Learning and works in collaboration with UCD Estates and the UCD Community.

"Over the past decade UCD has been busy transforming the campus to make it more accessible for everyone. As a member of staff and guide dog owner, the numerous accessibility improvements make it so much easier and enjoyable to navigate the campus." Tina Lowe Campus

This first achievement of the work of the Campus Accessibility Officer was to commission a series of accessibility audits of the main campus buildings, starting in 2012. These audits provided the foundations and priority projects for the annual accessibility minor works programme. In moving these audits to action, a long-term approach has been adopted with the recommendations being incorporated into on- going maintenance and refurbishments. This strategy has ensured, with each refurbishment, accessibility is incrementally improved, supporting the plus one approach of universal design[1], contributing to reducing an onerous task and ensuring retrofitting is financially achievable. Accessibility audits and on-going minors works projects continue to form the mainstay of the day-to-day operations of the Campus Accessibility Officer and UCD Estates' accessibility works programme. Adding to these foundations an Accessible signage strategy was commissioned in 2014 and more recently an audit of the Blackrock campus undertaken in 2021. Since 2012, over a half a million euro has been spent on the programme with numerous examples of good practice now in place.

Coupled with the accessibility audit, a dedicated central budget is essential to ensuring the minor accessible works programme is completed in a timely manner. Initially this dedicated budget was housed in UCD Access & Lifelong Learning, however with time and the mainstreaming of responsibility, it was relocated to UCD Estates. Projects

1 The 'plus-one' approach from the UDL framework, helps to break a project or task down into manageable, approachable chunks. It is a practical approach to applying the UDL framework in day-to-day operations.

for the budget are determined by the minors works programme. As mentioned over the last decade over half a million euro has been spent on these projects which have included the following; installing manifestations on window to differentiate glass panels; installation of a ramp and safety rails at the front entrance to James Joyce Library; levelling and paving throughout the campus; nosings on beginnings and endings of stairwells inside buildings and risings on the stairwells in the Newman Building; accessible bathrooms and upgrading accessible bathroom inline with changing places standards; installation and maintenance of automatic doors and push buttons; tactile paving and improving wayfind at the main entrances and along the central spine of the campus; installing, upgrading and maintaining 137 blue bay accessible car parking spaces, upgrading safety features in the accessible toilets and student residences.

"Overall wheelchair access on the Belfield campus is very good, especially in regard to pathways, ramps and buildings built over the last decade. Issues still exist where wheelchair access has been created retrospectively". Ricki Schoen, UCD Staff and Member of the Staff Disability Network.

The role of awareness raising can never be understated, reflecting over the last decade, the level of awareness of accessibility issues coupled with the development of accessibility expertise, particularly regarding Part M building regulations across the wider Campus has improved significantly, it has meant accessibility has become embedded into management and maintenance systems gradually becoming everyone's business. Over the years there has been a number of strategic opportunities to create and improve awareness on accessibility through projects like Getting around UCD, a video series created by students and staff, funded by UCD SPARKS initiative in 2016, Access ALL Areas presentation, at the UCD Access symposium and subsequent symposium publication on 31st May 2018; the University for all Seminar 2: The Built Environment 18th May 2021: A Case Study, Accessible sensory trail. Raising awareness is central to the role of the Campus Accessibility Officer and will continue to be a focus for the future.

A major achievement of the last decade is the development and maintenance of effective collaborative relationships, this has enabled a coordinated approach, an openness to innovative ideas and a willingness to trying alternatives, to find work-around solutions when the current situation doesn't exactly fit the specific requirements to evolve. These elements are all central to successfully resolving accessibility issues as they arise. The strong collaborative relationship with UCD Estates, students and the staff has allowed campus accessibility work to capitalise on innovative ideas while ensuring accessibility and inclusion is embedded into new developments and designs. A practical demonstration of this is the development of a recent Sensory Garden Project. This project emerged from the need for quiet spaces to support neurodiverse students on campus. This creative project utilises a series of linked open spaces across the campus, which have been adapted for accessible use, planted with sensory plants, which encourages the natural environment, bird life and insects, to create spaces that soothe the senses and are of benefit to all campus users.

Reflecting on a decade of campus accessibility, it has certainly been a decade of action, keeping the student central and working with the vision of an inclusive campus being a campus " where I can get around without needing to wait for someone to open a door or go the long way around from my friends". Mainstreaming inclusion and accessibility of the built environment is a work-in-progress and takes time. The components of effective collaborative relationships; dedicated roles and responsibilities, on-going awareness raising, and incremental change have driven the work of campus accessibility to advance our vision and contribute towards access & inclusion becoming everyone's business.

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Pillar 4 - IT Services & Infrastructure

Emily Smith

Assistive Technology Specialist,
Access and Lifelong Learning UCD

Beyond the physical campus: ensuring inclusivity in our digital spaces.

Technology is known for moving quickly, however, as with many other sectors the Covid-19 pandemic brought about lightning-speed leaps in the domain of education and technology. As a team that turns on having an open office right in the heart of campus, a key question for the UCD Access & Lifelong Learning unit during this period was "How can we reassure our students that we are still here?" In this section we will explore the digitisation of student supports, addressing digital poverty, and advancements around digital accessibility.

Covid-19 was a steep learning curve for the ALL team, and perhaps one of the most significant challenges posed in the early days of the pandemic was the question of digital poverty. As society found Zoom and teaching staff grappled with recording tools, our sudden reliance on technology cast a glaring light on the fact that not all of our students had equitable access to online resources. Many students were reliant on mobile phones having previously written essays on campus computers. Others shared laptops with younger siblings who were also now learning from home. Students in rural areas were confronted with poor internet connections. Some students found that the leap to digital learning posed issues around digital literacy.

The topic of digital poverty is multifaceted, but a key goal in the early days of the pandemic was to provide students who could not afford laptops with devices. With HEA-funding this became the UCD Laptop Loan scheme and large-scale logistical efforts were put in place to identify students in need of computers and to deliver them across the country. Since the launch of the UCD Laptop Loan scheme over 800 students have been provided with brand-new Dell laptops which are theirs to keep for the duration of their studies in UCD. This scheme is ongoing and has been expanded to include students in receipt of the UCD Sanctuary Scholarship for refugees, asylum seekers and students with leave to remain.

As the pandemic progressed and it became clear that we would not be returning to the built campus for some time, a larger philosophical question emerged: what does inclusion look like in the digital domain? In our framework we are always careful to highlight that access is not just entry into the University, it is equitable participation. For students with disabilities this meant translating the needs assessment process to Zoom and restructuring our unit's GDPR processes. It also meant introducing new note-taking software for online lectures, offering faculty guidance around captioning, developing remote approaches to note-taking and Irish Sign Language supports, and defining reasonable accommodations for online exams and new assessment models. In broader student support terms, the challenge became forging connections and community with a population of students who had, in some cases, never set foot on the UCD campus. The signature ALL Welcome became a fully online experience, complete with a student-curated Spotify playlist, Zoom quiz, and video series from our Access Leaders offering tours of the campus from a student perspective. Online study groups were facilitated to allow students to meet Access leaders and fellow students on their course, and the UCD ALL Student Supports Brightspace module was launched offering interactive versions of our academic skills workshops for students to work through at their own pace.

One of the most notable changes in the last ten years in UCD technology has been the move to the Brightspace virtual learning environment, and even in the last three, significant progress has been made with the introduction of Ally accessibility software. Combining two priorities of Pillar 4 of the University for All Toolkit, Ally takes a dual approach to digital inclusion in offering faculty feedback on uploaded materials' WCAG2.1 compliance, and providing students with the option of downloading their learning materials in alternative formats that best suit their needs.

Addressing WCAG compliance, this topic is only going to become more pertinent given the introduction of the EU Web Accessibility Directive into Irish legislation. Equitable access to digital materials on university websites and virtual learning environments is now a legal obligation, and combined efforts have been made by UCD ALL and UCD IT Services to enhance collective understanding of these requirements through the introduction of Ally, as well as Silktide accessibility checker for university websites.

Sustainability is a key tenet of the University for All initiative, and we would be remiss to view digital accessibility as merely a compliance issue – lists of technical features to be ticked. Inclusion is a mindset, and access to digital materials is an ethical obligation. Even before the pandemic, our campus extended beyond our built environment as students engaged with PowerPoints, online registration, and digital journal articles. For many students, these materials did not meet their needs – whether it be navigation challenges for assistive technology users, unclear directions for students with digital literacy challenges, or poor-quality formatting when accessed on a mobile device. Universal Design tells us that there is no 'average' student, and whilst we have brought the principles of choice and flexibility into our built environment, and our classrooms, there is work to do in incorporating these same principles into our digital spaces. Great work has been made in mainstreaming access to assistive technologies through tools such as Ally and SensusAccess, both of which enable students to convert learning resources into their preferred learning format, whether that be audio, visual or tactile; but it is time to move things on and normalise digital accessibility by acknowledging that everything we publish online should meet WCAG criteria. Just as we respect building standards, we must ensure that any student can enter our online domain.

#UCDAccessSympos

Programme Boards

College of Arts & Humanities

Dr Mary Farrelly

VP for Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

Example of Good Inclusive Practice: My Course Compass

What is My Course Compass?

Funded through the HEA and the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning, My Course Compass is a digital toolkit to support undergraduate students in the College of Arts and Humanities through key transition points in their college experience. This online student advising tool lives in every student's Brightspace portal, bringing together in one place all the information students need to make empowered decisions about their learning: what supports are available, what to do if they fail a module, why GPA matters (and when it doesn't), how to register, who to ask for help, and much more.

The My Course Compass Brightspace Module has several key objectives:

1. Support students navigating UCD systems like registration and elective selection
2. Empower students to make their own decisions about their programme by collating essential university information in one fully accessible and student-driven location
3. Direct students to the appropriate face-to-face support staff as needed

Who created this resource?

Project Leaders Dr Jorie Lagerwey and Dr Jaime Jones brought together a team of staff, faculty, and students from the College Office and across all seven schools of the College of Arts and Humanities. They also brought on board Educational Technologist, Sarah Buckley, to project manage the development and design of the Brightspace page. External support from the eLearning design agency Cobblestone was also enlisted in the later stages of the project to finalise the design of the module. Student voice was central to the project from the start and took the form of one-on-one interviews, focus groups, and video testimonials.

How was this resource developed and implemented?

The initial rollout of My Course Compass was developed and delivered within the tight schedule of one academic year from September 2021 to May 2022. Work in the first semester focussed on initial meetings with the project team, production team hiring, and student partner interviews to establish student needs, preferences and expectations. With the Brightspace shell module secured, work in the second semester focussed on the design, implementation, and testing of the module resources.

In the following academic year, the team engaged and trained faculty, staff and peer mentors to illustrate the modules to incoming first year students during orientation. The modules were included in all college orientation activities delivered by staff, and the module coordinators of first-year core modules were encouraged to highlight the new resources to students during the first weeks of term.

How does this initiative support the mainstreaming of inclusion at UCD?

My Course Compass maximises the accessibility of university systems for all students. The ultimate strategy is to target all students in order to de-stigmatize asking for help and advice and to provide essential information about programme structures and progression in order to minimise student confusion, stress, registration errors or progression problems.

The Brightspace module is designed according to Universal Design Principles, capitalising on Brightspace's ALLY software to ensure the resources are inclusive and compatible with accessibility software. Student partners were recruited from mature student populations, Access Leaders, and HEAR and DARE student populations to assure consultation with the widest possible range of students. In supporting students through moments of transition, the project marks a significant step forward in the implementation of the Toolkit for Inclusive Higher Education Institutions in the College of Arts and Humanities.

How can this success be replicated?

Begin by speaking to students to find out what programme questions they find most confusing or stressful; adapt resources to address those specific needs. Much of the information in My Course Compass is universal, but simply presented with A&H examples. Things like the decision making toolkit, the registration toolkit, and the collected resources could easily be borrowed or repurposed with other College-specific examples. Engaging the external design firm used by CAH to update or adapt the resources they created is highly recommended as adapting existing resources would present the best value for money and also offer the opportunity for uniform or at least broadly similar resources across the university.

Resources and materials

All staff can access a version of My Course Compass by signing up for the Discovery module version on InfoHub.

Or you can find examples of some of the resources included in the My Course Compass module:

- A one-minute introductory video below that welcomes students to My Course Compass.
- An Interactive Timeline allowing students to slide the purple tab across the academic year as information about key deadlines appears below. Each stage has a unique timeline that students navigate to with a large purple arrow.
- https://www.ucd.ie/teaching/showcase/academicadvisinginbaandbah/

Engineering

Professor Mark Flanagan

School of Electrical and Electronic Engineering

Embedding student access, diversity, and inclusion in Engineering – Our Experience

In the ten years of the Widening Participation (WP) Committee, the discipline of Engineering has made significant progress in mainstreaming inclusion. In the following, I will describe some examples of our positive experience from the last few years, which have had a particular momentum in this regard.

Inclusive Teaching has seen a marked shift towards centre-stage in the last few years. Two half-day Inclusive Teaching Workshops were held within Engineering in 2019 and 2020 which critiqued the inclusivity of our teaching and assessment practices. Each Workshop involved a Q&A session with UCD Access Leaders, talks by the UCD Disability Officer and the UCD Inclusive Education Coordinator, and a session on implementing the "University for All" Toolkit within the College. Both workshops were organised in collaboration with the College Principal and staff in UCD ALL, and gave rise to a heightened awareness of WP in general, and student support issues and inclusivity issues within Engineering in particular. Feedback from the Toolkit sessions were used to inform the University for All Implementation Plan for the College of Engineering. We have also found discussion of the data surrounding WP to be extremely useful in highlighting key areas for improvement. Complementary to these workshops, a Pilot Study on Inclusive Teaching in Engineering, born out of the College's Athena Swan Action Plan, was rolled out over the academic year 2019/20; the goal of this Pilot Study was to redesign a selection of modules across Engineering Schools based on inclusive design principles. This was a very positive and informative experience, the results of which are fully documented in the publication "Inclusive Teaching & Learning Case Studies in Engineering, Architecture & Affiliated Disciplines" which showcases the successful ongoing collaboration of colleagues across the UCD College of Engineering and Architecture in this space. The case studies presented in this publication focus on the implementation of Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

in these specific disciplines. Regarding software supports, the School of Electrical and Electronic Engineering has innovated in the space of supplying alternative text for scientific diagrams, which are often a barrier to students with visual impairment studying STEM subjects. Specifically, the School has developed software to translate digital representations of circuits into human-friendly text. This software has been used to add alternative text to over 1200 circuit diagrams used in all Stage 1-3 circuits modules in undergraduate teaching at UCD. 3D printed tactile solutions have also been developed. At this point, Inclusive Teaching is a standing item on the agenda of the Engineering & Architecture College Teaching & Learning Committee, and we now have three Engineering Faculty Partners, one Engineering staff member of the University For All WP Outreach Coordinating Network and one Engineering staff awardee of the Community Engaged Learning (CEL) digital badge. There is now a significantly greater awareness of the challenges faced by students from under-represented groups, and the actions we can take to accommodate their various needs. There has been a very encouraging uptake of the Digital Badge in Inclusive Teaching, where we now have over 30 awards to educators in our College. Also, the vast majority of staff in the College have now taken unconscious bias, dignity & respect, and cultural sensitivity training. Regarding financial supports, the number of Réalta Master in Engineering scholarships awarded by the College has increased significantly, with 20 scholarships being awarded in 2021/22, 2022/23 and 2023/24 (this is double the number awarded in 2020/21). The Réalta Master in Engineering scholarship provides funding for the fifth year of a Master of Engineering degree programme. The purpose of this award is to encourage UCD Engineering undergraduate students, who might be uncertain about their ability to fund the fifth (fee-paying) year, to progress into and complete the ME Programme (each scholarship is worth €9,500). I have personally found listening to the students' testimonies at the Réalta Scholarship Reception event to be an inspiring and uplifting experience, demonstrating how students can bravely overcome significant personal barriers on their journey to academic success.

While we celebrate these achievements, we want to build on them and to create further actions to progress access, inclusion and diversity in our student body in Engineering at UCD. In short, there is a lot more to do!

Brighter futures through inclusion
Inspired by
Brighter futures through inclusion
Inspired by

College of Science

Associate Professor Siobhan McClean

> "The beautiful thing about learning is nobody can take it away from you."
>
> - B.B. King

- We believe that everyone should have this opportunity to learn and fulfil their educational ambitions.
- In the College of Science we have a mentoring programme to help support access students in their first year in UCD.
- Typically 40 to 45 academic staff each year offer mentorship to the Stage 1 students that start their University journey from a range of entry routes.

Other initiatives include:

- Supporting academic staff on a variety of ways to enhance diversity and inclusion in their teaching, e.g
  - Training on enhancing inclusivity in Brightspace
  - Start of trimester checklists for academic staff to support students with accommodations,
- Making signage more accessible in the Science Centre.
  Scholarships for taught Masters programmes.
- Opportunities for access cohorts in stage 1 to meet their peers in later stages.

Medicine

Associate Professor Suzanne Donnelly

Associate Dean Programmes & Education Innovation,
Director of Clinical Education School

Reflections on Widening Participation in Medicine:

> 'Knowing is not enough; we must apply.
> Willing is not enough; we must do.'
> - Goethe

The current President of the Irish Medical Council of Ireland, Dr Suzanne Crowe,recently wrote an opinion piece titled " (Healthcare) Staff should be as diverse as our patients"[2]. In this piece, Dr Crowe reflects on a young patient with a disability interested in a healthcare career who comments that none of the staff in the hospital "*looked like him*". She notes the achievements of our education system in widening participation via HEAR and DARE schemes, but laments the healthcare workplace and training environment- 'the system is too rigid to make room for their needs'. The Goethe quote I chose for this reflection opens the 2004 Institute of Medicine of the (US) National Academy of Sciences report *In the Nation's Compelling Interest: Ensuring Diversity in the Health-Care Workforce*[3]. In 2023, Irish medicine is having necessary national conversations about the benefits of inclusion and diversity of our workforce and has, I believe, strong leadership to deliver meaningful change. UCD Medicine intends to be a key enabler of that change.

It has been a personal privilege to represent the School of Medicine on UCD's Widening Participation (WP) committee alongside Drs Michaela Davis and Marion Maher and our colleagues Dr Tom Flanagan (ALL Faculty Partner) and Dr Melinda Halasz (WP Outreach representative). We are building on the trailblazing work of Dr Cliona McGovern who developed an access pathway to medicine for those who did not complete the Leaving

2 https://www.medicalindependent.ie/comment/opinion/staff-should-be-as-diverse-as-our-patients/

3 Milem J, Dey L, White C. In the nations compelling interest: Ensuring diversity in the healthcare workforce. vol. 31. Institute of Medicine, editor. National Academies Press: 2004.

Certificate and on our provision of a graduate entry to medicine programme since 2008 – introduced as a national initiative to broaden access to medicine. In my role as Widening Participation lead for the School of Medicine since late 2019, I have had the opportunity to consider how UCD Medicine can help shape the future Irish medical workforce to better reflect the diversity of the population we serve as doctors. The answers would lie in the data, but we first needed to define the questions to ask of it.

The UCD WP strategy to democratise access route admissions data enabled us to interrogate the effectiveness of established admission pathways. Publicly accessible HEA enrolment data (2019/20) provided a rich source of additional information on the national picture with respect to participation in medicine programmes. From these sources, we found that medicine programmes have the highest mean DIS (deprivation index score), indicating highest socioeconomic advantage and household income across all higher education programmes, with only 4% participation of enrolments from DEIS schools.

We formulated additional questions that would help us unlock real mechanisms for change: How many eligible applications for Medicine are via access pathways? Do we make sufficient outreach efforts to showcase medicine as an attainable career of choice for school leavers with disabilities or from under represented backgrounds? How can we increase our access quota without an adverse (upward) impact on the very high CAO points for general entry? As a School we were willing, but we needed additional data to inform what we would do.

Answers were promptly provided by our colleagues in UCD Access and Lifelong Learning. We found that our access quota was comparatively low by institutional norms and had not changed in many years. We found that we have very many eligible applications from students through HEAR and DARE routes, indicating that our outreach programmes are effective, but their potential impact limited by insufficient ringfenced places for those we encourage to apply. We also noted that the relative 'discount' in admissions CAO points via access routes was very much less than the upper limit of 20% allowed. We sought a metric that would assure genuine equity of access to Medicine for students and will, in future, review competition for places via each pathway, seeking to achieve parity between these year on year; in short, a student applying to medicine through an access route should not face more intense competition for places than other students.

Echoing Goethe, in undergraduate medicine we are willing and we have started to do. In 2022/23, in line with the HEA's *Progress Review of the National Access Plan and Priorities to 2021* [4] We doubled HEAR places and in 2023/24, will have more than tripled them. We will monitor the impact of these changes on the ratio of eligible applicants: accepts for each admission route, aiming for equity of access, our ultimate goal. Echoing Dr Crowe, the landscape of healthcare work and training may be rigid, but through our extended clinical training network, we can play a part in changing this culture from within.

To make a meaningful difference, we must avoid making assumptions and identify where impediments to inclusion lie. Informed by admissions data, we must now pay attention to our broad educational culture- including our clinical education culture. In many of these initiatives and activities, making progress as a WP lead has felt like pushing an open door. We have had excellent completion rates for the Universal Design for Learning Digital Badge, and widespread adoption of Ally in universal design of teaching resources. At the transition to clinical education, students with a registered disability receive an offer (via ALL) to engage with a senior staff member who can advise and assist with any additional accommodations for the clinical education environment. In partnership with our students, we will launch a 'What Matters to Me' initiative in 2023/24. This will help our educators take a more student centred perspective by providing (de-identified) key information that students tell us they would like clinical teachers to know about them and, where feasible, to accommodate- their caring responsibilities, long commutes or part time jobs to support their studies.

Every journey has its unforgettable moments. Having just finished a teaching induction talk on supporting our access students, I thought little of a colleague's soft spoken 'thank you' until they added 'that was me.. I'm so delighted to be here now to give back'. UCD Medicine will be at the forefront of progress towards a diverse and inclusive medical workforce in Ireland. Willing is not enough. UCD Medicine is doing.

4 HEA (2018) Progress Review of the National Access Plan and Priorities to 2021

Law

Professor Gavin Barrett

Sutherland School of Law

Example of Good Inclusive Practice: UCD Sutherland Law and an enhanced approach to Cothrom na Féinne scholarships

The Newer Colossus
(after Emma Lazarus)

"Keep ancient schools, your storied pomp!" cried she
with silent lips. "For heroes bright I see
who, like courageous Sysiphus, though weighed by burdens, climb
and stoney-faced demand in this, their time,
accommodation fair where that needs be
No more now hidden masses yearning to breathe free,
but citizens arise. They grasp fate's key,
and boldly facing all that lies before,
they push wide open – here – life's golden door!"

The New Colossus - Emma Lazarus

Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,
With conquering limbs astride from land to land;
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name
Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand
Glows world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command
The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.
"Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!" cries she
With silent lips. "Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"

Example of Good Inclusive Practice: UCD Sutherland Law and an enhanced approach to Cothrom na Féinne scholarships

Participation by UCD Sutherland Law School in widening inclusion in the legal profession is something that requires so much more than financial resources. It requires, for example, appropriate admissions policies and appropriately inclusive teaching practices. But often, for those in challenging financial circumstances, it requires financial resources too. In providing these resources, the School, working closely with the UCD Foundation actively sought assistance from its stakeholders and alumni. The response of prominent Dublin law firm Mason Hayes & Curran was generous and led to the launch of UCD Sutherland Opportunity supported by Mason Hayes & Curran.

In October 2019, as part of this, first year law students were invited to apply for ten new Cothrom na Féinne scholarships, each worth €3000 per year for four years (so worth €12,000 to each student over the course of their four-year undergraduate degree) to be awarded on the basis of financial need. Ten of these scholarships have been awarded each year since then.

These scholarships augment the existing UCD Cothrom na Féinne scholarship scheme in two ways. The gift from Mason Hayes & Curran meant that there were many more Cothrom na Féinne scholarships specifically for law students than there would otherwise have been. Further, these Cothrom na Féinne scholarships were worth twice as much as the UCD Cothrom na Féinne scholarships (€3000 rather than €1500).

More recently, Hayes Solicitors and Walkers Ireland have each stepped in to support one Cothrom na Féinne Scholarship in Law. Led in its first three years by Dr Máire Ní Shúilleabháin, Mr. Paul Ward represents the School in administering all of these scholarships and works closely with the School Director, Ms Elaine Cregg, with UCD Access and with the UCD Foundation.

Cothrom na Féinne scholarships have been made possible through the generosity of law firms working closely with UCD Sutherland School of Law in the context of UCD Sutherland Opportunity supported by Mason, Hayes & Curran - demonstrating the advantages of cooperating with stakeholders in broadening access in the legal profession and beyond.

College of Social Sciences & Law

Dr Graham Finlay

Vice Principal Widening Participation,
College of Social Sciences & Law

Example of Inclusive Practice: Retail Outreach & Mature Student Admissions

My favourite part of my role as Vice Principal for Widening Participation is what I call 'retail outreach'. This is talking to individual current or prospective students about what they want to do and any barriers that they are confronting. Open days and large recruitment talks are important and often lead to individual discussions, but individual discussions are the most successful. I also learn the most from them about obstacles to widening participation. Everyone has a different story and a different experience. For example, at an ALL roadshow I met a student in my own large core module who has an artificial leg. He pointed out that the rear rows of Theatre L (the largest theatre in UCD, where the class was held) quickly fill up with students who sit at the end of the row by the stairs, forcing him to make a painful walk farther down the stairs. I would never have thought about this otherwise and will now ask students to leave those spaces free the next time I teach the module.

I was lucky enough to talk about my role on national radio and asked anyone who was interested in studying at UCD to contact me by email. I was not overwhelmed by responses, but the ones I got were all so specific and difficult that I saw the whole process of applying to UCD with new eyes. Many of the responses were written by family members who had heard me and were writing about their son or their granddaughter. One woman who would be an ideal mature student had failed to tick the box on the CAO form that registered her programme choices. As a result, she received no offers because she had not applied to any programmes. Another mother said that her son had left school early because of his disability. He had since completed several further education qualifications and wanted to study at UCD. Thanks to people getting in touch, I was able to direct them to the leads regarding their options in ALL and I learned, along with them, what was possible and what was not. For most of them,

the best options were Access and Open Learning and it reinforced my belief in how important these programmes are.

That this is the most effective form of outreach and learning is not surprising. I will never fill out a CAO form or do a google search for UCD Admissions. I will never seriously confront a Mature Student application form. I want to thank everyone I have talked to about coming to UCD for their time and persistence, which has been to my immense benefit.

In the College of Social Sciences and Law, we have changed our approach to communications surrounding mature student admissions. Knowing that the Mature Students Admissions Pathway (MSAP) exam was on the way out and concerned about the barrier it poses to student recruitment, we reworked our programmes' websites to highlight UCD's Access route and other prior qualifications and Open Learning as criteria for eligibility, placing MSAP last. It had previously been listed first. We also included links to these routes and highlighted the availability of the Access programme.

We also took advantage of the ability to contact mature student applicants through the CAO system. Many applicants had not submitted a personal statement, so we asked them if they would like to submit one. A number of them did, and some were delighted that UCD had taken a personal interest in their case. We were able to make these applicants an offer in almost every case. I am certain that this has improved our mature student recruitment and made a real difference in these applicants' lives.

Academic Affairs Board of Studies

Dr Bairbre Fleming

Deputy Director, Access & Lifelong Learning

Example of Inclusive Practice: Open Learning

The simple fair necessities, or that concept which is now becoming universally accepted to represent UCD's vision of inclusion, has been more than a decade in its evolution.

In fact the university's commitment to access predates the Jungle Book's 1967 creation of Bear Necessities. In the intervening years the university has established a range of projects and initiatives to promote fairness and inclusion. The formation of the Widening Participation Committee a decade ago has operated as an engine that has forged and driven various parts and pieces to develop a vision to deliver equal and fair chances for all to participate, while 'designing out' the barriers to participation. In doing that we have developed a range of fair necessities, and one of these has been the recognition of part-time, flexible learning.

Around the same time as the WP Committee was being formed ten years ago, there was another spark of an idea forming. Ten years ago there was a consensus that part-time provision was important and that our university, under the University Act, has an obligation to 'facilitate lifelong learning'. However, with competing priorities and shrinking budgets, we identified what would now be called a 'circular initiative' and adopted the logic of reusing or leveraging the teaching and learning already in place in UCD, and open that to all. The spark was addressing that space. The Board of Studies Academic Affairs has been witness to this universally designed innovative approach to part-time and flexible provision in UCD.

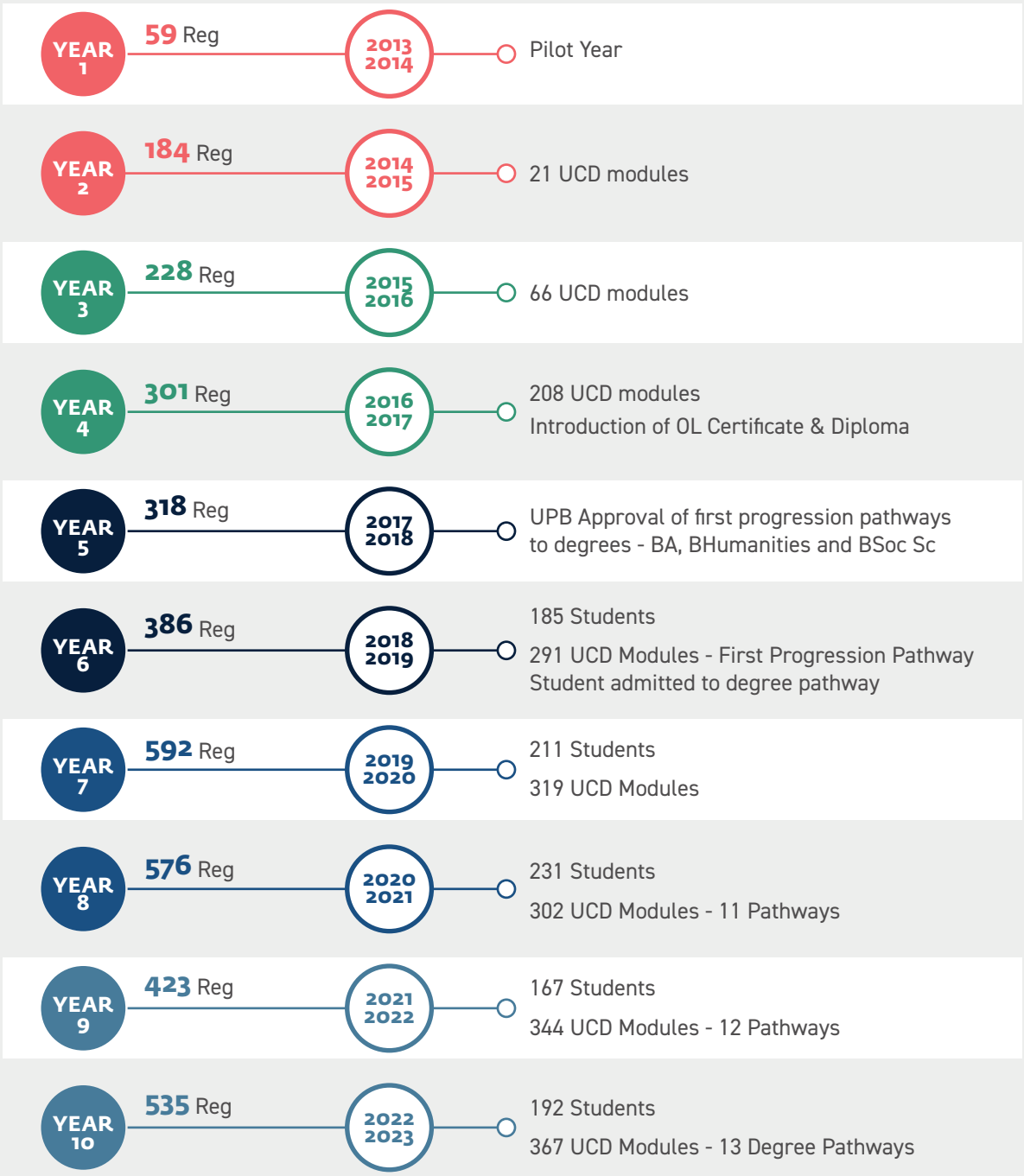
To set a context, while participation rates in Irish higher education have expanded considerably for full time students, the same has not been the case for part-time provision in the sector (Higher Education Authority, 2012). 'The Cinderella status of

adult education is the result of fragmentation in every aspect of the service' (Murtagh, 2009). This fragmentation extends to part-time provision in higher education. To borrow the Cinderella analogy, those students who wish to study in university on a part-time basis have difficulty getting to the ball. Extending the analogy further, the Ugly Sisters of the piece are the absence of state funding and the rigidity of the systems and structures. It is in this climate that UCD's Open Learning was born.

The 'stage' for Open Learning was the gap of part-time options in a university that had been innovative in modularising all its programmes so that it offered extensive modules across all disciplines. The 'Eureka' moment was the recognition that the gap could be filled by modules that were already on offer during the day to full-time undergraduates. The change in perspective recognised the merit and potential of treating all students as students, as opposed to offering alternative courses and services to part-time students. Our challenge was to persuade others of the merits and value of moving Cinderella from the margins and into the mainstream. This change in mindset obviously needed to be accompanied by a range of structural and attitudinal changes.

The systems and structures in UCD had been developed for full-time students who were registered to specific programmes. Consequently, we reviewed the systems and supports to determine how they could be adapted to include part-time students who were not entering UCD through the CAO process. We were essentially moving our thinking from a system of selection and relative compliance of a homogenous school-leaver cohort to a system of recruitment and flexibility for potential learners who need a system to be responsive and intuitive. A Steering Group was established during the pilot phase of the project and chaired by the Registrar of UCD. Key stakeholders from across the university were invited to participate in identifying and addressing the various challenges and opportunities that emerged as we rolled out the project.

In September 2013 the first Open Learning offering had two Archaeology modules, with 57 registrations. Over the years the Open Learning programme has expanded across the academic programmes. Three years after it started there were two exit awards developed – a Certificate and Diploma in Open Learning. These awards have led to the development of Open Learning Progression Pathways to a range of degrees.



Undergraduate Governing Boards were pre-approved by UPB to adopt entry pathways for Open Learning and there are currently 13 pathways available.

At the end of this decade of action Open Learning has become established as a flexible and inclusive opportunity for learners to participate in undergraduate study in UCD. The process has been scaffolded in a range of student and operational supports. It has also highlighted an emerging set of themes for student engagement – belonging and readiness.

A decade of Open Learning reminds us that access and inclusion is complex. It involves more than a set of efficiencies or procedural changes. Critically it requires significant tailoring and adaptations. Evoking the earlier spirit of Cinderella, we are reminded that not everyone who goes to the ball can participate fully and at a time and pace that suits the venue. There are some who need to arrive late and leave early. Similarly, the fabric of the institution must also be adapted to allow us to weave these additional aspects or threads in. The university is not a fixed garment or piece of canvas, it is a complex set of weaves. Our national and institutional vision for equality, diversity and inclusion requires us to weave, adapt and adjust our canvases. The Open Learning project is a testimony for that as those who come to the ball have changed over the last decade. The flexibility and willingness to change and accommodate is illustrated in the work of the Board of Academic Affairs and the promotion and support of OL within that structure illustrates that.

School of Public Health, Physiotherapy and Sports Science

Associate Professor Caitríona Cunningham

As a member of UCD's Widening Participation Committee since 2016, I have been privileged to work with the Access and Lifelong Learning team and staff from across all programmes at UCD, experiencing first-hand the UCD values of Collegiality, Creativity, Diversity, Engagement, Excellence and Integrity being truly brought to life. Through excellence in leadership and committed staff working collaboratively, reporting and interrogating the hard data, listening to the student voice and delivering on key initiatives, I have witnessed real change happening and UCD growing as the University for ALL. At School level, what began as a single academic staff member becoming a member of UCD Widening participation committee has evolved into essentially having a 'Widening Participation Local Implementation Team' who work with all staff members within the school via a variety of existing committees and aligning with School and UCD governance structures to deliver on UCD's Widening participation agenda. SPHPSS Annual Programme Enrolment Planning occurs with all Programme Directors invited to revisit, update and approve enrolment targets.

Range of Access Pathways
Access enrolment targets (2023/24)

Bachelor's Degree programmes

Access Enrolment (HEAR, DARE, Mature) targets for all Bachelors Programmes have increased:

- BSc Physiotherapy - 19.6%
- BSc Health and Performance Science - 15.2%
- BSc Sports and Exercise Management - 19.6%

QQI-FET Access routes approved for BSc Sports and Exercise Management and BSc Health and Performance Science to take effect for 2024/2025 applications

Certificate/Higher Diploma Level Programmes

Certificate in Safety and Health at work (Level 7) - all mature, part time (n=72)

Higher Diploma in Safety and Health at Work (Level 8) - all mature, part time students (n=20 approx)

Certificate in Cardiac Rehabilitation (Level 7) - all mature, part time students

I am also Chair of the WP Outreach Coordination Network. SPHPSS has developed a strong focus on outreach and engagement activities for potential access students:

- Information regarding programme access routes is included on School. website and embedded in School OPEN Day programme information.

- Participation in UCD Taster events eg. Taste of UCD at Ballyogan Community centre.

- SPHPSS have led sport exercise and health promotion workshops at UCD Festival to which DEIS school students are invited.
- Participation in ALL Outreach taster lecture series for DEIS school students.

- Community Engagement activities common in relation to health promotion, sport and exercise initiatives.

- SPHPSS Research topics also relate to inclusion eg. Disability Inclusion Research.

- Lots of opportunities for school research to act as a mechanism to engage with communities in UCD's catchment area. Public Patient Involvement and participatory research approaches practised regularly by SPHPSS researchers and required by many funders.

- UCD Physiotherapy have established a formal partnership with Dun Laoghaire Rathdown Leisure Services, whereby Physiotherapy students, participate in accredited work placements across the gym network (remote supervision by SPHPSS Physiotherapy Hub tutor collaborating with DLR staff 'on the ground').

- Via UCD Physio Hub, engagement with community groups has included working with Ballymun library, Pavee Point, Colaiste Eoin, Crumlin - helping break down barriers, create a UCD presence in communities with low progression rates to higher education.

Veterinary Medicine

Dr Arun Kumar

Lecturer/Assistant Professor,
School of Veterinary Medicine

Widening Participation in Veterinary Medicine

I perceive the role of a schools representative on the UCD widening participation committee as a two-way network between the school and UCD-ALL centre to achieve common goals of developing a university for all, embedding the core principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion. If the demographics of a school doesn't reflect the demographics of our society then our efforts of diversity, and inclusion requires a critical introspection. Maintaining an effective two-way network required regular presentation of the developments at the school on diversity, and inclusion efforts to the UCD widening participation committee and likewise presenting school specific widening participation data to the School's executive committee/program board. One of the outcomes of maintaining an effective two-way network was initiation of the University for All Implementation Plan of Widening Participation Committee. As part of this plan, a workshop was organised in December 2021 to capture the current practices regarding assessments conducted in modules taught by staff in the Veterinary Biosciences section. This would serve as a pilot before a larger workshop at School level. The format of this workshop involved participants completing a questionnaire prior to the workshop and during the workshop the participants were asked to critically discuss the responses to the questionnaire. Several key actionable outputs were identified in this workshop which broadly reflected the principles of UDL.

Key activities

1. Organise site visits to our on-campus veterinary hospital for various secondary school students/parents from a diverse background to enhance access to information about the programs offered at SVM (This is done as part of UCD summer festival).

2. We have initiated a 2 weeks summer school training program for secondary school students to give them an experience of the Veterinary curriculum. About 10 places in this training program are offered to students from Socio-economic disadvantaged backgrounds with financial support. Measures are also in place to ensure equal representation in this summer training program from different geographical regions in Ireland.

3. SVM is represented at the annual higher options career fair held during mid-September at RDS, Dublin. This event is attended by over 20000 secondary school students/staff/parents from all across Ireland and overseas.

4. SVM is also represented at the UCD annual open day and UCD summer festival to enhance access to information about the programs offered at SVM to general members of the public.

5. A purpose built webpage is designed providing detailed information about the programs offered by the SVM, including the entry requirement for these programs. The webpage also includes a video briefly outlining the remit of the SVM.

6. We also organise 3 to 4 outreach events every year at different secondary schools for wider dissemination of details on programs offered at SVM.

7. Academic staff are encouraged to adapt universal design principles in their teaching and assessment to meet the needs of a diverse class, including the use of open and free access online resources.

8. The recommended textbooks are selected by subject heads and module coordinators based on the wider and broader use of these educational resources across the veterinary medicine/nursing programmes.

9. The staff at SVM are trained and are mindful about the reasonable accommodation required by the students registered with the UCD-access unit.

10. Stage and module coordinators keep a regular track of student attendance and engagement in the class for early identification of any student issues and facilitate early intervention.

11. A mature entry pathway was introduced for the 2022/23 academic year.

Besides these activities a range of support systems are also made available to students in need at SVM, such as a dedicated student advisor, peer-mentoring and open door policy by staff to engage with students, which are perhaps the reason for a very low dropout rate (<2%) at SVM compared to the national average (15-20%). This lower dropout rate is a direct reflection of the SVM retention, diversity and inclusion strategy of making available the necessary and timely support to the students by our student advisor and program office team. I suppose I have provided here an overview of my activities as a SVM representative on the Widening Participation committee. Although several of these activities are complex and challenging, I have learnt significantly from engaging with these challenges and in the process have also developed a positive perspective of the society we live in.

School of Architecture, Planning and Environmental Policy

Dr Ellen Rowley

School of Architecture, Planning and Environmental Policy

Example of Inclusive Practice: Rethinking the M.Arch Studio Space: Community and Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

If Widening Participation can mean engendering a community-focused student cohort and more inclusive teaching practices by UCD's teachers, then bit by bit UCD's School of Architecture Masters programme is shifting its goals towards Widening Participation. The Architecture Masters programme - the M.Arch - is a two-year programme during which time the two years have traditionally been separated. At the same time, learning in the studio is the dominant teaching space for the Masters while lecture or seminar-based modules are more peripheral. Increasingly, these separations have been feeling synthetic and limiting. Surely, the learning from one year should flow into and enrich the following year's learning experiences; moreover, small-group seminar work and individual dissertation writing can better inform and be informed by studio processes?

Reflecting upon these approaches and their inherent gatekeeping tendencies, the Masters in Architecture has become a seedbed for change; it is becoming the site for APEP's embrace of UDL through the breath of architectural learning. Though in its pilot phase, Spring Trimester 2022/23 has brought the introduction of the M.Arch studio as a series of research units; each one running across the two years and aiming for deeper and wider interpretations of their themes, from 'Housing + the City' to 'Landscape + Economy'.

Among many steps is the mobilisation of a diverse staff body, to teach **together** in the studio space. Interactions have yielded new teaching partnerships where Humanities-based teachers work with Technology-based teachers to design transdisciplinary modules (across the M.Arch (year 1) and (final year) Engineering) for community groups in the city. Coming together more frequently, in part due to Covid restrictions and the ease of Zoom staff meetings, the diversity of the teaching community is better known and celebrated. There is more opportunity to listen to one another. And just so, we learn of the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) digital badge and other pathways. UDL, at

first new, joins the M.Arch agenda and now, students' neurodiversity can also be better known and eventually celebrated.

Building on an extraordinary M.Arch initiative 'Rising Home', where UCD Architecture masters students worked with the Peter McVerry Trust, new (post-2020) community partnerships with Cluid Housing Association and Sherrard House emergency accommodation service have led to rethought learning initiatives and outcomes for the M.Arch. In 2022, part of the M.Arch studio built a shelter in the Georgian back yards of Sherrard House. In 2023, another cohort of students are building play structures and screens for the St Mary's Mansions flat block community. In each of these design/build studios, there have been adjacent research modules where students (from non-English speaking countries and/or students with acknowledge learning challenges) have made and are making alternative research outputs. Following UDL practice, we welcome podcast-recording, board-game design, embodied carbon calculations into the arena of essay-writing, archive capturing and site measuring.

I can hear the symphony of the dawn chorus through the sliver between the window and its frame, too swollen to close completely, and jammed in its current position lazily one sunny afternoon. It allows a constant stream of fresh air into the room, heavy, crawling over the threshold and along the old teak cill, sinking to the well-worn carpet below. I don't mind a cold room, as long as it's a warm bed, but this intensifies the winter morning struggle.

Wrapped in bed like a burrito, my breath visible in the first light. I repeatedly tell myself, 'just five more minutes.' Soon the bird song is overlaid with the first of the mornings' deliveries for the factories across the road. When the hum of the production lines starts, I forget it ever stopped, feeling it reverberate deep within my ribcage - home.

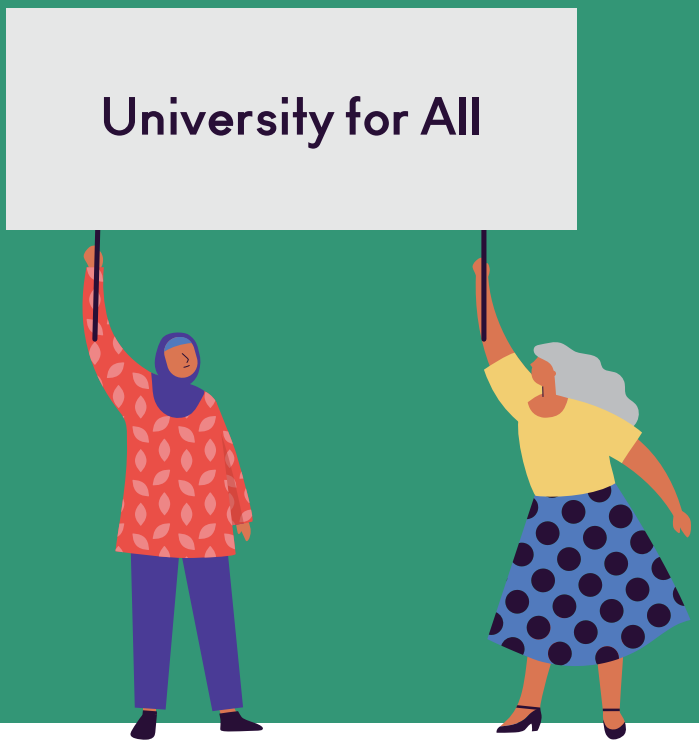
The window is a relic from a bygone era, too big for the room; its size betrays its aspirations. The plastic muntins themselves are emblematic of the good times. Legend has it that if you hold your ear close enough, you can still hear the roar of the Celtic Tiger. I pull back the cream curtains, the metallic rings herald the stream of sunlight into the room. The Sun sticks to the wardrobe obliquely, making gold of the yellow pine - another artefact - this beam moves across the walls throughout the year, bleaching all in its path.

The birds are gone now, replaced by the buzz of the factory workers.

I really must be going.

UCD
DUBLIN
ACCESS

Policy & Support



IT Services

Genevieve Dalton

Communications Officer IT Services

The information technology infrastructure in UCD includes all enterprise systems and processes, including the virtual learning environment (VLE) and student information systems along with the physical wired and wireless networks. IT underpins all stages of a student's journey and so it is critical these systems and services are available and accessible to all of our student community.

IT Services continuously tailor our teaching environments, systems and processes to ensure that we are embedding all areas of student access, diversity and inclusion. We work with other support units to ensure that the services we offer are developed with the entire student body in mind and that those services are suitable and accessible to all. When procuring a new system, vendors must show that they comply with or exceed accessibility requirements during the evaluation process and internal systems and processes are enhanced to meet accessibility requirements.

Some recent areas of focus have been improving accessibility within the University's virtual learning environment Brightspace, implementing a web accessibility tool called Silktide in our web environment and the development and implementation of a web template design library.

Ally, a tool provided by Blackboard, was introduced in order to support faculty and staff in understanding how accessible their learning content is, and to provide clear and easy information on how to create more accessible learning content for their students.

Ally also provides students with more accessible content by giving them the option to choose formats that work best for them in terms of accessibility but also in terms of providing formats that assist students in understanding and digesting their module material in a manner that best suits their own learning preferences.

For faculty, Ally automatically scans the learning content, providing them with feedback and an accessibility score on each item and a series of steps to assist them in making them more accessible content. Some students with disabilities need their module materials in alternative formats e.g. students with visual impairments who access their materials using a screen reader or students with specific learning difficulties who benefit from listening to their learning materials. Ally facilitates these students by allowing them to access their module materials in a format that suits them at source, without the need for making special requests or using specialist software. Ally not only benefits students with disabilities but all students, who can now choose formats that best suit their learning needs, preferences and environment.

Silktide accessibility tool is available to Colleges, Schools and Units and works to improve accessibility standards across the University's many websites. Once enabled it encourages users to ensure each webpage meets requirements such as having a title, appropriate headings, uses alternative text for images inside links along with adding subtitles to videos etc.

By making our websites accessible, we help give all our users equal opportunity to engage with us and our information easily. Along with the accessibility measures being implemented by IT Services at a system level such as the latest Design Library components in Terminalfour (T4), IT Services also offer advice on best practices for website editors to help make UCD website content accessible to all. This also helps to ensure UCD follows directives mandated by the European Union such as the Web Accessibility Directive. This directive builds on existing obligations for public bodies to make websites and services offered to the public accessible by meeting its 'Essential Requirements' which can be achieved by complying with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines.

UCD has undertaken to improve its web accessibility score in line with EU directive. There are approximately 420 websites under the UCD domain and the web accessibility score is evaluated and published on the web accessibility statement at regular intervals in order to measure progress. In addition, the National Disability Authority (NDA) monitors and reviews the UCD domain since October 2021.

A new design library which contains a suite of accessible templates which can be used by colleges, schools and units across the university has been developed and rolled out. The Design Library is a collection of available pages and components that can be used to develop a site in the Terminalfour content management system. The design library will continue to evolve and be added to on a regular basis.

Example of Inclusive Practice: Implementation of Ally for Brightspace Virtual Learning Environment

Every student at UCD has access to Brightspace - UCD's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). Brightspace is an online platform that allows lecturers to share learning materials, announcements, assessments such as quizzes, and collect assignments. Brightspace also has additional features such as a plagiarism prevention tool, online virtual classroom facility, a range of learner activities and other collaborative tools. All teaching materials are required to adhere to accessibility guidelines so that all students can partake fully in any online learning aspect of their university education.

Ally, a tool provided by Blackboard, was introduced in order to support faculty and staff in understanding how accessible their learning content is, and to provide clear and easy information on how to create more accessible learning content for their students.

Ally assists in improving the usability and accessibility of learning content within the Brightspace Virtual Learning Environment. Providing students with more accessible content ensures they can choose formats that work best for them in terms of accessibility but also in terms of providing formats that assist students in understanding and digesting their module material in a manner that best suits their own learning preferences.

For faculty, Ally automatically scans the learning content, providing them with feedback and an accessibility score on each item and a series of steps to assist them in making them more accessible content, in real time. Some students with disabilities need their module materials in alternative formats e.g. students with visual impairments who access their materials using a screen reader or students with specific learning difficulties who benefit from listening to their learning materials. Ally facilitates these

students by allowing them to access their module materials in a format that suits them at source, without the need for making special requests or using specialist software. Ally not only benefits students with disabilities but all students, who can now choose formats that best suit their learning needs, preferences and environment.

Implementation

UCD IT Services, engaged with other Higher Educational Institutes (HEIs) already using Ally, both within Ireland and the United Kingdom in order to gain insights into their approach with launching Ally.

Feedback was very positive from these conversations, with indications that Ally was user friendly and students greatly benefited from the introduction of Ally across the board, particularly as these institutions had purchased Ally in the context of the global pandemic (COVID-19) while supporting students studying remotely. UCD's rollout of Ally was expedited with the onset of the pandemic and the rapid move to online teaching.

Positive feedback from students was received immediately after launch:

> "Just a quick line of thanks to all involved in getting the Ally software on Brightspace. After somewhat struggling with Zoomtext, this is a gamechanger. It is simple to use and works every time. The time saved, compared to the previous laborious, and somewhat unreliable, methods is remarkable."

In order to build awareness of Ally, the project group agreed to run an Ally Early Adopter group for faculty who wanted to gain an understanding of Ally, and to assist the project team with developing appropriate support materials for faculty on the use of Ally in Brightspace.

Sign up to the Early Adopter group was very positive with approximately 45 faculty joining this group over the summer. Weekly drop in clinics were organised, where members of the early adopter group could meet and discuss any issues they were experiencing with a member of the project team, or share tips with other colleagues. The early adopter group ran from June to mid August and allowed the project team to plan for the start of the next academic year where a full launch of Ally and support resources were made available for everyone.

Launch

In September 2021, the Ally project team supported a full launch of Ally in Brightspace. Ally is now available to all UCD staff and students across all modules. Communications were sent to the UCD community informing them of the launch and detailing what Ally is and how it can be used.

Ally training was incorporated within the IT Services Brightspace workshop schedule and was available for staff to sign up to ahead of the start of the academic year. Online and on demand resources were created and published on the IT Services Knowledge Base and remain there for staff and students to use.

Student usage of Ally has remained consistent during the first full trimester since it went live with over 38,000 downloads of alternative formats across approximately 1,750 individual modules in the Autumn Trimester. Instructor usage in the Autumn trimester saw over 370 fixes to module content across 86 modules. As of the end of March 2022 there have been over 830 content fixes across approximately 130 modules for this academic year.

The overall data is rather consistent on a week on week basis and shows that the alternative format usage remains relatively high within the student population. In relation to the alternative formats being downloaded it is clear that the use of Tagged PDF is the most popular format, which follows a similar trend to other institutions in the EMEA region as reported by Blackboard in their Ally roadmap session. After Tagged PDF, there is a student preference towards the HTML and ePub formats followed by Audio.

The project team recently ran a student survey via the Student eZine (sent to all registered students), to gain further insight into the student usage of Ally, and how this might be improved. The response numbers for this however, were small and no tangible outputs could be attributed to the response rate received.

Next Steps

A full product review and evaluation of Ally will take place over the next 18 months. The review will focus on areas for improvement, increasing adoption, assessing the benefits it offers and listening to the student voice. IT Services continue to participate in the Ally User Groups and roadmap sessions and have embedded any learnings within our internal Brightspace workshops. IT Services continue to work with colleagues in Access and Lifelong Learning to promote this solution.

UCD Careers Network

Dr David Foster

Director of Career Development and Skills

Reflections of a Director... Career Development and Accessibility!

> "As the future of work develops at an even faster pace, we cannot hope to prepare our graduates for jobs, which, in all likelihood, have not yet been invented. However, if our ambition is to equip graduates to be adaptable in a changing world and secure successful and fulfilling futures for themselves, then CareerEDGE is probably more relevant now than it has ever been".
>
> -Eade (2019)

Therein lies the challenge facing higher education; to enable students to progress from programmes into employment while, at the same time, imbuing them with the skills, attitudes and attributes that will enable personal and professional success through adaptability as workplace practices and cultures evolve over time alongside strong awareness of the need for ongoing lifelong learning. These attitudes and attributes will be key to personal fulfilment and economic success. Government programmes such as the Human Capital Initiative and Springboard + speak to this agenda with many employers needing to upskill and reskill the workforce to meet existing and emerging demands.

At Careers Network, we are encouraged by Eade's assertion that the CareerEDGE Model of Graduate Employability (which has been the bedrock for professional practice for some years) is seen as an agent for success in the career development and employability of students moving forward. The CareerEDGE Model of Graduate Employability, places, at its core the following aspects of student life:

- Generic Skills,
- Emotional intelligence,
- Experience of work and life,
- Career Development Learning and
- Degree Subject, Knowledge, Understanding and Skills.

Success consists of students experiencing the above domains, engaging in effective self-reflection to build their self-efficacy, self-confidence, and self-esteem. These are critical components of successful employability outcomes. Enhancing self-efficacy and self-confidence remain core objectives for staff within Careers Network when developing interventions.

What we do

Staff at Careers Network support undergraduate and graduate students across UCD and offer support to Postdoctoral Researchers and recent graduates of up to two years post completion. Work is delivered through services, programmes and interventions designed to be inclusive in the sense of providing students with options around how they engage:

- Career Development Modules- around 1600 students annually study career development for credits.

- Co-Curricular Programmes- Stand alone events in some cases and programmes related in others, e.g., the UCD Advantage Award which recognises learning from co-curricular engagement with students reflecting on experiences to evidence Health and Wellbeing, Personal and Professional Development, Community and Cultural Awareness.

- Programmes and events that connect students and employers around workplace culture, case studies, business games and for progression into work opportunities.

- Career guidance and information to enable effective decision-making.

- Developing effective job applications and interview techniques.

Careers Network has recently procured a virtual career centre that sits alongside direct provision, and which is available on a 24/7 basis throughout the year, extending access to career development and employability.

Towards a more inclusive Careers Network

For many years, UCD Careers Network has been gathering, analysing and using feedback from students, employers and staff and faculty to shape what we do. For example, we have a sense of what works and what might need to be developed or stopped to meet the changing needs of students. This approach has been useful as a catalyst for change and the team has confidence that what we do is needed and not simply an activity delivered just because it has been on a work schedule for some time.

In more recent times, Careers Network has started collecting data from students at the point of the annual registration process. This is called Career Registration, a short survey comprising 3 questions on career readiness, employability-related experience and the sectors of employment which are of interest. With over 50000 pieces of data at this time, we are shaping and developing services based on data and evidence. The confidence we have in what we are doing is growing as professional activities are grounded in data from our own students. Data is available to staff and faculty and presented on the UCD Intranet using dashboards developed in Tableau to illustrate outcomes (https://intranet.ucd.ie/careers/).

Recent development of an Access & Lifelong Learning dashboard is enabling a broader understanding of the challenges facing students entering UCD under the ALL routes and allows for a better-informed approach to meeting the career development and employability needs of these students.

Staff at Careers Network with a direct role in student learning and development have completed the Digital Badge in Universal Design for Learning, a hugely rewarding experience for all concerned. I would particularly like to thank our colleague, Dr Lisa Padden in Access and Lifelong Learning for the energy, drive and enthusiasm shown when working with the team. In many ways, the team discovered that a lot of what was delivered was aligned to good practice but there is no doubt that career development and employability supports have been enhanced and the student experience richer as a result of the training. In undertaking training, it became clear that sometimes it is simple adjustments that make a difference to someone's experience, including:

- Uploading documents to Brightspace and using the accessibility plug-in (Ally),
- Using live captioning during online workshops,
- Making PowerPoints and other slides available before sessions so students can be prepared and can access on screen-reader during delivery,
- Providing session outlines and pre-tasks before sessions to assist with preparation,
- Design the content of workshop slides, web content, social media posts to make them as accessible as possible, using a clear font, accessible font colour, restrict the amount of text and have a clear structure,
- Consider the most appropriate delivery format and timing of the session.

These are examples of practical actions the team members take when developing and delivering interventions and materials. So, are we there yet? Well; maybe not completely and success might be reflected on the day when all of these actions become an embedded, unconscious process rather than something that needs to be factored in and thought about.

Leonie Phipps

Career & Skills Consultant

Aradhna Mathur

Co-Curriculum Project Officer, UCD Careers Network

Example of Inclusive Practice: Career Alumni Mentoring Programmes

This year the UCD Alumni Careers Mentoring Programme was open to final year as well as penultimate year students from the College of Engineering & Architecture, College of Science, College of Arts & Humanities and the College of Social Sciences & Law. Previously it had only been open to penultimate year students. At Careers Network, staff wanted to ensure that Access and Lifelong Learning students who were eligible for the UCD Mentoring Programme were aware that they could apply and would receive any support needed. In preparing the programme, prior to inductions for the mentees, a bespoke information session for Access and Lifelong Learning students was developed and delivered to encourage student engagement and to provide additional information on the specific supports that would be available to them during the programme.

The Access and Lifelong Learning Information Session took place online via zoom. It was recorded with both the slides and recording uploaded to Brightspace to enable broader engagement and accessibility. In terms of promotion, colleagues in Access and Lifelong Learning issued targeted emails to eligible students and it was promoted also via social media and on MyCareer. The UDL Principles of Multiple Means of Engagement and Representation when designing and delivering were adopted. The session was designed using PowerPoint, being mindful of different learning styles with multiple

means of representation incorporated such as adding visuals such as images, diagrams, links and a short video and text to showcase the process for the UCD Mentoring Programme. The links included descriptions and the images had captions to make sure we adhered to UDL principles. The style and design of the slides were accessible by following best practices for typography and colour contrast and the accessibility checker on Brightspace was an excellent tool to ensure accessibility. The session itself was presentation style and students were encouraged to ask questions via the mic or chat function on zoom. The poll function was used on zoom as an additional means of engagement. Resources were provided on additional supports to include information on how to make appointments for disability support, learning support, assisted technology and career related support.

Careers Network staff reviewed and amended the content for the mentor training to ensure that the mentors were given the best advice/guidance on how to best support students from diverse backgrounds. The mentoring launch event was online this year to allow mentors and mentees who live outside of Dublin to attend. Careers Network is in contact with all mentees via email to make sure they receive our full support in finding a mentor on the Alumni platform. If a student is unable to find a mentor on the system, further support in finding a suitable mentor will be provided.

James Joyce Library

Philip Russell

Information Services Manager

UCD Library is actively engaged in realising a 'University for All', offering inclusive spaces for everyone in UCD. Equality, diversity and inclusion are at the heart of everything the Library does, across 5 sites, online, and in the wider community. The single biggest transformation of the James Joyce Library since it was built is under way. This will provide many additional opportunities to enable access and widen participation. Here are just a few examples of UCD Library's current initiatives.

Example of Inclusive Practice: End Period Poverty Initiative

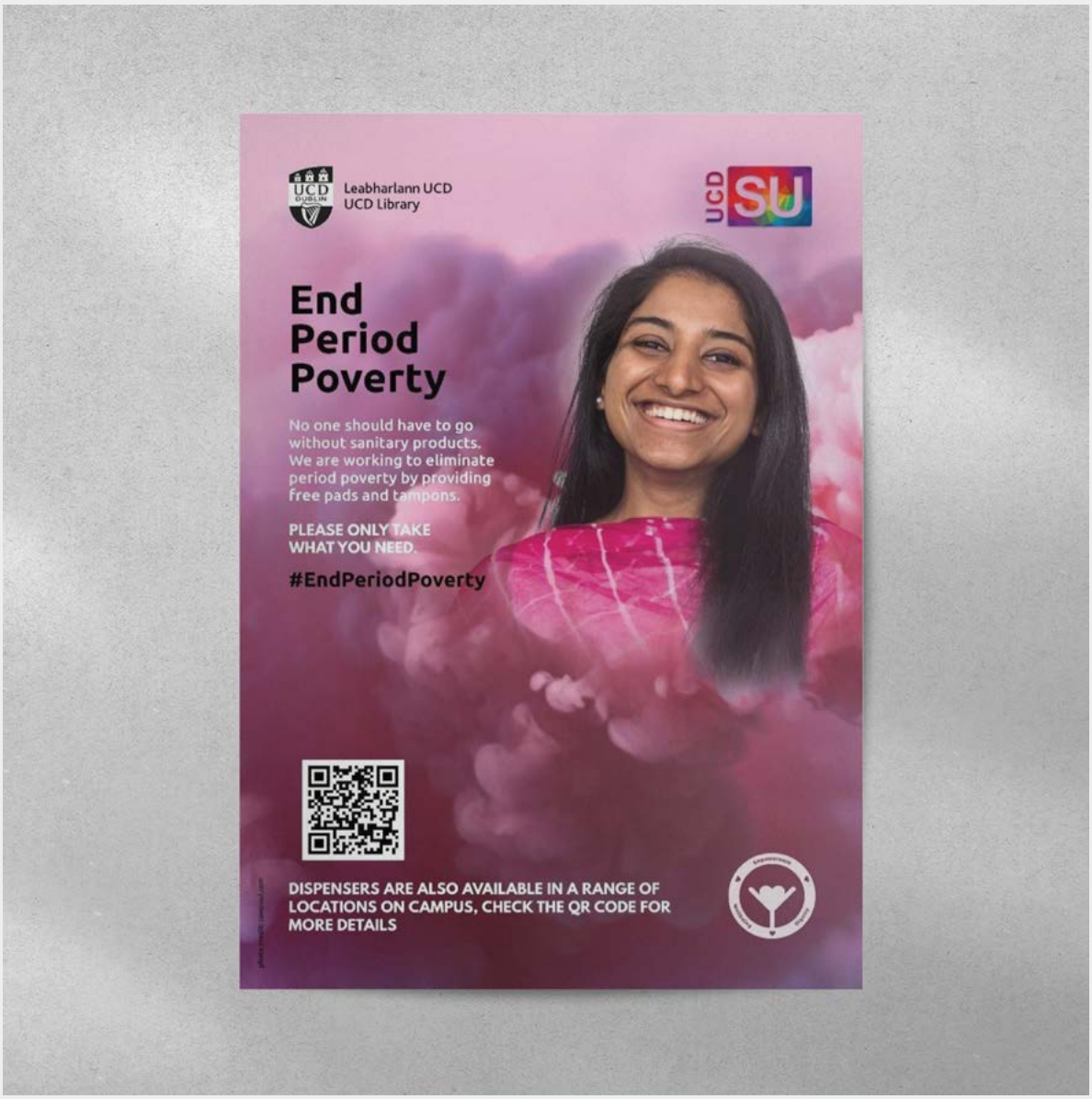
The "End Period Poverty" initiative in University College Dublin was extended into the UCD James Joyce Library in October 2021, ensuring it is the largest academic library in the country to provide free sanitary products to everyone.

Over the last number of years, UCD staff and students through UCD in the Community, the UCDSU and student societies have been raising awareness around the issue of period poverty. Following an earlier successful rollout of this service in the UCD Students' Union building, the Library, the Dean of Students and the UCDSU worked together to make free sanitary products, critical to ending period poverty, available to even more students by placing dispensers in the women's, men's and unisex/accessible toilets in the library.

While this initiative directly benefits UCD students, it has also provided an excellent opportunity for UCD Library to work collaboratively with colleagues across the campus including the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Office, the UCD Dean of Students and the UCD Students' Union. Additionally, it supports key objectives identified in UCD Library's Strategic Plan 2021-2025 – The Library of the Future, relating to both student engagement and the library's focus on equality, diversity and inclusion, creating an inclusive library for all.

Through an extensive marketing campaign developed by the Library and the UCDSU, a range of print and online resources were developed to support this initiative.

A promotional campaign #EndPeriodPoverty highlights this initiative across social media, campus newspapers, university plasma screens, posters and stickers.



The strong images used in the campaign represent a diverse range of people of different ages, abilities and ethnicities and draw attention to this important student service.

Promotional materials also include a QR code linking to a web page which displays library floor plans, and other campus locations, highlighting where free sanitary products are available and therefore making it as easy as possible for people to avail of this service.

The UCD Library Period Poverty Initiative team were recognised at the 2022 UCD Values in Action Awards for their work in implementing and promoting the #EndPeriodPoverty campaign.

In receiving the award, the UCD Library Period Poverty Team was noted for upholding the value UCD places on engagement, excellence, creativity and diversity.

This collaborative project supports UCD's Equality Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, by working towards removing barriers caused by gender inequality and socio-economic issues. The library is the ideal location for this service, with the longest staffed opening hours on campus, it is accessible to all UCD students and plays a central role in student life.

The initiative has proven to be extremely popular with students and staff, helping to improve the daily lives of all our library users.

Involvement with this project has also helped to empower library staff, providing them with an opportunity to enhance their knowledge, expertise and practices with regard to supporting equality, diversity and inclusion and achieving a University for All.

UCD Library has proved to be a catalyst for change. The success of this pivotal project acted as a 'proof of concept' which demonstrated the value and demand for this service on campus, facilitating the wider roll out of this initiative across UCD and enhancing the library's contribution to the UCD Community.

Selection of images showcasing Library Initiatives

Noise cancelling headsets	UCD Access and Lifelong Learning partnered with UCD Library to provide laptops; noise cancelling headphones; phone, tablet and laptop charging bays; and digital flipcharts. Purchased with Devolved Grant Funding 2021-22, these devices are freely available to everyone using the Library, supporting the values of a University for All.
JJL_Level 3 refurbishment02	UCD Library and UCD Estates are working on the transformation of the James Joyce Library building, in consultation with all Library users. Level 3 of the Library will be completed first, in September 2023. It will provide more student spaces and zones, and new facilities to meet a range of needs, including silent study rooms, sensory study rooms, and 'zoom rooms'.
LGBT+Spotlight	UCD Library regularly partners with UCD Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. In February 2023, the Library welcomed all Library users to a Spotlight on resources for LGBT+ history in the collections. These include print and ebooks, databases and treasures from UCD Special Collections.
Leaving Cert Students JJL	Every May and June, UCD Library opens up study facilities for Leaving Cert students. The service is free for students from DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunity) schools.
Poetry as Commemoration	Poetry as Commemoration' is an initiative of the Irish Poetry Reading Archive at UCD, supported by the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media, under the Decade of Centenaries 2012-2023 programme. It is one of many initiatives from UCD Library's Cultural Heritage collections that widen participation, in this case through working with poets and communities across the island of Ireland to deepen a collective understanding of our past.

GALE
ARCHIVES OF SEXUALITY AND GENDER
SEARCH THE LIBRARY DATABASE
LGBT+ HISTORY MONTH
LGBT+ History Month
Discover more online with UCD Library - ebooks, open access resources and databases

Temporary Library Card

UCD University Relations

Mary Staunton

Communications Manager

Ensuring inclusion for the future

Central to delivering the University's strategy is the development, promotion and protection of our brand and reputation. An organisation's brand is the articulation of its identity. It describes the ethos of the University, expresses our commitment to research discovery and holistic learning and promotes our contribution to ever-evolving Irish and global societies through our diverse community of students, faculty, staff and graduates.

Our brand is defined and articulated through a strong single identity – the UCD crest. This offers a clearly recognisable identity across the University. A single unified brand brings coherence to the diverse activities of the University and strengthens our overall recognition and reputation.

We amplify the University's key achievements by communicating across all platforms and channels; we gather content from across the University to effectively tell our stories and engage our diverse audiences, internal and external; we ensure that our strategic marketing campaigns reach the right audiences; we always ensure that diversity and inclusion are central to the planning of our advertising campaigns; we coordinate key university events to encompass diverse audiences, on campus and publicly; and we publish a number of key print publications to profile the broad scope of achievement at the University.

The University Relations Marketing team plays a central role in attracting a high calibre and diverse body of students to UCD. Based on extensive market research and analysis, we have produced successful marketing campaigns targeted at prospective students in each of the cohorts: undergraduate, graduate, non-EU and online students, as well as supporting various activities undertaken by Access and Lifelong Learning, Student Recruitment, and our Colleges and Schools.

Every message from the University's senior management team, every social media post, every advertisement, every printed publication, every single engagement with our audiences is carefully planned and constructed by the University Relations team to meet the University's objectives to 'attract, retain and develop an excellent and diverse cohort of students, faculty and staff' and to ensure that we are widening participation in education. We ensure that the diversity of each audience is taken into account in our planning. We draw on the diverse voices and messages of our own student base to illustrate our campaigns, building on their experience and adding greatly to the richness of our offering.

The diversity of our student, faculty, staff, alumni and community audiences continues to develop in line with national and global trends. We look forward to continuing to ensure that we use our voice to amplify the stories, successes and achievements of the whole UCD Community.

Admissions

Jill O'Mahony

Director of Admissions

Example of Inclusive Practice: Mature Student Applications

With yearly decreases in the number of Mature applicants to UCD, a project was initiated to review several aspects. Admissions took the lead in redesigning a system to assess Mature applications that would aim to:

1. Remove application barriers and increase Mature UG intake.
2. Apply a standard approach across programme areas.
3. Ensure mature student success.

The steps taken included benchmarking with other institutions, taking a fresh look at the information and data already received from CAO applicants and consulting with some of the key stakeholders currently involved in the UCD process.

We considered alternative solutions (e.g. engaging with 3rd party assessment providers, developing in-house assessment, altering MSAP provision,) but the approach currently recommended allows Admission Registry to apply an agreed rubric to assess all applicants (based on such elements as previous education, work and experiential experience, personal statement) , balancing the inputs required by applicant, Admissions and Colleges.

While the recommended solution is going through a pilot and consultation process, it is hoped that the new mechanism will:

- Have no additional costs to the applicant.
- Not deter applicants with a high stakes test (e.g. possible removal of MSAP test)

- More consistent process and increased standardisation across programme areas by introducing a rubric that will rank applicants based on set criteria.
- Reduce numbers to be assessed by Programme Boards following Admissions initial scoring.
- Allows for waiting lists so places that are not filled can be offered in subsequent offer rounds.
- Allow for inclusion of late applicants and/or additional documents to be requested and reviewed.

The initiative will be delivered with the support and sponsorship of the Widening Participation Group and will take account of the feedback received from the Access team via Mature student surveys and focus groups. In addition, time and resources will be planned to enhance current information available on web-sites, that will appeal to the Mature applicant cohort.

QQI FET/FETAC Entry Requirements

Do you wish to be considered for DARE?

How do I apply to HEAR?

Applying to CAO as a Mature Student?

UCD Teaching & Learning

Dr Sheena Hyland

Assistant Professor in Educational Development

Example of Inclusive Practice: UCD Framework for Programme Assessment and Feedback Strategies

Inclusive assessment challenges such as high assessment work-load, over-emphasis on module level assessment and need for diversification of assessment had been identified as key challenges in UCD following the Curriculum Review and Enhancement project. The UCD Education Strategy (Action 1.2) had also emphasised the importance of assessment being central to programme design... need for a comprehensive assessment framework. As a consequence a strategic project was established (2018-2020) led by Associate Professor Geraldine O'Neill (UCD Teaching and Learning) to develop this institutional framework.

The UCD Framework for Programme Assessment and Feedback Strategies was developed to support programme teams (including faculty, professional staff and student representatives) to engage in dialogue in order to **review, plan, articulate and implement** their programme/stage assessment and feedback strategies. A key aim of the Framework is to support programme teams to create coherent assessment and feedback approaches that build upon:

- Prior modules (vertical integration) and, where possible, parallel modules (horizontal integration) across a programme and/or

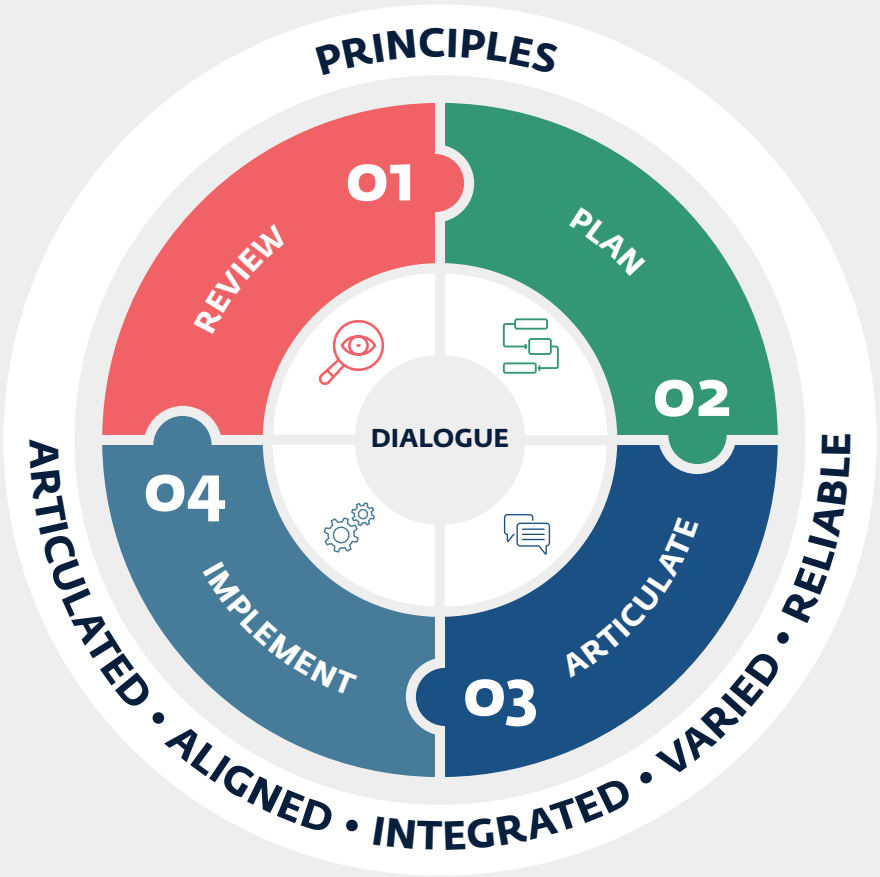
- Create opportunities for integrative assessment that can assess multiple modules e.g. capstone projects or portfolio assessment.

In the early stages of the project, a survey was sent to UCD Programme Directors (n=65) and the six College VPT&L to develop a set of underlying programme assessment and feedback principles (see Figure 1). Over a two-year period, UCD T&L then led 19

workshops across UCD (548 participants in total). The project developed a four-step process, as part of the framework, to support teams to discuss (dialogue) and enhance assessment changes (see Figure 1):

Step One: Review
Step Two: Plan
Step Three: Articulate
Step Four: Implement

Assessment and Feedback Strategies



UCD Framework for Programme Assessment and Feedback Strategies

The project was a collaboration between UCD T&L, VPTLs, Director of Assessment, UCD Student Union, Deans' Forum. In addition to these key collaborators, the workshops included conversations between staff across different disciplines, representatives from UCD QA, UCD ALL, UCD Registry, Deans/Associate Deans and programme directors

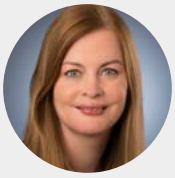
Project Highlights

- High level of engagement and collaboration across UCD staff and students
- The project included the design and delivery of a National Forum Open Course on Programme-Focused Assessment, in collaboration with TCD (27 Faculty and 17 facilitators nationally obtained the badge)
- The project input into the VLE oversight group, the TEL Strategy, Brightspace ePortfolio project and the Teaching Fellows (digital group).
- The 'Framework' was approved by UCD UMT Education Group, UPB Committees and finally approved by ACEC in June 2020
- The project and the framework were presented at international/national conferences, including the key-note at the UK SEDA conference, 2019
- Since 2022, the Framework has been embedded in the UCD Quality Review Guidelines (Academic) documentation (p22) to guide Schools in the quality assurance and enhancement of their programmes
- The Framework webpage, finalised in 2022, has comprehensive advice for staff, including a series of evaluation tools to support review; and 17 case studies and 11 assessment and feedback resources to support implementation ideas.

Further Resources

The UCD Teaching and Learning website includes resources on Programme Assessment and Feedback. UCD T&L can work with programme teams to facilitate dialogue and explore ideas for programme assessment and feedback. In addition, UCD T&L run an accredited module on 'Leading University Teaching and Learning' (7.5 credits), and occasionally run the National Forum Open Course on Programme-Focused Assessment, focusing on ideas for leading change in programme design and assessment.

Finance Office



Grainne Keane

Director of Finance, College of Health and Agricultural Sciences

Contribution to Widening Participation

As Director of Finance for the College of Agriculture and Health Sciences and a member of the Finance Office community much of my decision making is understandably focused on the financial implications rather than the wider societal impacts of University policies. I have had the privilege of being the Finance Office Representative on the UWP for several years and in that time I have broadened my perspective, finding my involvement in the Committee be both enlightening and rewarding.

The goal is widening participation, however achieving that is also about broadening peoples' perspectives (including my own) about what truly constitutes a "level playing field" and how we can go about removing barriers to achieve a University for all.

It has been inspiring to collaborate with colleagues from all across the campus who are so selfless and passionate about driving change to create a University for all.

Some of my key highlights have been:

- Leading a project which enhanced our understanding of the various factors driving the trajectory of sanctuary scholarships awarded across various disciplines.

- Lending my support at a Medicine School executive discussion on access quotas which led to a decision to fast track a significant increase in access quotas.

- Playing a key role in the UWP symposium on affordable student accommodation, gaining insights on the student body perspective as well as highlighting on behalf of the Bursar the complex challenges that the University faces in relation to this and conveying the University's recognition of the importance of continued dialogue with both the student body and the state to seek solutions.

- Providing the unique perspective of a “non student facing” professional staff member as a member of the Universal Design Project Team and gaining new insights on the types of invisible barriers that we need to break down and the need to take a step back and put ourselves “ in other people’s shoes” when communicating and designing policies.

I am delighted to be celebrating the important milestone of a full decade of UCD shaping the Widening Participation agenda and offer my thanks and congratulations to all my colleagues and past colleagues who have been instrumental in advancing this. Given the enthusiasm and innovation demonstrated by the UWP Committee to date, I am very excited to discover what will unfold in this space over the next decade.

Estates Services

Tadgh Corcoran and Thomas Hamill

Introduction

The Estate Services within any higher education institution holds the important responsibility for managing existing university property while planning accommodation for future generations of students, researchers, faculty, and staff. The subject University has over 33,000 students and 3,900 academic and support staff and has the largest campus portfolio in Ireland. The University's Estate Service aims to embed accessibility and inclusive design within the campus environment to promote the creation of a university for all but acknowledges the challenges that may arise while attempting to make this vision a reality. Hence, the Estate Services team consider Universal Design to hold solutions to these challenges, as this enables us to appraise how our campus facilities can be used to the greatest extent possible by all people, regardless of age, ability, gender, or background.

University Estate Services

The role of an Estates Services team is one of custodian of the campus and the campus experience. Our aim is to pass the campus onto future generations in better condition, and, as such, it is a journey of continuous improvement, not only of the campus but also in how we manage the estate and building portfolio of the University. In 2022, the key objectives of the "Estate Strategy" in the subject University are:

1. Support university growth: Like most higher education institutions, UCD is growing rapidly with the University growing by 25 per cent or 6,600 full-time equivalents between 2018–2023. The University is diversifying this enrollment by engaging with access students, international students, and students with diverse abilities. Growth is manifested not only in the academic buildings but also in the residential and student amenities on campus that support student life and community promoting work, rest, and play.

2. Enhance the campus experience: Fostering an inclusive and fulfilling experience of the physical campus and built environments for all users is fundamental to the role of Estate Services in higher education institutions. In UCD's context, the early campus design in the 1960s reflected the ambitions of a modern egalitarian university, and the University recently celebrated 50 years of UCD at the Belfield campus (University College Dublin, 2020). The University seeks to improve the campus experience holistically, from the full-scale capital refurbishment projects, to targeted interventions through minor works projects and maintenance interventions of existing buildings, all which offer opportunities to embed accessibility and inclusive design to improve the campus experience.

3. Improve sustainability and transition to a low carbon campus: It is no surprise that a university's buildings are the most significant contributor to energy consumption and carbon footprint. Our challenge as a University community is to learn to adapt how we use our buildings for a low carbon future.

As a higher education institution with a large campus portfolio of buildings ranging from period to current day, it is our firm belief that these key objectives can only be met and the campus can only benefit by embedding accessibility and creating community through inclusive design, truly creating a university campus for all.

The evolution of university campuses

Often, higher education institutions have existing campus buildings and infrastructure which require refurbishment, as well as plans for future campus buildings to promote university activities. University Estate Services have the job of balancing priorities for refurbishment and developing future campus infrastructure. To understand the inclusivity journey that the Estates Services' team are on in UCD, one must firstly understand the campus' origin and the subsequent challenges posed.

As Ireland's largest University, the estate facilities are predominantly based at the Belfield campus with additional accommodation provided at Blackrock, Lyons Research Farm, Newman House, and various hospital locations. With over 33,000 students, faculty, staff, and visitors using the Belfield campus on a daily basis, the campus hosts a multitude of stakeholder groups and manages significant transport infrastructure. The Belfield campus facilitates various functions and incorporates apartments, offices, laboratory and teaching facilities, restaurants, sports and parkland facilities, retail, and entertainment services.

Historically, the Belfield campus was the realisation of a utopian vision for a modern Irish university. It was Ireland's first purpose built modern campus and it changed the idea of what a university should look like. The campus design came out of an international competition in the 1960s, with the original masterplan by Polish architect Andrzej Wejchert. The campus was organised around a central spine of circulation based on the idea of movement and flexibility. The campus plan needed to be flexible, to allow for on-going development over future decades. However, if you consider the campus in the context of the design principles at that time, accessibility, as we understand it now, was not a priority.

This has left Estate Services with numerous challenges. As an example, although a number of the university buildings received Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland (RIAI) gold medals for their design, the Restaurant in 1970 (RIAI, 1970) and the Administration (Tierney) Building in 1972 (RIAI, 1973) were developed with a series of steps at the front/main entrances. There are also the magnificent period estate houses whose lands make up the Belfield campus. Estate Services have established a Programme for the

Preservation of Period Houses and although accessibility is always a priority in the sympathetic restoration of these historic properties, this is not as straightforward a process as developing a green field site. However, to give these properties a modern purpose, which is essential to their preservation, it is equally important that they are open and accessible to the entire university community. Such legacy accessibility challenges are evident throughout the campus and highlight the impact of not embedding Universal Design and accessibility principles during the design stages of campus projects.

Promoting inclusion through building care and management

Although conscious of our obligations under the relevant legislation, statutory requirements are not the main driver in our inclusivity journey. Instead, the Estate Services' objective is to go beyond mere compliance and to understand that inclusivity and diversity are to be embraced and encouraged in the University community, and that the built environment of the University should be equally inclusive by design. We have realised that the accessibility and usability of a campus relies heavily on the good management and excellent care of our existing buildings. Building care and management encompasses the many practical tasks involved in the day-to-day operation of a building, including building maintenance, planning for emergency evacuation, customer service, and staff training. The introduction of an Accessibility Systems Management Plan for all buildings across the campus is an example of how we have attempted to embed inclusivity in our day-to-day operations. Too often in the past, such systems were installed without any focus on ongoing maintenance and monitoring. Estates Services developed this systematic plan to regularly check and monitor accessibility systems in buildings, including accessible toilet and bedroom alarms, refuge point intercom systems, and power assisted doors. Ensuring the systems are working when required is a basic element of good building management.

Furthermore, through our accessibility minor works projects (small scale focused improvement works), we aim to make impactful alterations in a legacy campus environment, or put another way, we aim to make a big difference with small changes. These accessibility projects are a collaborative effort with colleagues in the University's access service, based on consultation and the identification of priorities. Projects

completed have consisted of both external (e.g. access to buildings, wayfinding, parking, service dog facilities, etc.) and internal (e.g. wayfinding, inclusive Changing and WC facilities, communication systems, etc.) considerations.

Incorporating inclusion into future campus project and University capital programme

In a university's Capital Programme to support University Growth, ensuring Universal Design and University for All principles are considered right from the project inception is fundamental to moving from a focus on compliance to inclusive design. Examples within campus plans for UCD include the Centre for Creativity and the Centre for Learning. In conjunction with accessibility consultants O'Herily Access Consultancy, a 43-point checklist of Universal Design criteria (Appendix A) was developed for both projects which were based on the University for All Toolkit (Kelly and Padden, 2018) and review of national and international best practice. Through regular accessibility workshops, Universal Design reviews of the building's designs, Universal Design feasibility reports, and on-going accessibility advice from the University accessibility consultants, inclusivity and accessibility were key principles throughout the design of both buildings. With inclusivity being considered at all stages, and with the collaborative approach adopted by the University and our design team, it was possible to ensure Universal Design was incorporated fully into our future campus plans. Having successfully incorporated the process, we are very pleased to embed this into the design process for other major capital projects such as the Science Centre and the Sports and Student Amenities project, as the Estate Services' team acknowledge how embedding inclusivity from the design stage benefits all users of the campus.

Conclusion

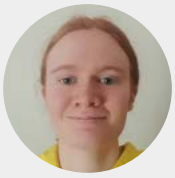
As an Estate Service for a large university, we recognise that we are on a journey, a journey of continuous improvement. While we believe that we can take pride in the campus that the team has developed to date, there is still plenty of room for improvement and work to be done, all of which will take time. As we undertake that work, we are attempting to ensure inclusive practice across the spectrum of the services that Estates Services provide. From effective day to day building operation

and campus management, to smaller scale accessibility focused renovation works, and all the way to our major future building projects, we are working to enhance the campus for future generations of students to come and provide a legacy of good design practice in which accessibility and inclusion for all are our driving principles. We have made progress. The student funded Student Centre SLLS Building won the 2013 RIAI Universal Design Award (Centre for Excellence in Universal Design, 2013), and our integration of the inclusivity principle into our future campus design process is an innovation which enhances the design process and are examples of good universal design in operation. Most importantly, they are an example of the University's and Estate Services' commitment to move beyond compliance. We aim to continue to go beyond the statutory and building regulations requirements, and we realise that developing a campus experience which exemplifies a culture of inclusion is a challenge requiring a commitment towards a process of continuous improvement and not a one-off initiative.

UCD
RE
Handbook
2020
HEAR
Higher Education Access Route
Handbook
2020

Students

Student Access Leaders

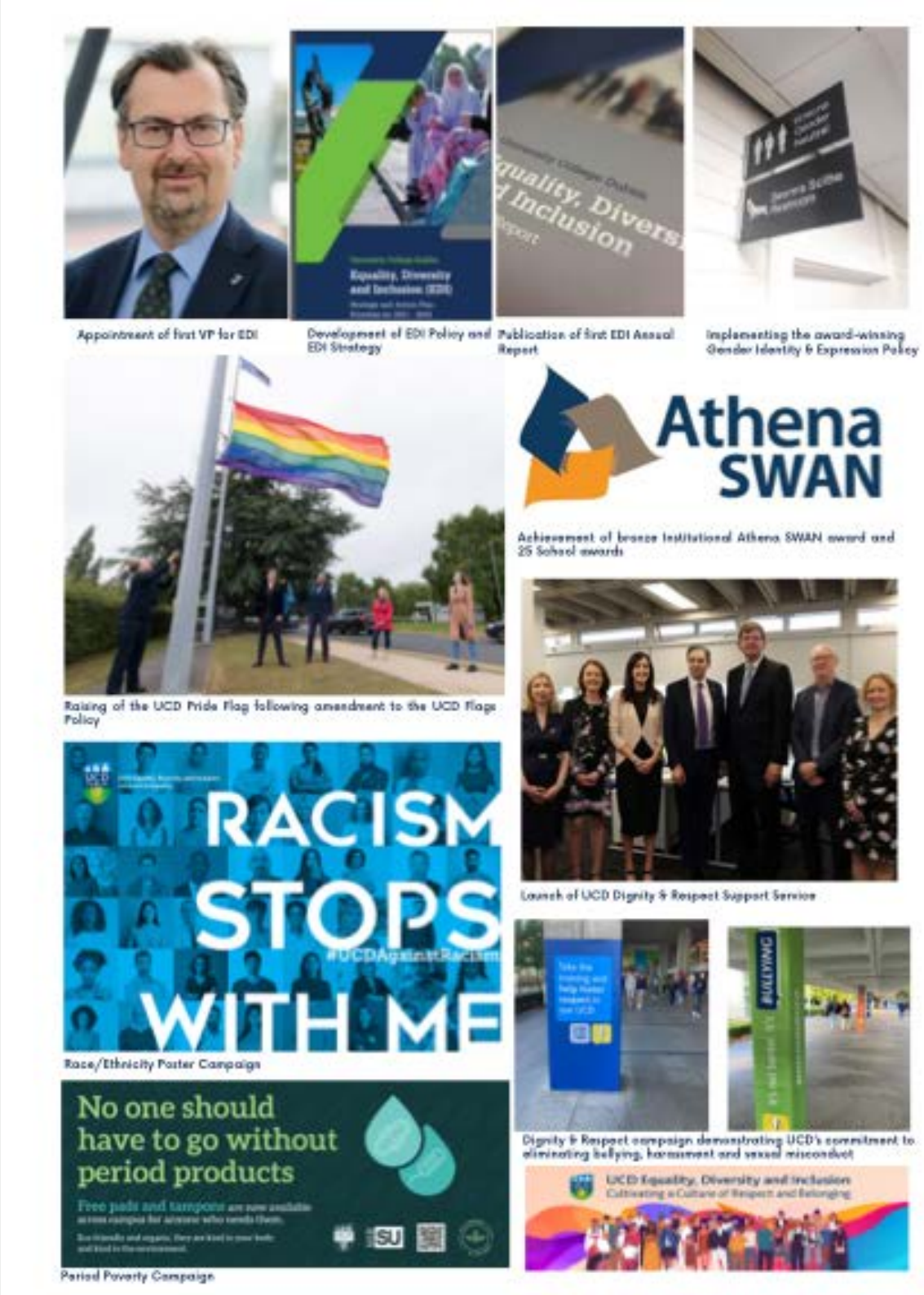


Eleanor Ronan

UCD Access Leaders are recruited and trained each year by Access and Lifelong Learning and we take our training and life experience with us both in our work with access and in our everyday interactions as part of the UCD community. We are trained in and promote many aspects of good practice such as choosing inclusive topics of conversation and accessible routes when taking people on tours. We also work consistently to improve engagement with other access students. For example, at the start of term, we help out at the ALL Welcome Day, assisting new students to get used to the college environment by encouraging them to chat to one another and leading discussions about transitioning to college. I remember how much the ALL Welcome helped me to meet new people and get used to the college environment and it is great to see this tradition continue. Access Leaders have also been helping out at open days for incoming students and visits from secondary schools. We have been sitting on various panels, focus groups and committees in UCD, such as the Widening Participation committee, and this ensures that access students are represented and their voices are heard throughout the university. Furthermore, we have recently been seeking feedback from all students and staff in UCD, about how they feel UCD can improve in terms of access. Through this process and many others, UCD will develop further in terms of access and more and more doors will open for a greater variety of people to enter and participate in the UCD community.

Co-opted

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion - Rory Carey & Marcellina Fogarty.

University of Sanctuary EDI Sub-Group

Dr Muireann Ní Raghallaigh

Senior Lecturer/Associate Professor,
Head of Subject (Social Work)

In December 2021, UCD successfully renewed its University of Sanctuary status. The EDI University of Sanctuary Sub-Group will continue to address the wider challenges experienced by those students who are from a refugee, asylum seeking or other forced migration background and investigate the development of a process in relation to academics from a forced migration background coming to UCD.

University of Sanctuary Scholar Precious Matumba speaks to her experience studyingat UCD and the value of her scholarship.

University Widening Participation Committee Membership

Chair, University Widening Participation Committee

Professor John Brannigan

Programme Board Leads

Agriculture, Food, Environmental Sciences

Professor Olaf Schmidt

Architecture, Planning & Environmental Policy

Associate Professor Dr Ellen Rowley

Arts & Humanities

Dr Fionnuala Walsh

Engineering

Associate Professor Mark Flanagan

Law

Professor Gavin Barrett

Medicine

Associate Professor Suzanne Donnelly

Physiotherapy, Public Health and Sports Science

Associate Professor Caitriona Cunningham

Science

Associate Professor Siobhán McClean

Social Science
Dr Graham Finlay

Veterinary Medicine and Veterinary Nursing
Dr Arun Kumar

Policy & Support Leads

Access & Lifelong Learning
Dr Anna Kelly

Admissions
Jill O'Mahony

Academic Board of Studies
Dr Bairbre Fleming

Finance
Gráinne Keane

Communication & Marketing
Mary Staunton

Recruitment
Anne-Marie Harvey

IT Services
Genevieve Dalton

Career Development and Skills
Dr David Foster

Student Advisors
Aisling O'Grady

Teaching and Learning
Dr Sheena Hyland

Co-opted Members

Human Resources
Rory Carey

UMT EDI Committee
Marcellina Fogarty

Joint Chairs - EDI Sub-Committee on Sanctuary
Dr Muireann Ní Raghallaigh & Assoc Prof Liam Thornton

UCD Global
Deirdre Healy

Student Representatives

John Ryan
Eleanor Ronan

UCD Student Union President
Molly Greenough

#DublinLearningCity
#1916LeadersandLearners

University College Dublin
University for All