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There's a vibrancy about Galway these days. The phenomenal success of the Wild Atlantic Way coupled with winning the bid to become the European Capital of Culture in 2020 mean that the city has a spring in its step. The bounce is tangible here in NUI Galway. President Jim Browne reflects on the region and the University, with Gráinne Faller.

“The opportunity all of it provides for the city and the university is incredible,” he says. “When you think about what has happened with the Wild Atlantic Way, then you ally that with the European Capital of Culture and then you bring the University into that, it’s very special.”

While all universities are important to their regions, few have the kind of symbiosis that NUI Galway has achieved with its hinterland, but that is only part of the story. The University has also had considerable success internationally. Its researchers have been immensely successful at winning European research funding, both from the European Research Council and the €80bn Horizon 2020 research and innovation fund. In fact, NUI Galway won more Horizon 2020 funding than any other Irish university last year and continues to punch well above its weight when it comes to winning international funding.

“I like the fact that the success is spread across the campus,” says Browne. “It’s not all med-tech or ICT. There are people involved in humanities, social science, engineering, science: it is dispersed throughout the institution. The investment we have made in the buildings and the staff is now coming through in the form of this kind of success.”

That investment that Browne refers to, the Capital Investment Programme, is nearing completion. It began in 2006 and cost close to €400 million. The research funding wins are proof that the spend is already reaping rewards.

“All that infrastructure creates the kind of resources needed for us to become a good partner for European institutions to make successful bids for Horizon 2020,” says Browne. “We have a target of €100 million over seven years and we’re way ahead of that. That target was seen to be quite ambitious at the time but I think we’ll achieve it. The first couple of years suggest that we’ll overachieve on it.”

As the capital spending draws to a close, the University’s funding focus is now shifting.

“Nothing is ever complete in the capital sense but a major milestone has been reached,” Browne says. “We’re transitioning our priorities away from capital and towards support for students, research and recurrent activity.”

One of the features of this shift in focus is a concerted effort to enable some of the most talented academic researchers to forge careers within the University. Galway University Foundation, charged with raising private support, has established the Foundation Research Leadership Programme, which will fund 15 new lecturer posts over the next three years.

Browne says: “Ireland produces about 1,300 PhDs per year as a sector and where do they go? The majority have to go into the so-called real world, industry and business. However, we also need some to stay in the universities, and right now because of controls on numbers due to the financial situation, we can’t do it. So this Foundation Leadership scheme is creating opportunities for the very best young people to come back into the University. That’s really important in terms of replenishing the staff in the institutions.”

The University is evolving and progressing, and Browne cites the appointment back in February of Professor Anne Scott as Vice
President for Equality and Diversity as an important and hugely positive step for the University. However, he admits that gender and diversity equality is an issue that has rightly overshadowed much of what has gone on in all Irish universities in the past few years. A highly publicised court case and a damning report on gender equality in all Irish universities by the Higher Education Authority, highlighted issues that Browne admits had been overlooked.

“While we dealt with the promotions issue before the courts found against us,” he says “My big regret is that we didn’t deal with the wider issue. We didn’t recognise that the outcome from the 2009 promotion round was indicative of a wider problem across the University.”

The Gender Equality Task Force, led by Professor Jane Grimson, which published its report in May, did a “stupendous job,” according to Browne. “Every single one of the final set of recommendations will be implemented,” he says.

Browne acknowledges that many inside and outside the University are sceptical, particularly as court cases are ongoing. He can’t comment publicly on those for legal reasons, but he says: “The scepticism is there. I understand it, but time will tell. I would be confident that we are now doing the right thing... I believe that what matters is walking the walk not talking the talk. Some of the taskforce recommendations can be implemented quickly. Others will take more time. I think as early as next year we will begin to see a difference.”

The problems have perhaps deflected attention from a lot of the other happenings in NUI Galway in the past year. The University was very much involved in Galway’s successful bid to become the European Capital of Culture 2020, for example.

Browne believes that with this success, and the popularity of the brand that is the Wild Atlantic Way, NUI Galway itself can become an even more integral part of the cultural fabric of the area.

“The University’s historic Quadrangle is unique in the west of Ireland,” he says. “Why couldn’t we make something out of that and link it with the Atlantic Way and the Capital of Culture? This Quadrangle can be a place that can welcome distinguished visitors and it could become a significant attraction for visitors to the west of Ireland. Let’s face it, tourists to the west of Ireland aren’t coming for the weather. They are largely cultural tourists. They are interested in culture, scenery, history. This could be a part of that.”

Browne’s vision is to make the Quad into a Visitor Centre: something that becomes that living heart, not just of the University, but of the region. Parts of the Quad are soon to be vacated as disciplines move to the newly completed buildings and the Buildings Office is actively exploring the possibility.

“It all speaks to an agenda of the University and the city and the region all working together to make it a really attractive place. We’re going to work on getting that idea articulated properly over the coming months and bring it to the Governing Body.”

That relationship between University, city and region, to which Browne refers, is multifaceted and perhaps one of the most exciting aspects of that relationship is the continuing growth and development of the medical technology sector.

Browne says: “It’s arguably the best story of economic development in the whole country. Medtech in the west of Ireland is not simply a sector, it is an eco-system.”

He does not claim sole credit for the University. “Success has many fathers,” he says, “The university played a role, initially in training. In the 1990s we created a biomedical engineering degree, a biosciences degree. Then we went after money for the biosciences to build the biomedical buildings. We went after SFI centres, we got CURAM and Insight in here, now we have BioInnovate as well. The cross pollination that happens is synergistic in the best sense of the word. We have this medtech cluster in Ireland, in the west of Ireland in particular, that has the most tremendous future. People will pay for health no matter how bad things are.”

It is certainly a testament to the resilience of a city and a University that has been through challenges such as the withdrawal of the tech giant Digital from the area in 1993. Many thought the west would never recover.

“It’s a great compliment to Galway that it has happened here,” says Browne. “Nobody sat down with a 20-year plan, we just saw how it was developing and took advantage of it. A lot of people have contributed to it. At the moment medical devices are mainly concerned with biomechanics but just wait until ICT and electronics get into it. This University is made for it. All the disciplines we have in the University, we have so many that can feed into an area like medtech. We have everything going for us.”

Browne is approaching the end of his ten years as President of the University, but he’s not willing to wind down just yet. He is energised by the progress he sees and excited at the opportunities he sees coming down the line.

“It’s a whole new world and this is just the start of it,” he says.

Gráinne Faller is a journalist and director of FH media consulting.
Theatre & Performance at NUI Galway

Niamh Ni Fhlatharta, a 3rd Year BA student in Drama, Theatre & Performance at NUI Galway, studies the iconic Big Top in preparation for her whirlwind two-week internship at Galway International Arts Festival. The SELECTED Programme is central to the partnership between NUI Galway and the Festival, which gives a limited number of students full access behind the scenes to see how a festival of this magnitude is presented to a world stage.

Múscailt Arts Festival

A large scale gramophone by sculptor Donnacha Cahill was a portable stage and music player throughout the festival. Representing ‘Romantic Notions’, the Gramaphone took a few unscheduled detours around the city during the festival.

Youth Academy Conferrings

Sarah and Sharon Thomas, sixth and fourth class students in St John’s the Apostle Knocknacarra National School, Galway City, receive their certificate of participation from NUI Galway’s Youth Academy.

#IBackGalway

NUI Galway is Backing the Bid – the University with the help of PhD drama student Justine Nakase flies the flag for Galway’s successful bid to become European Capital of Culture in 2020.
NUI Galway students Lt Sarah Conlon and Lt Joe Mulhearn raising the flag at the official Ireland 2016 Proclamation Day at NUI Galway

ReelLIFE Science

Canadian astronaut, Commander Chris Hadfield, was a member of the judging panel for ReelLIFE SCIENCE, which is organised by Dr Enda O’Connell and a team from NUI Galway, in collaboration with the Cell EXPLORERS outreach programme.

The Psychological Society of Ireland

Niall Breslin (Bressie) and Dr Paul D’Alton, Clinical Psychologist and former President of The Psychological Society of Ireland, addressed the current challenges and future of mental health in Ireland at a public forum at NUI Galway. Both spoke about the importance of challenging and changing attitudes towards mental health issues in Ireland, and how best to respond to and take care of those with mental health issues.

Teddy Bear Hospital

Lena Convoy (5) from Tullykyne National School, Moycullen, Co. Galway, brought her pink panda to the annual Teddy Bear Hospital. The Hospital is organised by Sláinte Society, the NUI Galway branch of the International Federation of Medical Students Associations.

iBooks Scéal 1916’ and The Story of 1916 were launched in April 2016 in Scoil Chroí Íosa, Galway.

NUI Galway students Lt Sarah Conlon and Lt Joe Mulhearn raising the flag at the official Ireland 2016 Proclamation Day at NUI Galway.
RESEARCH round-up
**MedTrain**

CÚRAM, the Science Foundation Ireland Centre for Research in Medical Devices, based at NUI Galway, has been ranked first in Europe and awarded €2.1 million for its application to develop a new industry-academia fellowship programme called ‘MedTrain’ over the next four and a half years.

The submission was ranked number 1 out of 72 applications submitted from across Europe to the Marie Skłodowska Curie Actions Scheme under the Horizon 2020 funding programme.

The MedTrain programme will offer 31 prestigious two-year postdoctoral fellowships over the next four and a half years to experienced researchers in the area of Medical Device Research and Development, including Tissue Engineering and Regenerative Medicine, Biomaterials and Drug Delivery, Glyco and Protein Engineering, and Neuromodulation and Computational Modelling.

The MedTrain programme is based on individual-driven mobility, meaning that fellows will have the freedom to choose their research topic, their MedTrain supervisor, and their secondment organisation, which must be relevant to their research and career development.

**Exploring the deep**

NUI Galway was part of a research expedition carried out aboard the British Antarctic Survey research vessel, RRS James Clark Ross. It was led by the British Antarctic Survey and supported by an international team of scientists from nine countries.

Researcher and Lecturer in Zoology, Dr Louise Allcock, from the School of Natural Sciences at NUI Galway, joined the expedition as an expert in both deep-sea ecology and Antarctic octopuses.

The international team surveyed the seafloor around the South Orkneys, identifying species and investigating the communities of animals that are found there. During the month-long expedition, over 700 photographs of seafloor habitats and nearly 4,000 photos of live animals were taken.

Scientific highlights included the discovery of numerous new species, rare animals such as pelagic sea mosses, and a ‘graveyard’ of the plates of long-dead giant barnacles.

There are striking similarities between these deep Antarctic habitats and deep-sea habitats in Irish waters. Discovering more about these ecosystems is fundamental to making sure these beautiful complex habitats are protected.

An increased understanding of where animals that are vulnerable to fishing and other human impacts live was gained during the expedition, and will help policy makers to manage Antarctica’s natural resources more effectively in the future.

**Therapeutic potential of Spider venom**

An NUI Galway scientist has begun research on venom variations from the false black widow spider and its therapeutic potential for anti-cancer properties. The venom will be tested on different lines of human cancerous cells. This is the first time that an Ireland-based bug is being investigated for its potent bio-activity and that venom from this particular spider has been examined.

Dr Michel Dugon, an Irish Research Council Fellow in Botany and an Adjunct Lecturer in Zoology at the School of Natural Sciences, is carrying out the research on the rapid evolution of spider venom and its potential therapeutic applications. To date, less than 100 species worldwide have been investigated for the therapeutic potential of their venom.

Dr Dugon will use the venom from a local invasive spider, the false black widow, known as the *Steatoda nobilis*, which arrived in Ireland in 1997 and is well known in the British Isles as ‘the most venomous spider in the UK’. There is evidence of people suffering fairly serious effects from the bite of this spider, which results in symptoms similar to a wasp or bee sting, but until now the venom has never been studied.

Dr Dugon said: “We thought that the venom from a *Steatoda nobilis* would be quite benign and rather unlikely to cause mass cell death in a biological assessment on healthy or cancerous cell lines, especially once the venom is diluted and sprayed on cells. To our great surprise, the venom from this spider causes significant cell death even when diluted with one part venom to one million part water. We are just amazed that a solution containing 0.0001% of crude venom still manages to cause serial death in our cell lines. What causes it? We hope to find out soon.”
Global study shows stroke largely preventable

Ten risk factors, that can be modified, are responsible for nine of 10 strokes worldwide, but the ranking of those factors vary regionally, according to a study by researchers from NUI Galway and McMaster University, Canada.

Prevention of stroke is a major public health priority, but the variation by region should influence the development of strategies for reducing stroke risk, say the authors of the study published in The Lancet in July.

Stroke is a leading cause of death and disability, particularly in low-income and middle-income countries. The two major types of stroke are ischaemic stroke, caused by blood clots, which accounts for 85% of strokes, and haemorrhagic stroke or bleeding into the brain, which accounts for 15% of strokes.

The study, led by Dr Martin O’Donnell of HRB-Clinical Research Facility, NUI Galway and formerly McMaster University, and Dr Salim Yusuf of the Population Health Research Institute at McMaster University, Hamilton, ON, Canada, and collaborators from 32 countries, builds on findings from the first phase of the INTERSTROKE study, which identified 10 modifiable risk factors for stroke in 6,000 participants from 22 countries. This full-scale INTERSTROKE study, added 20,000 individuals from 32 countries in Europe, Asia, America, Africa and Australia, and sought to identify the main causes of stroke in diverse populations, young and old, men and women and within subtypes of stroke.

“This study has the size and scope to explore stroke risk factors in all major regions of the world and within key populations,” said Dr. O’Donnell, who is also a stroke physician at Saolta University Healthcare Group.

“We have confirmed that ten modifiable risk factors are associated with 90% of stroke risk in all parts of the world, in both men and women, and in younger and older people. The study also confirms that hypertension is the most important modifiable risk factor in all regions, and the key target in reducing the burden of stroke globally.”

Using robots for forensics

An international team of researchers, led by NUI Galway, is developing robotics and intelligent reasoning to gather forensic evidence. The ROCSAFE project will focus on developing software and hardware to be deployed in the event of a terrorist attack, or a chemical, biological or nuclear incident.

Robotic air vehicles will be equipped with cameras and sensors for detection of radiation/nuclear, chemical or biological threats. Data from these will be relayed to a Central Decision Management Unit, which will be located in a safe zone near the periphery of the incident. Data and images will be analysed in real time to provide decision support.

Remotely-operated ground vehicles will be developed to remove the need for personnel to go on scene to identify threats. These vehicles will have the capacity to detect the presence of forensic material and collect it, while preserving the integrity of the evidence chain.

The project is led by Dr Michael Madden from the College of Engineering and Informatics, and has been awarded €4.8 million in horizon 2020 EU funding.

The ROCSAFE project is the most recent in a series of security-related research successes by NUI Galway. The University has now established a National Centre for Security Research to draw together the multiple strands of security-related research across multiple disciplines.

Protecting the Irish honeybee

The public’s assistance could be vital to researchers and beekeepers in their work to protect the native honeybee by building resistance to the varroa mite

Approximately one third of all the food consumed by human society is dependent on bee pollination and in some parts of the world demand for pollination is outstripping supply. In Ireland and across the world, wild honeybee populations have undergone widespread extinction, leading to not only a loss of bees but also a loss of the genetic diversity that ensures the continuing health of bee colonies.

There has been extensive assisted geographical movement and selective breeding of different honey bees in Europe and the US, with the aim of bringing honey production to new areas or to enhance production. One of the consequences of this process was that the Asian honey bee, Apis cerana, and its ectoparasitic mite, Varroa destructor, came into contact with the European dark northern honeybee Apis mellifera melifera.

At NUI Galway, a bee breeding programme supported by the Native Irish Honey Bee Society (NIHBS) has recently been initiated to improve the resistance of native Irish honeybee colonies to varroa and diseases whilst retaining the colony traits that are important to beekeepers.

The programme forms part of the research of Keith Browne, a PhD student supervised by Professor Grace McCormack, a Ryan Institute researcher at NUI Galway. The research will investigate questions surrounding the evolutionary genetics of Irish honey bees and the traits linked to disease resistance. Furthermore, it aims to establish the possible links between the Irish honeybee genome or physiology and their foraging environment that imbue varroa tolerance.

The project utilises targeted citizen science, with beekeepers throughout the island of Ireland checking for varroa using a standardised protocol and reporting back to NUI Galway twice a year. The beekeepers then breed preferentially from colonies with low varroa numbers and, where possible, avoid chemical treatment of these colonies. This citizen science approach will be augmented with an online survey seeking information from both beekeepers and members of the public, which will give a picture of the distribution of apiaries in Ireland and, importantly, advise researchers on possible sightings of wild or feral bees.

Whilst it is felt by many that varroa-related deaths and introgression with domestic honey bees has rendered the wild native Irish honey bee effectively extinct, no definitive study has investigated the true story. NUI Galway intends to investigate suitable areas where there is a low concentration of domestic honey bee apiaries for possible wild colonies.

If successful, this programme and associated research could help ensure the continued arrangement of mutual benefit that humans have with the honeybee which permits the best quality and quantity of our crops. Crucially, it may allow the honeybee’s reintroduction into the wild in Ireland and elsewhere.
Irish Honeybee collecting pollen

Photo: Martin Kiely
NUI Galway Leaps to Top 250 in Global Rankings

In September 2016 NUI Galway continued its rise in global ranking as the Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings 2016/2017 confirmed the university’s position within the top tier of Irish universities. NUI Galway made a significant leap into the 201-250 range, compared to 351-400 in 2012.

Also in September 2016, NUI Galway advanced in the QS World University Ranking 2016/2017, climbing 22 places to 249 in the world. This is the fourth consecutive year in which NUI Galway has risen in the popular annual league table.

President of NUI Galway, Dr Jim Browne: “The success of our advancement in global university rankings reflects the ambition, hard work and creativity of our staff and students. There’s a culture here in Galway that’s focused on making a difference, by empowering our students to go on and do great things as well as an emphasis on areas of research that can have the most impact.”

In January 2016, NUI Galway moved into the Top 200 list of most international universities by Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings and in March 2016, it was ranked in the Top 200 for ‘Best Universities in Europe 2016’.

Gate Theatre Archives

On 12 May 2016, NUI Galway and the Gate Theatre announced a partnership to digitise the Gate’s archive, a major resource for theatre scholars and artists.

When completed in 2018, the Gate Theatre Digital Archive will be exclusively available at NUI Galway’s James Hardiman Library, where users will be able to access hundreds of videos, scripts, show programmes, and many more treasures from the Gate’s history.

Founded in 1928, the Gate has a long tradition of working with some of the world’s great actors. The archive features material relating to Orson Welles, Michael Gambon, John Hurt, Penelope Wilton, Stephen Rea, Ian Holm, Liam Neeson, Charles Dance, and many others.

NUI Galway is home to numerous Irish theatre related archives, including those of the Abbey Theatre, Druid Theatre, the Lyric Players Theatre, Thomas Kilroy, John Arden and Margaretta D’Arcy and Siobhán McKenna.

In other archival news, in May 2016, NUI Galway announced receipt of a significant donation of books about the Williamite War (1689-91) in Ireland and its aftermath, from Colman Morrissey, son of a graduate of the University. Meanwhile, a collection of artefacts relating to the life and work of Irish language poet, Máirtín Ó Direáin, was also generously given to the University in June 2016.

Over 16,000 delegates on campus

The University welcomed over 16,000 conference delegates, the majority of whom are international, to the campus this year. The estimated economic benefit to the region was over €24 million.

Among the events was the European University Association (EUA) Annual Conference, which saw over 300 leaders from Europe’s top universities visiting Galway from 7-8 April 2016.

As the voice of Europe’s universities, EUA supports and takes forward the interests of the European higher education sector as a whole. The EUA has 850 member institutions from 47 countries, and collectively the conference delegates represented over 17 million students from across the continent.

This was the first time the event was held in Ireland. President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins, delivered the opening address on the importance of universities in encouraging free thinking.

The EUA Annual Conference explored how Europe’s universities are developing comprehensive “bricks and clicks” strategies and how they are tackling the challenges involved in becoming more interactive and interconnected.
Pictured at the Gate Theatre announcement were Patrick Lonergan, Professor of Drama and Theatre Studies at NUI Galway, Lorna Quinn, actress, and Michael Colgan, Director of the Gate Theatre.
New Medical Academies

A major investment by NUI Galway in clinical training across the West/North West region saw new medical academies coming on stream during the year. The new facilities, which will support the training of medical personnel, are the result of the University’s partnership with Saolta University Health Care Group and Sligo, Mayo and Letterkenny University Hospitals.

On 14 December 2015, An Taoiseach, Enda Kenny, opened the Mayo Medical Academy. The Academy is housed in a purpose-designed facility located in the former chapel on the grounds of Mayo University Hospital.

The new Sligo Medical Academy, a similar specially-built facility on hospital grounds, was opened on 12 February 2016 by Minister for Health, Dr Leo Varadkar, in Sligo University Hospital.

The new medical academies will be of vital importance to the learning outcomes for medical students. They will also be of benefit to the health system in terms of increased personnel on wards and opportunities for recruitment and retention of top staff through association with the University.

The Letterkenny Medical Academy is due to be opened later this year, with the three new hospitals joining Portiuncula Hospital, Ballinasloe, in the University’s list of Regional Medical Academies.

In addition, on 4 January 2015, it was announced that the Galway Clinic will now be recognised as an affiliated teaching hospital of the University.

Vice President for Equality and Diversity

On 26 February 2016, the University announced the appointment of Professor Anne Scott as Vice President for Equality and Diversity. The first appointment of its kind in an Irish University, the new post reflects NUI Galway’s leadership of transformational change in the higher-education setting.

The Vice President will spearhead changes to ensure that equality of opportunity is provided to every member of staff. Professor Scott will also develop and implement a strategy that establishes NUI Galway as an exemplar of best practice in the area.

Professor Scott was previously Executive Dean of the Faculty of Education, Health and Community in Liverpool John Moores University and Deputy President and Registrar of DCU.

In May 2016, the University’s Governing Authority welcomed and unanimously adopted the publication of the final report issued by the Taskforce on Gender Equality chaired by Professor Jane Grimson. The Vice-President position was established by the University following the establishment of a Taskforce on Gender Equality chaired by Professor Jane Grimson. The Vice-President position was established by the Taskforce on Gender Equality chaired by Professor Jane Grimson.

In parallel, a national report on gender equality in higher education was published in June 2016. The report was compiled by the Expert Group commissioned by the HEA and chaired by Máire Geoghegan-Quinn to undertake a national review of gender equality in higher education institutions.

‘Yeats & the West’ on Tour

A major NUI Galway exhibition celebrating the many connections W.B. Yeats had with the west of Ireland opened at The Model in Sligo on 24 March 2016.

NUI Galway, in association with Yeats2015, presented ‘Yeats & the West’, an exhibition exploring Yeats’s life, work, legacy and deep connections to the west of Ireland.

Alongside the exhibition, each week NUI Galway and The Model presented an exciting series of public talks, tours, and schools events.

Highlights of the Yeats & the West exhibition include original artworks by Jack B. Yeats and his father John Butler Yeats. It also included a wealth of visual material from artists like Norah McGuinness and photographers like Fergus Bourke and Nicolas Fève, alongside rarely seen images, manuscripts, and books from archive collections in NUI Galway.

The exhibition is part of NUI Galway’s contribution to Ireland’s decade of commemorations and the worldwide Yeats2015 series of cultural events marking his 150th birthday.

NUI Galway Announces Innovative New Programme to Recruit Research Stars

NUI Galway has begun an international recruitment campaign to recruit 15 of the brightest emerging research stars to support the delivery of an ambitious strategy to become a top-200 research-led university by 2020.

In partnership with Galway University Foundation, NUI Galway has launched ‘The Foundation Research Leadership Programme’, a new three-year programme to attract the highest calibre of early-career researchers to Galway.

Almost €7.5 million will be allocated for the recruitment of the 15 Foundation Research Lectureships, aligned with the University’s strategy to develop internationally-recognised research excellence in a range of priority areas. The Foundation Research Leadership Programme will support the development of early-career academics and future research leaders.

Crucial to the support of NUI Galway’s Research and Innovation strategy is the attraction and retention of emerging research leaders across the University’s key research themes, building on significant international successes to date. The priority research areas are: Biomedical Science and Engineering; Marine, Energy and Environmental Science; Data Analytics and Informatics; Physical and Computational Sciences; Applied Public Policy and Social Sciences, Digital Humanities and Drama and Theatre Studies.

NUI Galway has significantly grown its research activity and output over the last ten years. The identification of priority research areas and subsequent investments in these areas have enabled the University to develop a critical mass of expertise, which has led to significant success in securing competitive research grants, nationally and internationally. Currently home to two national SFI Research Centres, in Medical Device Technologies and Data Analytics, NUI Galway is also in the top two best performing Irish universities in the European Horizon 2020 research funding programme.

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Almost €7.5 million will be allocated for the recruitment of the 15 Foundation Research Lectureships, aligned with the University’s strategy to develop internationally-recognised research excellence in a range of priority areas. The Foundation Research Leadership Programme will support the development of early-career academics and future research leaders.

Crucial to the support of NUI Galway’s Research and Innovation strategy is the attraction and retention of emerging research leaders across the University’s key research themes, building on significant international successes to date. The priority research areas are: Biomedical Science and Engineering; Marine, Energy and Environmental Science; Data Analytics and Informatics; Physical and Computational Sciences; Applied Public Policy and Social Sciences, Digital Humanities and Drama and Theatre Studies.

NUI Galway has significantly grown its research activity and output over the last ten years. The identification of priority research areas and subsequent investments in these areas have enabled the University to develop a critical mass of expertise, which has led to significant success in securing competitive research grants, nationally and internationally. Currently home to two national SFI Research Centres, in Medical Device Technologies and Data Analytics, NUI Galway is also in the top two best performing Irish universities in the European Horizon 2020 research funding programme.
Long Road to Rio brings Gold back to Galway

Dr Eoghan Clifford [BE’02] the NUI Galway Engineering lecturer did Ireland, Galway and his native Limerick proud clinching not one but two medals in the Rio 2016 Paralympics this September.

Eoghan took home one gold in cycling in the Men’s C3 Time Trial and one bronze medal in the C3 3000m Individual Pursuit.

Interviewed for Cois Coiribe last year, as part of his Road to Rio campaign, Eoghan explained that he was diagnosed at an early age with progressive muscular dystrophy. As a child he was a realist and knew that although he was faster than everyone else, competing at Olympic level might not be on the cards. Needless to say as an Olympic gold medallist, nothing has slowed this cyclist down.

Eoghan was one of the big winners for Ireland on the country’s most successful day in Rio - dubbed ‘Winning Wednesday’ – he finished in pole position with a time of 38.21.79 in the Men’s C3 30km Time Trial. Eoghan had taken Bronze the previous Friday in the Men’s C3 Individual Pursuit with a time of 3.40.201.

A new dad to eleven month old Sofia, Eoghan’s wife Magda, also a research engineer, works with the College of Engineering and Informatics at NUI Galway.

Dr Pat O’Leary, the NUI Galway Chemistry lecturer made Irish history as the first ever Irish Paralympian to book a place in the KL3 Canoeing Final. Pat finished a mere three seconds behind the winner to be sixth fastest in the world.

The Cork native and dad of two boys was the first canoeist to compete as the sport made its debut in Rio 2016. Pat was canoeing for a long time before losing his leg in recent years to bone cancer. He competed in the K1 class, a 200m straight sprint.

It was a truly great games for the region with former Students’ Union Manager at NUI Galway, Rena McCarron Rooney competing at Rio 2016 reaching the quarter final stage in Table Tennis.

NUI Galway alumna Deirdre Mongan [BSc 2000, MSc 2001, PhD 2006] competed in the Shot Put while local Eric O’Flaherty lined out for Ireland in Football.
Honoured in Áras an Uachtaráin

Eight NUI Galway academics attended a celebration of ‘Women in Science’ by President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins, in Áras an Uachtaráin in February. The event celebrated the leading role that women play in scientific research and industry.

Since his inauguration in 2011, the President has spoken repeatedly about the importance of using scientific insights to address the great challenges facing humanity and our fragile planet and to ensure the benefits of this research are shared equitably among and within nations. The celebratory event highlighted the achievements and inspirational roles played by a growing number of women in this regard.

Speaking at the event, President Higgins said: “It gives me great pleasure to host this event, aimed at celebrating the leading role that women are playing in scientific research and industry. Science is an important and influential discipline – one which has a pivotal role to play in the great concerns of humanity in our time, and one which has the potential to make the greatest contribution to improving our world.”

World Trade Center St Louis Delegation visit to NUI Galway

Pictured during the visit of World Trade Center, St Louis Delegation to NUI Galway, which featured a roundtable discussion on entrepreneurship and education, moderated by Keith Finnegan of Galway Bay FM were (l-r): Sheila Sweeney, CEO, St. Louis Economic Development Partnership; Dr Jim Browne, President of NUI Galway; Patrick Dolan, Chairman 5th District Council; and Professor Lokesh Joshi, Vice-President for Research, NUI Galway.

Unique Scholarship Scheme

NUI Galway announced a scheme that targets high-achieving, school leavers from ‘new’ communities, particularly those who are living in or exiting from direct provision during the Inclusive Centenaries conference on campus. This national pilot scheme aims to assist high-achieving, second-level school leavers from Ireland’s newest communities to pursue their third-level educational goals at NUI Galway, so that they realise their full potential, and contribute to shaping the Ireland of today and tomorrow.

Mary Robinson, David Stanton TD, Minister of State for Justice with responsibility for Equality, Immigration and Integration, and former Justice Bryan McMahon were among the line-up of keynote speakers at the Inclusive Centenaries conference.

Minister of State for Justice, David Stanton with student Victoria Chihumura launching a unique scholarship scheme during the Inclusive Centenaries Conference.
**New Sustainability Initiative**

In July, NUI Galway launched a new sustainability initiative which aims to make the campus one of the greenest, smartest, healthiest and community focused in the world.

The initiative is based on a Learn Live Lead approach, where NUI Galway focuses on its core strength in teaching and research to learn about sustainability, analyses building performance and campus operations to live more sustainability, and connects to broader society to lead in translating sustainability to the wider community.

As part of the initiative, NUI Galway became the first university in Ireland to join the Sustainable Energy Authority Ireland (SEAI) Sustainable Energy Communities Network. This ambitious initiative also includes a ‘Battle of the Buildings’ energy-efficiency competition and a new website to showcase sustainability teaching and research and to engage the campus community.

**BREXIT debate**

"These resources were built as iBooks using iBooks Author, which allows teachers to create stunning multi-touch textbooks,” remarked Seán Ó Grádaigh. "The rich digital media content and interactivity along with the built-in assessment and accessibility features facilitate all types of learners in a way that the printed page never could."

The books are available as free downloads from the iBook Store. https://itunes.apple.com/ie/erossey16bb
A new strategic sports programme aimed at developing competitive and leisure activities on campus is being implemented. It is the most detailed sports plan ever to be unveiled at NUI Galway and will benefit students and staff for many years to come.

By JOHN FALLON

NUI Galway is developing a strategic sports programme which will facilitate leisure and competitive activity for decades and make it the leading university for recreation in the country.

The plan aims to build on the framework established down through the years, utilise natural amenities such as the River Corrib, the nearby sea and mountains, develop strong working relationships with sports authorities at local, national and international levels, along with improving and developing new facilities on campus.

The strategy will broadly work on three levels. Elite athletes will be catered for. So too will those who participate in the existing 44 sports clubs in the University, while emphasis will also be placed on those who just want recreation and want to develop and maintain a level of fitness.

It is envisaged that emphasis will also be placed on the staff of over 4,000 being catered for and encouraged to pursue existing and new leisure activities.

The strategic plan is being developed by Mike Heskin, who was appointed to the newly established post of Director of Sport and Physical Activity last November, and aims to put structures in place which will have short and long-term benefits for students and staff.

The Galway native, whose extensive experience in sports management includes being CEO of Hockey Ireland and Irish rowing team manager at the Beijing Olympics, said that it is an exciting time for sport at NUI Galway.

“We want to increase sports participation in the University and we want to drive the high-performance end of it as well. For me the two aspects of this are that we want to build a sporting brand for the University.

“This will show the strength of our sport and the attractiveness of the University for study. That’s driven in terms of pursuit and performance, but it also has to be matched by the broadness of our participation programmes.
“We want to get as many people into sport and that has to be driven by lifestyle. Gone are the days when you played a match on a Wednesday and you had 12 hours of lectures a week. Student life is a lot more intense from the academic side so the training programmes we offer must be built around that,” he said.

Developing partnerships with sports organisations, particularly at elite level, will be a key component of the strategy, with the success of Connacht Rugby in winning the Guinness Pro12 title in May — the province’s first trophy in its 131 years history — a good example of what can be achieved.

NUI Galway is the main sponsor of the Connacht Rugby Academy, which has helped develop players for the professional game over the last few years.

Seven players from the academy last season — Sean O’Brien, Peter Robb, Conor McKeon, Conan O’Donnell, James Connolly, Shane Delahunt and Rory Parata — played 55 times for Connacht during that historic Pro12 campaign, while several other members of the squad were academy graduates.

Many of the academy players also study at NUI Galway, while there are a number of areas where the University and Connacht Rugby exchange expertise.

“The Connacht experience shows our aspirations are achievable,” added Mike Heskin. “We are mirroring where Connacht were ten years ago. We are not at the level where Connacht were when they had to march to Lansdowne Road. But they had a dream and community backing.

“That dream has been delivered and it proves that this dream can be delivered. We want to extend that across the sporting spectrum. We see NUI Galway people involved and we have contributed in terms of a huge number of their players went through our academy. The University has recognised how to deal with high performance athletes. “The University has to accommodate these guys, and this was done prior to this with some Olympians. We want to have an environment within the University where we want to extend that across the spectrum.

“The Connacht Rugby relationship it is mutually beneficial. They need to deliver quality players but they need an education. We provide that part, we would like to deliver a relationship where their expertise in sports and our expertise in education are married together. Connacht Rugby is a typical example because both Connacht Rugby and NUI Galway benefit. We want to mirror similar examples with other national governing bodies(NGB).”

Mr Heskin said that the elite programme needs to be developed and he is confident it can be done similarly to the partnership with Connacht Rugby.

“I would call success, in terms of our participation, that we are part of the elite programmes of a number of NGBs. I would like us to have strategic relationships with four or five of those and their high performance programme.

“Rowing would be an obvious one, basketball is another one. Athletics Ireland would be another one we are looking at.
"Geographically, Gaelic sports have to be strong because Galway is a dual county and we sit between north Munster which is hurling, and then you have the Mayos and Roscommons, which are football."

The vast majority who participate in sport in NUI Galway do so through the various clubs, some of which have been in existence in the University for decades while others are quite new. Around one in four students participate in sport and one of the aims is to increase this number.

“We would have about 4,000 or 4,500 out of 16,000 students participating in sport, about 25 per cent. The elite would be very small, we would have about 3,500 to 4,000 involved in organised sports.

“We have 44 clubs, you go from snowboarding, ultimate frisbee, all the martial arts. We have all the Olympic sports, and we are developing the new ones. Over 46 per cent of students would have taken up a sport for the first time when they are first years. That reflects the spectrum we are offering. A lot of students are coming from a limited menu of sports.

“If you are coming out of south Dublin there is probably a broader range of sports. But if you are coming from east Galway there are probably the Gaelic sports and not much more.

“One of the other areas that is strong is women’s sport. We would be strong in our soccer, basketball, women’s rugby, those three in particular are very strong. People wouldn’t expect it but our women’s rugby and basketball teams win championships, and our soccer team won the Premiership this year. There is a whole development area that needs a huge amount of work. Like every university, 50 per cent of the population is female.”

One of the big growth areas in the past decade has been the increase in the numbers participating in leisure fitness and NUI Galway is determined to assist students and staff to take part.

“It is normal practice now for this generation to go to the gym or take part in other recreational activity, not necessarily to compete or be a member of those clubs, so we need to look at exercise programmes and facilities

“And that exercise revolution is now turning to my generation. We are looking to building a strong exercise ethos within our staff,” added Mr Heskin.

A major factor in achieving all of these aims is to improve facilities and develop new ones. There is ample space in Dangan to carry out these developments some of which will require major investment and planning, while others can be achieved more readily.

“Dangan is one of the best outdoor facilities in the country. There are 33 colleges in Ireland offering sports facilities and Dangan would be up there with the top three. What we have to do now is make it convenient and available to our student population.

“Currently after 5.30pm we can’t access that because of lighting. We need to make these facilities more conducive to training for our student body. We need to install lighting.

NUI Galway Mystics Basketball player Lauren Murray
“Also, we are in the wettest point in the country, the need for an artificial pitch is huge. It’s not just an issue in the University, it’s in the city. We have a plan and are driving it forward. The delivery of that pitch is part of the University’s Vision 2020, so that was already a plan.

“We need to create a situation that our running tracks are available at night, and teams can train at night, that we have venues for national events. Ultimately sports can become a money-making venture for the University. We can put on events, training camps. We have to develop our accommodation in parallel with that. Being a centre of excellence is all encompassing.

“The other element in Vision 2020 was a new water sports centre which was to cater for all of our water sports. We have rowing, kayaking, sailing, windsurfing, sub aqua, paddleboards. All of those have to be catered for. The initial plan was where the rowing clubs are rotated in Earl’s Island, but we are investigating other locations to get the optimum. Dangan is a runner, and then bring the other ones towards the docks. Those projects are part of Vision 2020.”

Finance, of course, will be a key aspect in all of these plans and it will be addressed on a number of fronts, including State funding, sponsorship and philanthropy, as well as attracting investment for revenue generating products.

The alumni have an important role to play in this, as evidenced from the completion of other major projects in NUI Galway over the years, and Mr Heskin is confident that the support will be there for the most ambitious sports programme produced in the University’s history and he knows the value of such backing.

“It’s huge, a common factor of successful sporting universities is a very engaged alumni. It would be impossible to do it without them. You need the alumni to be involved in terms of specific clubs but also in terms of the overall sporting environment.

“The alumni bring their understanding of the sport, their expertise in terms of coaching, their expertise in terms of management. Funding would be huge, but they have business experience to deliver the overall programme.

“If you look at the success of sporting universities worldwide, the American university model, the Oxford or Cambridge model, it is all built and driven by the alumni. They see it as part of their legacy.”

Integrating all of the sports across a single NUI Galway brand will be an essential part of the strategy, ensuring that there is not duplication and that the various sports can benefit from the expertise of others, while at the same time developing an ethos which all students and staff can take pride in.

“We need to build a forum, the plan is to have coaches working as an NUI Galway team of coaches. We will have regular meetings where, for example, football and rugby coaches are in the same room having a discussion or learning about training modules or screening athletes, or whatever. The more that expertise crosses over the better. Whether it’s a basketball or a Gaelic football team, the expertise needs to be built up.

“The idea is to create a generic sporting hub, where we have expertise in sports sciences, analysis, coaching theory and practice and implementation and all our coaches are being lifted at the same time.

“We want to create an educational platform for them. The only difference between the sports clubs will be their detailed knowledge of their specific sports, but the coaching and environment for the athletes should be the same.

“Our plan is to become more College focused with our participation programmes. We hope to bring them out so sport becomes part of your daily life in the medical school, in the College of Arts. It’s not just something that you find in sporadic pockets.

“We want to have sports champions in each of the faculties,” added Mr Heskin.

John Fallon is managing editor of Media West (Ireland), a news and sports agency based in Galway.
JOE MCDONAGH (BA ’75) was one of the great personalities in the UCG of the nineteen seventies. A brilliant student and linguist who did an MA in Celtic Studies, he was fluent in three languages, Irish, English and Welsh. He was a beautiful singer, with a vast repertoire of songs in all three languages, and he just loved singing. Tall, dark and handsome, he cut an impressive ‘Braveheart’ type figure around college with his long curly hair and thick beard.

Joe was a superb hurler, a leader with tremendous qualities that earned him an All Star in 1976. He captained the UCG Freshers to victory in 1972, and made a huge contribution as a midfielder to the UCG Fitzgibbon win in 1977, a much celebrated victory that he greatly coveted in what was then his sixth Fitzgibbon campaign. He was also a fine footballer, and played in five Sigersons.

A good year for NUI Galway sport

Women’s Rugby had their best year on record. Having won all their competitive fixtures, they secured four title cups.

Ladies Soccer topped off a successful season with a hugely comprehensive win over University of Ulster. Twelve goals from the girls earned them the title of WSCAI Intervarsity Shield champions.

The Men’s Basketball club began their campaign with a strong showing in the league and eventual league title against Griffith College Dublin. Although it was not to be long before they met them again, this time in the Division One ‘A’ final.

The Ladies Basketball club started their campaign with the Intervarsity league. In the final match of the league, NUI Galway Mystics faced off against their main rivals, Fr Matthews. The winner of the match would decide the league champions. After a tense battle, Mystics came out on top 64-67.

Overall it has been the most successful season on record for both men’s and ladies Basketball in NUI Galway. A season topped off with several winners at the annual Basketball Ireland awards in June, including Coach and Player of the Year for Mystics, as well as Young Player of the Year for Mystics and Player of the Year for the men’s side.

A sporting tribute

JOE MCDONAGH (BA ’75) was one of the great personalities in the UCG of the nineteen seventies. A brilliant student and linguist who did an MA in Celtic Studies, he was fluent in three languages, Irish, English and Welsh. He was a beautiful singer, with a vast repertoire of songs in all three languages, and he just loved singing. Tall, dark and handsome, he cut an impressive ‘Braveheart’ type figure around college with his long curly hair and thick beard.

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Bé Joe an Ghaeilgeoir is cumasúil a chuala mé a riamh, agus go deimhin ní labhar muid ach Gaeilge le chéile I gcónaí. Chaith sé seach mbliana déag mar mhuinteoir Gaeilge I gColáiste Éinde, ansin chuidh blírn I gceannas ar
Bank of Ireland announced a programme of support for the development of sports clubs and societies at NUI Galway in March of this year. The significant investment from Bank of Ireland will help fund the development of the clubs and societies and help improve the overall quality of the student experience at the University.

Mr Liam McLoughlin, Chief Executive, Retail Ireland, Bank of Ireland, said: “Going to university can be a big life adjustment for students. Sports clubs and societies are an important part of the college experience, presenting students with the opportunity to further their growth in other ways, to gain new experiences, and to make friends for life. We are therefore delighted to support the development of clubs and societies at NUI Galway. Wellness and Mindfulness is also a big part of the programme being announced today, and one that my colleagues from the on-campus branch will be taking an active part in. We are very pleased to be supporting the development of the next generation of sporting and artistic stars at NUI Galway.”

Please visit www.bankofireland.com/nuigalway for details of banking services available to graduates and staff of NUI Galway.

Bank of Ireland backing NUI Galway sport

Floras na Gaeilge, agus cinnireacht ina dhiaidh sin ar Choiste Ghairmoideachais i nGaillimh, Muigheo agus Sligeach. Níl fios cé chomh minic a chuala mé “hasn’t Joe McDonagh got the most beautiful Irish” ó dhaoine a chuala óráid ó Joe in ard a réime síos tríd na blianta

In November 2015, we organised a 40th reunion in UCG of our own winning Freshers hurling team of 1975. Joe was invited, but he sent a message of regret “tá mé sínte le núimónia le seachtain san ospideal” . Only it wasn’t pneumonia, but the insidious cancer that was to claim his life on May 20th 2016. UCG hurlers and footballers of the past came from the four corners of Ireland and beyond to pay their respects to our Minstrel Boy.

The most abused and cliched term in the Irish language is “ní bheidh a leithéid ann arís”. In this case however, I can truthfully say that in my lifetime there will never be another Joe McDonagh. Never was and never will be. Joe the captain and teammate who sweated blood on the hurling and football fields for UCG, Galway, Cortoon, Éire Óg, Bearná and his beloved home parish of Ballindereen. Joe, who created one of the most iconic moments in the history of the GAA when he sang “The West’s Awake” on the steps of the Hogan Stand after Galway’s win in the All-Ireland hurling final of 1980. Joe, the superb orator and communicator who rose to the highest position in Irish sport when he served as President of the GAA between 1997-2000. Joe, the laughing friendly charismatic fellow with the big personality whose company we hugely enjoyed. Joe, the brilliant singer who led us through countless sing songs in all sorts of places when we were young and mad for road on and off the field. Joe, our true friend who in return was truly loved and admired Joe’s son Eoin, himself a warrior of six Fitzgibbon campaigns with UCG, finished his poignant oration at his father’s funeral mass by quoting Micheál Ó Hehir of RTÉ after Joe had performed on the steps of The Hogan Stand in 1980:

“Well done Joe McDonagh.”

And so say all of us.

By Joe Connolly, (BA ’78)
The centenary celebrations of the 1916 Rebellion have seen an unprecedented public engagement with history - not just from within the academic community - but from national and secondary school students, community groups and the general public alike. NUI Galway has played an important role in promoting the extraordinary level of popular exploration of our recent history with the appointment of 1916 Scholar in Residence, Dr Conor McNamara.

The role of Scholar in Residence has facilitated NUI Galway in playing a formative role in both the intellectual and communal exploration of the Rising.

University College Galway in War & Revolution 1913–19, Exhibition

Telling the many compelling stories of the period from within University College Galway during the Irish revolution was a key strand of the Scholar in Residence’s work. During the period 1913–19, UCG was reshaping its own image through the championing of the Irish language, the increasingly democratic nature of the education system and the changing cultural allegiance of its academic staff. As senior researcher on the A University in War & Revolution, 1913–19 Exhibition, currently on display in the Hardiman Library, Dr McNamara was responsible for charting the University’s experience of a period of unprecedented political upheaval.

The exhibition includes approximately 14,000 words in English and Irish and almost 170 images. The exhibition examines the stories of the 15 men associated with the University who lost their lives in the World War, alongside the 140 students and staff who fought in the military, as well as the details of the men and women from UCG who participated in the Easter Rebellion.

Revolution in Ireland, 1913–24: A New Digital Repository

NUI Galway is keen that the centenary of the rebellion leaves a lasting intellectual legacy and, in this respect, plans are now at an advanced stage to create an innovative new digital repository of the revolutionary period. By building on personal relationships with families and community groups across the country, the University has gained access to a treasure trove of new archival papers held in private family hands pertaining to the War of Independence and related events. It is hoped that these papers will be digitised by the University and made available to the public in an accessible and comprehensive manner through a new online database.

We would encourage anyone who has family material, such as personal letters, prison notebooks, first-hand accounts and so on, to contact Dr McNamara so that we can bring to life the struggles of ordinary families during this formative period.

Dr McNamara can be contacted at conor.mcnamara@nuigalway.ie

Finally, Galway University Foundation ran an essay competition based on the theme 'University College Galway and 1916' and winners were students:

Joyce-Elena Ni Ghiobúin, Dean Buckley, Megan Reilly and Ryan McGuinness
Few who were present will ever forget the weekend commemorations to mark the centenary of the Easter Rising. For four days, the country was held in thrall by the past over the Easter weekend of 2016.

“We stepped beyond our own front doors and offices into the big public spaces and made them our own again,” the journalist and broadcaster Olivia O’Leary observed in The Irish Times. “Yes, of course there was the impressive scaffolding of ceremony and parades and concerts and talks. But the turnout all over the country made it remarkable. We were the show.”

It was a weekend which began with a gathering of thousands of relatives in the Garden of Remembrance on Easter Saturday and ended on Easter Monday with Reflecting the Rising on the streets of Dublin. On Easter Sunday the Defence Forces, the symbol and the expression of Irish sovereignty, were centre stage.

Some 3,500 members participated, including the chief of the defence forces, Vice Admiral Mark Mellett, who completed his PhD in political studies at NUI Galway in 2009.

Few who were there will forget Captain Peter Kelleher from the 27th Infantry Battalion reading the Proclamation at the GPO as Patrick Pearse had done a century previously.

The real stars, though, as Ms O’Leary, alluded to in her column, “from the very earliest discussions on this project, we knew it was risky,” Mr Concannon recalled. “We were looking for something that was bigger, more ambitious, more culturally driven than anything RTE had done before – and they delivered beyond everyone’s expectations. It was exhilarating to see, week by week, how issues were experiencing probably for the first time in their lives a sense of national identity that was open-minded and generous and welcoming. There wasn’t a hint of the divisiveness that a year previously we feared might mar these events.”

If Easter Sunday was about the military and the relatives, Easter Monday was about the public. Reflecting the Rising was a series of public talks, plays, musicals and outdoor performances. Gardaí estimate that 750,000 people took part, the biggest public event ever held in Ireland.

Mr Concannon remembered: “The sheer numbers were a concern. I remember checking in with the Gardaí in the Control Centre in the Castle to see if all was well on the streets – and being told by the chief super that he was looking at 20 screens of civility that was still very familiar, very Irish. It was hard not to feel emotional, particularly looking around at the thousands of kids and young people who, I felt, were experiencing probably for the first time in their lives a sense of citizenship asserting itself.”

The weekend commemorations ended on Monday night in the Bord Gáis Energy Theatre with Centenary, directed by another NUI Galway graduate Cillian Fennell (BSc in Marine Biology ‘88). It too proved to be a triumph.

“From the very earliest discussions on this project, we knew that it was risky,” Mr Concannon recalled. “We were looking for something that was bigger, more ambitious, more culturally driven than anything RTE had done before – and they delivered beyond everyone’s expectations. It was a wonderful closing to the weekend.”

Was it for this?

Ronan McGreevy (BA ’90, HDip ’91) is an Irish Times journalist. He is the editor of Was it for This? Reflections on the Easter Rising, a unique anthology of commentary on the Easter Rising based on the archives of The Irish Times. He is also the author of Wherever the Firing Line Extends: Ireland and the Western Front, published by The History Press.
Dr Derek O’Keeffe (Medicine, 2010) is a clinical fellow at NUI Galway, researching novel telemedicine technology with Professor Tim O’Brien, Department of Medicine. He was selected as the Flight Surgeon for Telemedicine for the mission. As an expert in telemedicine, he remotely monitored the ‘Aquanauts’ during their undersea experience as an official part of the NEEMO mission.

The NASA Extreme Environment Mission Operations (NEEMO) sent a group of six astronauts, engineers and scientists to live aboard the Aquarius habitat, 20 metres under the sea off the Florida coast for three weeks, in July and August, 2016.

Those aboard NASA’s Aquarius undersea research station participated in a live, public video link-up with their NUI Galway-based clinician, Dr Derek O’Keeffe on Friday 22 July. The link up was preceded by a public talk on telemedicine at NUI Galway.

Dr O’Keeffe holds dual biomedical engineering and medical qualifications and is an expert in state-of-the-art remote monitoring technology, with a successful track record in prior spaceflight and extreme environment missions.

He oversaw the ‘Aquanauts’ physiological parameters during their undersea experience and used this information to monitor crew health and to facilitate mission critical decisions (e.g. Extra Vehicular Activities – EVAs). In addition, he ran several staged health emergency scenarios (e.g. cardiac / respiratory arrest) to evaluate and develop remote crisis response protocols.

Dr O’Keeffe worked with his fellow Irish colleague Dr Marc Ó Griofa, who was chosen as one of six crew members on the NEEMO Mission.

“The Aquarius habitat and its surroundings provide a convincing analog for space exploration. NASA are also carrying out similar missions in other extreme environments, such as deserts, icefields and volcanoes around the world. Telemedicine provides us with the ability to monitor in real-time the ‘Aquanauts’ vitals. We can alert them if for some reason their heart rate goes too high or their blood pressure goes too low.”

Dr O’Keeffe added: “Telemedicine is already opening up exciting new frontiers in our everyday lives, such as providing remote care to patients in medically underserved areas. In addition, it is currently been used experimentally in novel healthcare applications such as chronic disease home monitoring. For example, this allows doctors to track parameters such as blood glucose or bodyweight patterns which allows them to make clinical decisions to intervene early if required.

"This would prevent patients with diabetes or heart failure from deteriorating and therefore improve care and ultimately prevent a hospital admission. Fast forward ten years, we would envisage that it would be the standard of care for patients to have home monitoring of physiological data for certain chronic diseases and equally for all hospitalised patients to have continuous monitoring and remote review.”

NASA astronauts carry out simulated space manoeuvres on the ocean floor during a NEEMO expedition.
Picture: NASA
With over 18,000 students, the University is home to a wealth of talent and energy. Throughout the year, many of them have received prizes and accolades. Here we highlight just a few.

**Prestigious Fulbright Awards**

In June 2016, US Ambassador to Ireland Kevin O’Malley and Ireland’s Minister of State for Gaeltacht Affairs and Natural Resources Seán Kyne, announced 39 new Fulbright Irish Awardees.

Since 1957, the Fulbright Awards have been made annually by the Irish and US governments and provide Irish students, scholars, and professionals with the opportunity to study, lecture, and research at top universities and institutions throughout the United States.

Among the 39 awardees were nine winners from NUI Galway, including mother and daughter Rita and Ruth Melia from Athenry, Co. Galway. This is the first mother and daughter pair to win Fulbright Irish Awards in the same year.

Rita Melia is a Doctoral Researcher at UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre, NUI Galway, an early childhood specialist with Early Childhood Ireland, and an Irish Research Council Scholar. Her daughter, Dr Ruth Melia, is a clinical psychologist who collaborates on a joint research project with the IT Department at NUI Galway where she is also Adjunct Lecturer in Clinical Psychology.

Other students to receive the scholarships included Ruth Cormican, who is completing her LLB at NUI Galway, and Sylvia Soldatou, a PhD candidate in the Department of Chemistry.

Graduates among the NUI Galway winners were Rosa Shine, Jason Finnerty, Dr Kate McDonnell-Dowling, Anna Ní Choirbín and Áine Ní Shúilleabháin.

Pictured above are Ruth and Rita Melia.

**Genetics of breast cancer**

PhD student Úna McVeigh was selected as a prize winner to win the ‘Go Mini Scientific Challenge Program’. Chosen from 1,100 submissions worldwide, Úna McVeigh received a prize valued at $4,500 to further support her research in the genetics of breast cancer.

The announcement was made at a reception at the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) annual meeting in New Orleans in Louisiana in April 2016.

Úna McVeigh’s translational research study, which leverages samples from a large biobank at NUI Galway’s Department of Surgery, aims to identify the frequency of genetic variants, their effects on breast cancer risk, and the clinical utility of testing for them. She hopes to be able to validate new clinically-relevant variants that are potentially applicable in broader populations.
Student Entrepreneur

Edel Browne, a third year Biotechnology student, has been announced as the winner of U Magazine’s ‘30 Under 30’ in the contribution to STEM and was named as one of The Sunday Business Post’s ‘30 Under 30’ for Technology. Edel is founder of Free Feet Medical, a new device for treating people with Parkinson’s disease. She is also Entrepreneur in Residence at the University’s Blackstone Launchpad. She is a past participant on the STEMette’s Outbox Incubator in London, a founding member of the Digital Youth Council of Ireland, a Global Youth Ambassador for AAT (America’s Amazing Teens) and a Global Teen Leader for the Three Dot Dash and the We are Family Foundation.

Edel has also secured her place as one of 11 Nissan Generation Next ambassadors after a month of public voting. A total of 81,000 votes were cast for 20 finalists, with the top seven automatically qualifying to join the ambassador programme. The Nissan Generation Next is about helping the best and brightest on the road to success, and she plans to use her new Nissan to travel to Parkinson’s Associations across Ireland to present her work and to conduct market research to improve Free Feet Medical’s product so that she can bring it to market.

Prestigious AIG Legatum Prize

Kyle Moore, an NUI Galway final year Bachelor of Arts student, was awarded the prestigious American International Group, Inc. (AIG) Legatum Prize in April 2016. The prize challenges the world’s brightest young minds to generate new ideas to some of the toughest policy questions.

Kyle was presented with the £3,000 prize and the 2016 trophy with his innovative proposal for a reciprocal ‘caring credits’ system within the EU. His idea, which is published in full, along with the other finalists’ entries, by the Legatum Institute, proposes that participants earn credits through caring for the elderly, which they could ‘cash in’ later in life in any EU member state, either to fund their own care or that of family members. He cited an existing Japanese scheme as a good example for Europe to follow.

Student Awards

Ben Gwalchmai, PhD student in Digital Arts and Humanities, was awarded a prestigious Venice Biennale Fellowship, which is coordinated by the British Council.

Ruth Cormican, LLB student at NUI Galway’s School of Law, was awarded a Fulbright Scholarship to study for an LLM in International Human Rights Law at the University of Notre Dame in the United States.

Hazel Mularkey, Orla Lynch, Clare Murphy, Aisling Tyndall, and Nora Szollosi travelled to the Netherlands to represent Shannon College of Hotel Management at the European Mise en Place Cup. They won the ‘Best Case Study’, and were awarded second place in the overall competition.

Michelle Moran from Foxford, Co. Mayo, has been awarded the GlaxoSmithKline Excellence in Human Resources Award.

NUI Galway’s CÉIM programme won the ‘Student Engagement Activity of the Year Award’ at the National Student Achievement Awards 2016. CÉIM is an academic peer-led support scheme for first year NUI Galway students studying the BA in Geography, the BA in Law, and Engineering.

Louise Corcoran, a PhD student, was awarded first prize for her poster presentation at the Eighth Annual Scientific Meeting of the Faculty of Pain Medicine, which took place in Dublin.
It’s been ten years since work began on NUI Galway’s €400m Capital Development programme. Now with 14 major new buildings, thousands of additional students and a thriving research community on the 260-acre campus, the face of NUI Galway has changed enormously. So, has it lived up to the vision? JO LAVELLE (MA 2002) REPORTS.

By the end of 2016, all of the major projects in the 2006 Capital Development programme will have been completed. The largest developments of the project, the Sports Centre, the refurbishment of Áras na Mac Leinn, the award-winning Engineering building and the Psychology building, had a big impact on the student experience. Additional projects that are due to be completed before the end of the year include the Centre for Drama, Theatre and Performance, and a Human Biology building to house Anatomy, Pharmacology and Therapeutics, and Physiology.

In addition to supporting an increase in student numbers and improving the student experience, the expansion programme can now offer increased invaluable support to local industry, suggests NUI Galway President, Jim Browne. “What we have now are a set of facilities that by any standards, are as good as anywhere in the world. The buildings that have been created here reflect the needs of this part of the country, while also reflecting the strategy of the University, which is to work with its neighbourhood and its region. An example of this is our...
interest in biomedical engineering science: we have clinical and research buildings which are all designed to service that industry. Not alone are they fine buildings, but they’re also appropriate to what’s required here. To me, that’s a great success. We now have the infrastructure so we can attract the best people and when they come here, they can work in the very best situation. That’s important, because for a university to attract good students and to attract good staff, you need the facilities.”

One of the unique aspects of this hugely ambitious project is that it was achieved entirely without debt, something the University is extremely proud of. Philanthropy has played a large role. For example, the projects completed in the early phase, including the Sports Centre, the Engineering Building, the Business School and the Bailey Allen Hall, were typically 25 to 30 per cent funded through philanthropy, which needs to be raised in order to leverage State and European funding.

Since 1998, Galway University Foundation (GUF) has been focused on raising philanthropic funds for the development of the University – both from a strategic and an academic perspective – and has raised over €200m to date. Its contributions have made a very significant impact on the redevelopment of the campus.

According to Tom Joyce, CEO of the University Foundation, in Phase 2 of the development, the Lambe Institute for Translational Research and the Biomedical Sciences Building had a high level of philanthropic funding – up to 60 per cent, in fact. The Institute for Lifecourse and Society on the North Campus and the Centre for Drama, Theatre and Performance, which will be known as the O’Donoghue Centre and is due to open in autumn 2016, also received significant backing from GUF.
“The fact that we don’t have debt is really thanks to the work of the Foundation, and then the ability of the University to match the Foundation with state support to deliver a facility,” continues Dr. Browne. “Certainly, a lot of what’s been done here couldn’t be done without them. It could not have been achieved, not just in terms of the financial support the philanthropy brought, which is very important, but also some of the ideas of the philanthropists, some of the visions they gave us. People like Dr. Ronan Lambe and his vision for Translational Research, for example. What Dr. Lambe gave was more than money – it was a sense of what we could achieve here, it was a sense of ambition, and an inspirational set of ideas. Philanthropy and GUF are not just about money – it’s a huge part of it – but they’re also contributing ideas and helping the University to make the best of itself.”

Former Vice-President for Capital Projects, Keith Warnock says that to complement the construction of the striking new buildings, the University has worked hard to improve the overall appearance and friendliness of the campus. “Many of the old pre-fabricated buildings have been removed. The O’Shaughnessy Bridge (named after the Galway engineering student who went on to become chief engineer of San Francisco and to oversee the design and construction of the Golden Gate Bridge) elegantly crosses the canal between the main campus and Earl’s Island, and has become the major entry point for those walking to the University. The grounds are exceptionally well landscaped and maintained. The Engineering Building is striking in itself; seeing it behind the large open space in front, dissected by a path lined by 2,000 red tulips, greatly enhances the visual effect and underlines how far the university campus has developed.”

While the coming years are likely to see a slowdown in the construction of major new academic buildings, plans are underway to provide additional student accommodation (around 900 new beds) in two phases. There will also be an emphasis on the refurbishment and updating of the buildings constructed in the 1970s, such as the Arts Science Building.

Ten years on, and with all the projects almost complete, has it been a success? It’s a very positive ‘yes’ from Dr. Browne. “They’re buildings which are of the highest standards, built without debt and they reflect the needs of this wider community. They’re an important statement of the West of Ireland’s ambition, in addition to the University’s ambition, and they’re balanced in every sense of the word – balanced across discipline, balanced in terms of teaching and research. We’ll attract good students, we’ll attract good staff and they’ll have the facilities to do their job. So yes, I think it’s a great success.”

Jo Lavelle (MA 2002) is a journalist, writer and content specialist. Having spent much of her career in the magazine and newspaper industries, she now works mainly on the creation and marketing of digital content for a variety of national and international organisations.
NUI Galway’s Sports Centre (2008) provides students with greatly improved facilities, including a 25-meter swimming pool, a large sports hall (the Ó Muircheartaigh Hall, named after former President Dr Dr Iognáid G. Ó Muircheartaigh), and a well equipped gym.

Áras na Mac Leinn (refurbishment 2009)
This involved the construction of the new Bailey Allen Hall, a new medical centre, a base for the campus radio station Flirt FM, and spaces to accommodate cultural events undertaken by student societies.

Engineering Building (2011)
Bringing together engineering students and staff who had previously been located in 13 different venues, this award-winning building incorporates features allowing it to function as a teaching tool. For example, various aspects of the construction techniques used are visible behind glass panels, and there are sensors embedded in floors to allow observation of the changing stress levels in floors subjected to pedestrian loads.

Psychology Building (2013)
After years of being located in different sections on and off campus, psychology staff and students finally came together under one roof. The building contributes to the creation of a new central square for the University: Psychology is on the north side, the Arts Millennium Building to the west, the Library to the south, and the Arts Science Building is to the east.

O’Shaughnessy Bridge (2012)
The bridge, which crosses the Eglinton Canal, is named after Michael O’Shaughnessy, a graduate of NUI Galway from the late 1800s who commissioned the design of the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco. Designed for pedestrians and cyclists, the bridge is part of a scheme to encourage sustainable travel throughout the city.

Institute for Lifecourse and Society (ILAS) (2015)
The Institute for Lifecourse and Society (ILAS) focuses on research in the social sciences by creatively integrating the rich and diverse intellectual resources from within the University and beyond.

Lambe Institute (2015)
Comprising the Lambe Institute for Translational Research and the Health Research Board (HRB) Clinical Research Facility, this building is the focal point where NUI Galway’s cutting edge research combines with a clinical setting.

Human Biology Building (completion late 2016)
This building, when completed, will bring together pre-clinical medical students, housing Anatomy, Pharmacology and Therapeutics, and Physiology.

Centre for Drama, Theatre and Performance (completion by end 2016)
The new Centre for Drama, Theatre and Performance will include a 120-seater auditorium, public foyer with box office and bar, rehearsal rooms, a workshop and seminar rooms.

Biomedical Sciences Building (2014)
Housing CÚRAM and the Regenerative Medicine Institute (REMED1), this building offers a world-class biomedical research centre focusing on gene therapy and stem cell research, and new generation medical devices.

NUI Galway stem cell research may lead to a greater understanding and enhanced treatment of heart disease and sudden death in young children.

Biomedical researchers from the Regenerative Medicine Institute (REMEDI) and CÚRAM at NUI Galway, in collaboration with clinicians from Our Lady’s Children’s Hospital Crumlin (OLCHC), have, for the first in Ireland, synchronised beating heart cells from human pluripotent stem (iPS) cells made from skin biopsies.

The research funded in partnership by REMEDI and the National Children’s Research Centre (NCRC) aims to investigate the causes of unexpected sudden death from inherited cardiac conditions in young people, and to help test therapies that may reduce the risk of sudden death in survivors and relatives.

The discovery of the genetic basis of inherited cardiac conditions, specifically the inherited rhythm disease known as Long QT Syndrome, has advanced the researchers’ understanding of disease mechanisms and provided an insight into how we ultimately might ‘repair’ the genetic defect. The stem cell scientists at REMEDI in NUI Galway are now in a position to generate patient-specific heart tissue in a dish to test new therapies and treatments.

To continue the next phase of this study, NUI Galway is now seeking families affected by Long QT Syndrome to come forward for a skin biopsy in consultation with their doctor. The aim is to recruit both affected and unaffected family members to better understand what places one family member at risk and not another, preferably with the identified causative gene mutation in the family.

Professor Tim O’Brien from NUI Galway said: “We are excited about the potential to develop new therapies for children at risk of sudden death using this technology. The complete translational infrastructure for this work is now present in Galway and will be extended nationally with our collaborators in Dublin and throughout Ireland.”

Giving Stem cells a heartbeat

NUI Galway stem cell research may lead to a greater understanding and enhanced treatment of heart disease and sudden death in young children.
INSPIRED TO INNOVATE
AT NUI GALWAY, THERE HAS LONG BEEN A THRIVING ECOSYSTEM OF STUDENT INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP. IN THE LAST YEAR, THIS HAS BEEN FURTHER UNDERPINNED BY DEVELOPMENTS ON AND OFF CAMPUS. WITH NEW SUPPORT IN PLACE FOR ENTREPRENEURS, EACH DAY MORE STUDENTS AND STAFF ARE INSPIRED TO INNOVATE.

Turning Simple Ideas into Big Business

In February 2016, NUI Galway became the first university outside the US to open a Blackstone LaunchPad on campus. Based in a striking new hub at the heart of the campus, the Blackstone LaunchPad is a multidisciplinary programme that encourages and supports students, staff and graduates to turn their business ideas into reality.

The programme represents a €2 million investment by Blackstone in Ireland, and it uses structures and models that have already seen dramatic results in universities across the US. With Mary Carty as Executive Director, and a dedicated team of student interns and enthusiastic staff mentors contributing from across colleges and disciplines, it is already fostering a spirit of innovation and entrepreneurship on campus.

TechInnovate

TechInnovate is a unique specialised technology innovation programme at the University, where teams identify real needs in a certain domain and then invent, and implement solutions. The programme is a 10-month, full-time, stipend-supported fellowship, supported by Bank of Ireland.

The full-time programme combines teams of high-calibre fellows from either an engineering, business or design graduate background that aims to align unmet needs with a market opportunity. Team members are chosen to contribute their knowledge and expertise as part of a multidisciplinary fellowship team.

The Fellowship Programme is a specialist technology innovation programme which is based on the BioInnovate Ireland Fellowship, in turn modelled on the Stanford Biodesign programme.

Innovation District

A new wave of innovation has also begun in Galway City, with entrepreneurship running high and individuals being encouraged to start up their own enterprises.

Galway Chamber of Commerce, Port of Galway, AIB, Startup Galway, ITAG, WestBIC, GMIT and NUI Galway, have come together to kickstart a new innovation hub as part of a larger initiative called the Galway City Innovation District.

Already established is the PorterShed, a specially created venue for high potential start-ups and SMEs in the West of Ireland. The global trend and preference for tech companies is to locate in areas close to city centres. Ten companies employing more than 30 people, have based themselves at the PorterShed.

In July 2016, the launch of the Yield Lab Galway in the PorterShed was announced. A food and agriculture technology venture fund and business accelerator, the fund plans to invest in 8–12 companies over the next two years. Each Galway-based food and AgTech startup will receive up to €100,000 and participate in a twelve-month accelerator program.

Yield Lab Galway is a significant boost to the investment opportunities available to emerging agri-tech and agri-innovation spinouts from NUI Galway.

Atlantic Centre

Also new to the region is the Atlantic Centre for Entrepreneurship. A partnership between proven entrepreneurs and experienced academics, it provides essential applied entrepreneurial skills, knowledge and networks to support innovation and business creation and growth.

The Atlantic Centre for Entrepreneurship runs a series of focused courses, events, workshops and labs, that address specific entrepreneurial needs. The first course, ‘Scaling a Business’, was run in June 2016 and subsequent courses will be held on campus.

Companies based in NUI Galway’s Business Innovation Centre forged ahead in 2015/16.

Channel Mechanics, a cloud-based software company, raised over €2 million in angel funding to drive expansion in Ireland.

DiaNia Technologies, an innovative materials technology company, secured €2 million in seed-funding to utilise materials science to facilitate the development of catheter-based medical devices.

Pocket Anatomy, a mobile medical software solutions company and TNW 2014 European Best Tech StartUp, was a winner at the 2015 SCCUL Awards in the ICT category.
Medtech in Galway

“The critical mass, expertise and infrastructure are now well established in NUI Galway for research in the area of medical devices, medical technologies, and clinical intervention to grow more substantially over the coming years.”

Galway is at the heart of the vibrant and competitive global medtech industry, employing one third of Ireland’s 29,000 medtech employees. According to industry and academic professionals, this is just the beginning of a very exciting time for the city’s medtech sector.

The Irish Medical Devices Association (IMDA) reported that during the recent economic crisis, the medtech industry continued to expand, with 7% export growth, reaching €12.6 billion. Accounting for 9% of all Irish exports, this growth is now on an upward trend as recovery takes hold in Ireland.

More than 30 years ago, the manufacturing industry began to emerge in Galway. Over the years, what was originally basic, high-volume manufacturing evolved into higher-end research innovation, which, coupled with the existing manufacturing, brings an all-encompassing manufacture, research and development (R&D), and innovation offering. This is, in part, thanks to the industry’s strong links and collaborations with NUI Galway researchers.

NUI Galway made its first really meaningful connections with the industry with the introduction of the Biomedical Engineering degree – a direct response to the local industry requirements for more engineering graduates. Since the first students of this course graduated in 2003, a core strength of the BE in Biomedical Engineering programme has been the relationship with the multinational and indigenous medical device companies based in the Galway region and nationally.

“All of our students undertake an eight-month internship within a medical device company, which often leads on to joint research projects with the industry partner when the students return to their academic studies and, most importantly, employment after graduation,” says Professor Laoise McNamara, who, in addition to providing a Medical Device Design course to 4th year Biomedical Engineer students, also delivers teaching externally to the Medical Device Industry.

“The medtech industry is very supportive and influential in our programme design. We have an industry advisory board, to take input from key medtech industry leaders on our programme, and we receive support from the medtech sector for student awards. Most importantly, Biomedical Engineering has a long-standing and thriving research collaboration with many industry partners,” adds Professor McNamara.

Through this collaboration, an unprecedented number of opportunities has arisen in recent years, one of the most significant being the recent establishment of a national Centre for research in Medical Devices (CÚRAM) last year, led by NUI Galway. Funded by Science Foundation Ireland and industry partners, CÚRAM, led by Scientific Director, Abhay Pandit, enhances Ireland’s standing as a major hub for the global medical devices industry.

*Example of an imprinted biomaterial used as a device in tendon repair*
Research at CÚRAM aims to improve and enhance existing medical devices, while developing the next generation of ‘smart’ biomedical implants, cell device and drug device combination products to address unmet clinical needs for some of the world’s most pressing illnesses, including cardiovascular disease, osteoarthritis, Parkinson’s Disease, diabetes and kidney disease.

That NUI Galway is located in such close proximity to the regional medtech hub, in addition to its proximity to University Hospital Galway, adds to its unique position when it comes to applying innovative biomedical treatments to diseases, suggests Head of Research Development at NUI Galway’s Research Office, Dr. Ann Ryan. “It really is a very important attribute. We’re home to the HRB Clinical Research Facility (CRF) and the Lambe Institute for Translational Research (TRF), and also the Centre of Cell Manufacturing Ireland (CCMI). This is Ireland’s first manufacturing facility for clinical-grade stem cells that enables the manufacturing and licensing of cell-based therapeutic approaches. It is one of only a handful of such facilities in Europe.”

According to Dr. Ryan, these developments, coupled with the growing international recognition of the quality of our research outputs, have made a huge difference to the student experience at the university. “Our emphasis is on enriching the student experience through research-led or research-informed teaching, so by having our students educated by research-active academics, not just in the medical devices area but across all areas and disciplines, you create a more stimulating environment and end up with more employment-ready graduates. Also, with programmes like Bio Innovate, the focus is on training a different type of student because you’re training them to be entrepreneurs, to develop solutions to unmet clinical needs, to spin out and develop their own companies.”

“Up to now, it’s been about solidifying the foundations,” continues Dr. Ryan. “The critical mass, expertise and infrastructure are now well-established in NUI Galway for research in the area of medical devices, medical technologies, and clinical intervention to grow more substantially over the coming years. The opportunities are huge and we have very ambitious targets for our research activity and particularly, our funding income from Europe by 2020. Because of our unique linkages with the medical device industry, our proximity to the sector and because of the co-location of key infrastructure such as the CRF, TRF and CCMI, together with CÚRAM, we have huge potential for continued growth and innovation in this area. This is a really exciting time for medical devices research in NUI Galway.”

The future is looking very bright for this sector in the West of Ireland with Senior Director of Regulatory Affairs at Medtronic Ireland, John Kilmartin, suggesting that the recent designation of European Capital of Culture 2020 to Galway will benefit the medtech sector in Galway greatly. “A lot of people are aware of companies like Google and Facebook, but in the broader context of Ireland and Europe, I think it will bring visibility to the technology aspects Galway has, and the medtech sector is a good example of that. Additionally, 80 per cent of our graduates leave the region, and so, post 2020, if Galway is seen as a good place to live, work, and raise your family, and we’re recruiting and retaining the talent that’s coming out of our local universities, that would be a great win win for us. If we’re investing jointly with a university in making high-end graduates, wouldn’t it be great if we could reinvest it back into the local economy? That can be through indigenous companies or large multinationals – so long as we’re not losing that talent to other countries.”
Aoibheann McNamara

A creative entrepreneur who runs Ard Bia at Nimmo’s Cafe and Restaurant, Aoibheann McNamara and is also one half of The Tweed Project, which produces one-off pieces using traditional materials combined with modern tailoring.

WHAT DID YOU STUDY AT NUI GALWAY?
I studied Arts Administration about 17 years ago at what was then UCG. It was the second year that the course was running. There were small numbers then, and it was a simple course, yet it was very comprehensive. The classes ran from 11am to 1pm most days and then the odd afternoon. NUIG was very accessible and easy, as was Galway... just as it is now.

WHAT DID YOU DO WHEN YOU GRADUATED?
I went to Toronto to work in an amazing arts organisation called A Space Gallery and then went to South Korea to teach English for a while. I then travelled around Asia, mainly India, for six months, focusing mainly on the Tibetan areas or the Himachal Pradesh region, where I met the Dalai Lama. I then came back to Ireland and spent some time in a Tibetan centre in Cavan. That’s where I learned to cook. From there, I opened the first Ard Bia in Donegal. Two years later, I came to Galway and opened Ard Bia here – first on Cross Street, above Tigh Neachtain, and then we moved to where we finally found our home at Nimmo’s down by the Spanish Arch.

YOU’RE KNOWN AS AN INNOVATIVE AND DETERMINED BUSINESS PERSON – WHAT’S THE DRIVE BEHIND IT?
My drive is simply the pursuit of an aesthetic life and to meet interesting and creative people.

CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT THE TWEED PROJECT?
It’s a collaboration between Triona Lillis and me, which we set up two years ago now. We’re both extremely passionate about Irish fabrics and we noticed that despite producing some amazing tweed and linen, no producers in Ireland were using them to suit modern sensibilities. And so we decided to do it ourselves, with the aim being to bridge that gap between traditional and contemporary design.

Our focus is very much part of the Slow Fashion movement, where quality, fabric, craft and time take precedence over trends. It’s basically the antithesis of fast consumer culture. Each piece is made to order and will last a lifetime. We work from our workshop in Henry Street, with specially selected cuts of Donegal tweed and Irish linen.

ANY OTHER PROJECTS IN THE PIPELINE?
Not at the moment. I’m stepping back a bit from taking on any more projects to spend the time with my son, Oni.

WHAT DO YOU PUT YOUR SUCCESS DOWN TO?
I don’t see myself as successful per se. The pursuit of personal inner success is far more important to me. If what I do makes people happy, then that’s a success for me.
Paul O’Hara is director of founder of ChangeX, a platform of proven innovations for anyone who wants to strengthen their community. Paul, along with his wife, Cork barrister Lucy O’Connell and their two-year old-daughter, Elizabeth, are based in Dublin, and are expecting their second child in October.

Why did you choose NUI Galway?
I came to NUIG in 1996 to study commerce. My father and several family members had studied there and loved it, and being from Mayo, it felt familiar and was the obvious choice. I almost went down the accountancy route, but changed my mind at the last minute to major in Marketing, thanks in part to Dr. Aidan Daly, and graduated with a B.Comm in 1999.

What professional path did you take after graduating?
I studied for a M.Sc. in Marketing at UCD. I joined Unilever in a brand management role on graduating and then spent a few years at Cadbury as Product Group Manager – trying to get you all to eat more chocolate than you needed!

When did you develop your interest in social entrepreneurship?
During my mid-twenties, I started to become much more aware of social problems in Ireland and abroad. The more I learned about the problems, the more overwhelmed I became. Here was I marketing chocolate while so many suffered. I went through a bit of a quarter life crisis, which culminated in a trip to Zimbabwe, where I was exposed to extreme poverty for the first time. I made a commitment to myself then that I would spend the rest of my working life trying to solve social problems. I had no idea where to start, but on the flight home, I sketched out an idea for a bottled water company that would redistribute profits to water projects in Africa. I had never heard of social entrepreneurship at this stage, but the water idea brought me in contact with Ashoka, the world’s leading network of social entrepreneurs. Ashoka were just getting started in Europe and I joined to set up offices in Ireland and Scandinavia and served as Europe Director for a few years.

Can you tell us about ChangeX?
During the first eight years of Ashoka in Europe, we invested over €50 million in 400 social entrepreneurs in fields such as education, healthcare, social inclusion and the environment. We saw tremendous opportunity in packaging all of the world’s proven social innovations and putting them on one platform so they were easy for others to find and start in their own communities. This is the idea behind ChangeX. Our goal is to help build thriving communities across the world by connecting the best ideas with changemakers in local communities who get things done. We launched 18 months ago in Ireland and it’s been growing quickly since. We launch in the US later this year.
Silicon Valley, the leading global tech hub, has attracted many ambitious graduates looking to work in one of the most innovative tech clusters in the world. *Cois Coirbe* talks to three NUI Galway graduates who are advocating the advancement of more women leaders in tech.

**Anne-Marie Farrell**, Head of Customer Marketing, Global SMB Marketing, Google.

Currently leading the Customer Marketing team at Google, Mountain View, Anne-Marie also runs StartupOnomics, an annual Dublin-based conference for homegrown start-ups with the world’s leading thinkers on human behaviour. Originally from Bray, Co Wicklow, Anne-Marie studied Electronic and Computer Engineering at NUI Galway from 1999 to 2003.

**What was your experience of studying at NUI Galway?**
I didn’t have much exposure to engineering-related subjects in secondary school, apart from maths and physics, so Undenominated Engineering was a great opportunity to learn about different engineering disciplines before making a choice. It looked like a great decision – the tech world was booming and there was a shortage of computer science/engineering graduates. I started my engineering degree thinking I would end up working as a software engineer. Unfortunately, the dot-com bubble was about to burst, meaning tech/IT graduates were not in demand, but the versatility of an engineering degree opened up a lot of other opportunities.

**You began your career as management consultant with Accenture. Where did you go from there?**
In 2006, I decided to join Google in Dublin. Google was expanding rapidly in Europe and I wanted to work for an innovative and fast-paced company. Google is a fantastic place to work and, importantly for me, encourages employees to transition to new roles within Google. I’ve been fortunate to work in a number of areas, including strategy, behavioural economics, business analytics, marketing and finance. In my current role in SMB Marketing, my team help small businesses around the world grow by connecting them with their customers.

**Why have you chosen to make a life in Silicon Valley?**
Silicon Valley is a great place to work and live. I get to work with exceptional people, and, together, we tackle challenging projects, whether that is in Google or with start-ups. I enjoy working with start-ups to help grow their businesses. I also mentor start-ups at the hardware incubator highway1, part of Irish company PCH. It’s a nice connection to my engineering days and with my experience.

**Where do you see the tech industry in Ireland at the moment?**
The tech industry is booming in Ireland. I think the IDA have done a tremendous job at attracting great companies like Google, Facebook, LinkedIn, Airbnb, Dropbox, [and many more] to Ireland. In Galway, I’m really excited at how the tech scene is growing and emerging. One of my former lecturers, John Breslin, is at the forefront of the tech movement in Galway and has developed Portershed – a place to work, share and succeed together. It is a great first step towards an Innovation District in Galway City. I also think we’ll see great talent and ideas emerge from Blackstone Launchpad.

It seems like a very odd career path, but the one thing I have learned is that engineering was the best degree I could have studied. As an engineering graduate, I’m definitely biased and will always recommend studying engineering – it opens up doors to multiple careers, including accounting, data science, marketing and of course, engineering.
Máire Walsh, Digital Strategy Director for Subdirect.
Graduated with a Masters of Business Studies in 2001

Originally from Castlebar, Co Mayo, Máire recently was named one of the most influential Irish women abroad in technology by the Irish Times and was a recipient of the 2016 40 Under 40 Award. She was also a recipient of the Top 10 People’s Choice Award from the Irish Echo, a US publication.

What path did you take after finishing your Masters?
I was very fortunate to work with my thesis supervisor and lecturer Ann Torres on a research project. Ann was my first mentor and helped spark my creativity, confidence, and drive. From there, and partly because of Ann’s picture of the Golden Gate Bridge in her office, I moved to San Francisco so I could travel and gain new experiences. San Francisco immediately felt like a bigger version of Galway: lots of possibilities, surrounded by water, and lots of diversity. My first job here was as a marketing and e-commerce manager for a magazine. That helped further fuel my love of content and of that industry. From there, my career took off and I worked in various roles that had the common thread of launching content products, building audiences and driving revenue growth.

What does your job with Subdirect entail?
I oversee digital and mobile strategy for Subdirect, a company that helps build revenue for the world’s leading magazine publishers and e-commerce companies. My team oversees digital and online growth, new platform development, and marketing efforts to monetise and connect with customers across all screens globally.

What is it you like most about working in Silicon Valley?
I have the opportunity to work with some of the leading and most innovative companies in the world to help build product roadmaps to make content available anytime, anywhere, on any device, with the goal of fueling future revenue growth. I’m lucky to have the opportunity to meet and work with so many talented people. It’s competitive, but the work relationships you build have an enormous impact on your growth.

What's your opinion of the tech industry in Ireland at the moment?
Its rapid rise and growth is very exciting. The growth of many Irish companies in Silicon Valley is also impressive; as they grow they will be able to hire more people at home and vica versa. Ties between Ireland and Silicon Valley will become stronger and that will help fuel more growth.
Máire Sogabe is currently Chief of Staff for the Chief Information Security Officer of Pacific Gas and Electric in San Francisco.

Having grown up on a sheep farm on the Dingle peninsula in Co. Kerry, Máire came to NUI Galway to do a Masters in Community Development in 1994 following her BA in Sociology and Geography at Maynooth.

What is your fondest NUI Galway memory?
I have many great memories of my time at UCG. I loved being on campus, walking through the Quad, hanging out with friends at the cafeteria and celebrating the end of exams at the Students’ Union bar. The commute to college on bike from Salthill was exhilarating; I can’t think of a nicer way to travel than cycling along the sea to college. Of course, in winter time it was often quicker to walk due to the sideways rain and gale force winds.

Where did your career path take you after graduating with the MA?
After graduating from NUI Galway, I packed my bags and travelled around Australia, Japan, South East Asia and the US. Eventually, my growing interest in technology drove me to return to the Bay Area to sign up for a Masters in Computer Information Systems at Golden Gate University. I got my first job in a tech start-up as a college intern and transitioned to a permanent role after graduation. I then moved on to another start-up, this time a financial software company. I worked there for over five years as their Data Exchange Operations Manager. After the birth of my first child, I moved to Tokyo for a couple of years, where I spent time with my daughter Brigid as a stay-at-home mum. Even though I did not work, I was very active in the Irish community, served on the organizing committee for the Emerald Ball Tokyo, and was a member of ‘Tokyo Fáilte’, an Irish Women’s group.

Describe your job at Pacific Gas and Electric?
Upon returning from the Japan to the US, I started working at Pacific Gas and Electric, one of the largest natural gas and electric utilities in the United States. Currently I am the Chief of Staff for the Chief Security Office, responsible for leading strategic planning and protecting the company’s physical and cyber assets from threats that could compromise or disrupt services. The energy sector is uniquely critical as it provides an enabling function across virtually all industries in the US. If the power goes off and stays off, the impact would be catastrophic to the people and economy of California. The failure of the power grid would prompt a cascading collapse of many other critical infrastructures that ensure the availability of water, food, medicine, finance, transportation, telecommunications, etc., possibly for years. I take my job very seriously and like to think of myself as a ‘guardian of the grid’.

How are you enjoying life in San Francisco?
I really enjoy living in San Francisco and the Bay Area. I’m very busy, I’m taking some Cybersecurity certifications, helping organise the Irish Network Bay Area USA conference, and my kids are about to start school. I love spending time with my kids, Brigid and Cillian, travelling, and reading up on renewable energy, storage and electric vehicles. The weather is great, so outdoor activities are possible all year around.

Bank of Ireland at work

Bank at work is an exclusive banking service for NUI Galway alumni.

Bank of Ireland is proud to partner with NUI Galway to launch Bank at work - an exclusive banking service for employees and alumni of NUI Galway.

As an alumnus of NUI Galway, you can take advantage of all the benefits of Bank at Work. You get access to a dedicated team of financial advisors who will always be on hand to help you with whatever financial decisions - big or small - you may have.

Our flexible banking service makes it simpler for you to apply for financial products. It also means that you get faster decisions. As well as that, you get access to an exclusive web-portal, which has been specifically set up for NUI Galway Alumni. Not only does it offer you useful advice and information, it also provides some preferential rates on products.

Our ‘always in’ service fits around you and your schedule. Our team of dedicated financial advisors is available to you on campus, by phone on 0818 200 378, by texting BAW to 50365 or via FaceTime and skype (for mortgage meetings with contact details available on your dedicated Bank At Work portal).

Bank At Work is committed to helping and supporting you with all your financial needs. Whether you want to buy your first home or are thinking about starting to save for a rainy day, we can give you the expert financial advice you need.

Bank of Ireland

For small steps, for big steps, for life.
An bhfuil an déagóir macnasach tagtha in inmhe faoi dheireadh?

Bhi dúshláin go leor roimh an stáisiún óg, amhras faoin gcoincheap sna meáin agus ceistéireacht faoi inmharthanacht sna blianta tosaigh. Ís túisce a ritheann focail fearacht seiftiúilach, cruthaitheacht agus samhlaíocht i dtaobh TG4 linn anois ó daingníodh socruithe maoinithe agus de réir mar a neadaigh sár-chláracha i gcroíthe an lucht féachana.

Sár-bhainistíocht sceidil ba chionsácair le ghean an lucht féachana ar an gcainéal ón tús. D'fhág athchraoltaí le linn na seachtaine cénanna nach gcaillí seoda siamsaíochta agus spóirt, leithéidí CU Burn, Sacar na Spáinnse agus All-Ireland Gold. Thug focail muinteoirí óga aimsire agus Hector ortu siúd nach raibh Gaeilge acu athmhachnamh a dhéanamh ar chraoladh na Gaeilge. Chuidigh sobaldráma taitneamhach Ros na Rún le foirneachtí a oibrigh gur Gaeilge acu athmhachnamh a dhéanamar ar chraoladh na Gaeilge. Chuidigh sobaldráma taitneamhach Ros na Rún le foirneachtí a oibrigh gur Gaeilge acu athmhachnamh a dhéanamar ar chraoladh na Gaeilge.

Chumaidh roimh an chás, crá croí iad na fotheidil Bhéarla íomhánna, dá inmholta iad mar éascaíocht dóibh siúd ar an mbeagán focal.

Craoltóir a fheidhmíonn mar ardán foilsithe é TG4 seachas craoltóir den mhúnla traidisiúnta, rud a tháinig faoi bharr leath chomh diúltach i leith na Gaeilge agus a bhí roimh bhunú an stáisiúin, dar leis. Is é seo an chéad chuid mhothraíochtaí a bhaint amach agus tóchar ag dóilte le bheith ar fáil trí córas thuine a chur ar fáil le haghaidh na hÉireann agus an phobal féachana ar fud an domhain.

Ó cuireadh tús le Teilifís na Gaeltachta ar oíche Shamhna 1996 bhain an cainéal neamhspleáchas amach mar charaoltóirí seirbhíse poiblí ina cheart féin mar thoradh ar an Acht Craoltóirí, 2009. Is é seo an cheithre blianta a bhí sin de chuid na réimsí soláthair fostaíochta le comhlachtaí neamhspleáchach. Lúb sásta leis an chéad chuid de na nádúrachtí, ach tá an chuid eile agus ach de bharr leis an chéad chuid de na mheannún a dtugtar an scéal na Gaeilge.

Céimí de chuid na hOllscoile é Pól Ó Gallchóir (BA 1997, HDiPA 1998). Agus é ag imeacht ar scór ón stáisiúin i mblíana, creideann Pól Ó Gallchóir gur gá a bheith airdeallach ag dhúshlán na hiomaíochta i gcónaí:

‘Margadh teilifise é seo a bhfuil diarnaimiúlacht ann. Caithfear an lucht féachana a aimsiú, a choineáil agus a chosaint trí rogha mhaith de chláracha lúchraíochta a chur ar fáil. Agus iad a chur ar fáil ar an ngach phoiblí a chur sa ngheoladh ar an Ghaeilge. Ní fheidhmiú nó féidir leis an Ghaeilge a chur ar fáil ar an mbeagán fuelseachtí.’

Pronunthchheimnearnach, Acadamh na hOllscoile Gaeilge, OÉ Gaillimh.

Dónall Ó Braonáin
Winning the bid to become European Capital of Culture in 2020 is a once in a lifetime opportunity for Galway to create a lasting and meaningful legacy for generations to come – culturally, economically and socially.

GALWAY 2020 – European Capital of Culture

The 2020 vision is now an ambitious €45.5 million programme of projects that will transform the city and county over the next four years and beyond. Extraordinarily exciting times await, with Galway City Council Chief Executive Brendan McGrath likening it to winning the bid for the Olympics. NUI Galway has been instrumental in the process from the beginning.

Professor of Drama and Theatre Studies at NUI Galway, Patrick Lonergan, who coordinated a steering group within the University to contribute to the bid book programme, expects that in the coming years, a “huge” number of projects will be coordinated across the University, with opportunities for all staff, students, alumni and visitors to get involved. “There are also huge opportunities for new European partnerships, for research, and more. We are going to be engaging in conferences, cultural events, research activities and outreach up to 2020 and beyond.” NUI Galway has currently partnered with Galway 2020 in three of the four flagship programmes of the Capital of Culture – Hope it Rains, a series of weather-proof projects, An Artist in Every Place, which aims to “invade, occupy and inhabit everyday spaces with cultural activity” and Window on the World, which will the boundaries of digital technologies and virtually immersive mediums.

Other projects which NUI Galway have partnered on include Middle Island, a performance co-developed by Druid, Wires Crossed, a Galway Community Circus project, and Forward Motion, which focuses on education and engagement projects with children and teenagers. NUI Galway’s School of Education will produce The Immersive Classroom, which will target increased digital literacy in schools using immersive technologies.

A number of NUI Galway’s own academic staff have teamed up to produce Aistriú, an anthology of extracts
from 25 Gaelic texts documenting aspects of migration in Irish and European context, while NUI Galway Students’ Union will team up with European Youth Forum to produce Eye on the Edge, a parallel conference to EYE in Strasbourg, the largest of its kind in Europe.

With the University’s new theatre space opening on campus in the coming year, it offers an ideal opportunity, not only to host great work, but also to act as a working space for artists to experiment, says Professor Lonergan. “But while the new theatre will be centrally involved, we want the entire campus to be part of Galway 2020,” he adds.

The groundwork for the ambitious bid began back in 2014, when Galway City Council teamed up with NUI Galway to get the ball rolling on the bid process. Economic Geographer, Dr. Patrick Collins, of the NUI Galway team, says there was a major focus on having as much input as possible from the public from the beginning. “We sat down with all the major cultural stakeholders, moved from there through all the major societal and community groups and then to all the people of Galway. We knew from the start that it would be ‘the public’s’ bid, so we quickly set about getting a website up, a social media presence as a platform for explanation and discussion, and a good brand for Galway 2020.”

Led by NUI Galway, interviews were held with Galway’s key cultural players, to gather their visions and thoughts, and focus groups were formed. Discussions were also held between artists from previous ECOC designated cities and Galway-based artists to share their experiences. The Speak Outs, which took place in 2015, were an integral part of the process, where members of the public were invited to offer their opinions, and give their voice to what they want to see happen for their towns and city.

“Ultimately, the Capital of Culture allows us to do things that we have never done before, and we want to be bold and brave, and take up this opportunity as fully as possible.”

Professor Patrick Lonergan

According to Dr. Collins, the very particular set of skills that NUI Galway hold will be key to running a project of this scale. “These range from world leading methodologies in evaluating and analysing culture – projects like the Creative Momentum and the work of INSIGHT are clear examples of this.”

So what are Dr. Collins’ hopes for what the designation will bring to the city and county? “That Galway uses this designation to become a model second tier city and region. That it trusts in the ingenuity of its people, that it continues to give them an authorship of their own destiny. I hope that we explore the possibilities that are unique to this place, that we step out of the shadows, that we take risks, that we be bold, that we embrace the chaos of this and that we experiment with putting culture up there to the fore, as an active agent of sustainable development, not seeing it as something of an add-on or a luxury.”

Galway 2020’s Business Engagement and Regional Partnerships Manager, Mark O’Donnell, is keen to point out that while the economic benefit of winning the bid is clear, the long term-cultural legacy is at the core of the European Capital of Culture.

“Notwithstanding the economic and commercial benefits, at its heart, the Galway 2020 project is about a long-term cultural legacy for Galway, through developing a sustainable environment for our cultural producers and artists, as well as encouraging the next wave of makers and creators. The Galway 2020 project will work in parallel with the Cultural Strategy, which seeks, among other things, to develop new funding models for culture as well as progressing a suite of infrastructural projects to enhance the cultural offering of the city.”

Much of the groundwork for the overall programme will take place in 2017, with the ramping up of projects in 2018 and 2019. Right now, Galway is in the transition from bidding to implementation stage. That means lots of careful planning, says Project Manager of Galway 2020, Patricia Philbin. “For the next number of months, we will engage in detailed planning to put in place the processes, structures and partnerships required to deliver a European Capital of Culture. We will be working closely with past, present and future European Capital of Culture cities over the coming months to learn from their experiences.” Asked what it was like to head up one of Galway’s most successful wins, Ms Philbin says; “Words can’t describe the incredible excitement of winning the title of European Capital of Culture 2020 and the anticipation of the opportunities ahead. It has been a privilege to work on the project and with such an amazing team.”

Going forward, it’s clear that this once in a life-time opportunity must be embraced by all involved. Finding ways to use such an extraordinary opportunity to the best of its advantage is now to the fore of the agenda for the NUI Galway steering committee, says Professor Lonergan. “How can we use this opportunity to develop new courses, build new infrastructure, change the way we work together, and re-evaluate the role of universities? How can we build links between the arts and sciences, in order to show that “culture” cuts across all academic disciplines? How can we reach out to new communities in the city and county, and in the nation and the world – both in real and virtual spaces? Ultimately, the Capital of Culture allows us to do things that we have never done before, and we want to be bold and brave, and take up this opportunity as fully as possible.”
1. Niamh Higgins, from Caltra, Co. Galway, was conferred with a Higher Diploma in Midwifery, with Orla Lonergan from Carrick-on-Suir, Co. Tipperary, and Jessica Lane from Ennis, Co. Clare, who were conferred with an Honours Bachelor of Nursing Science degrees in November 2015.

2. Sarah Hoctor, from Templemore, Co. Tipperary, was conferred with an Honours Bachelor of Nursing Science degree in November 2015.

3. Dr Stephanie Slevin, from Waterford City, was conferred with a PhD in February, 2016.

4. Dr Rebecca Henry from Derrybeg, Co. Sligo, and Dr Marie Fitzgibbon, from Oola, Co. Limerick, who were both conferred with a PhD in February, 2016.

5. Dr John Greally was conferred with a Doctor of Medicine on Published Work (DMed) in June. Dr Greally is pictured with his wife, Dr Geraldine McGinty, and his parents, Dr John Greally and Dr Marie Greally. All are graduates of NUI Galway and Dr Greally is wearing the gown his father wore when he graduated in 1976.
6. Dr Aoife Bell, from Galway City, was conferred with an Honours Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery, and Bachelor of Obstetrics (MB, BCh, BAO) degree in June, 2016.

7. Dr Paul Lohan, from Ahascragh, Co. Galway, was conferred with a PhD in Medicine in June, 2016.

8. Dr Clodagh McDermott, from Breaffy, Co. Mayo, was conferred with an Honours Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery, and Bachelor of Obstetrics (MB, BCh, BAO) degree in June, 2016. Clodagh received seven out of 14 final medical medals for her outstanding academic performance.

9. Breda O’Connell, from Listowel, Co. Kerry, Maeve Booth, from Moate, Co. Westmeath, Emily Tully from Kinvara, Co. Galway, Niamh Keely, from Belmullet, Co. Mayo, and Aoife Godfrey, from Kilgarvan, Co. Kerry, were conferred with Honours Bachelor of Science degrees in June, 2016.

10. The Medical class of 2016
NUI Galway scholarships are making higher-level education more inclusive

How great a difference can access to higher education make?
Consider a young factory worker named Michael. In the 1960s, he enrolled in what was then UCG and became the first person in his family to graduate from University. In 2011, he became the President of Ireland. Access to education can be life-changing. It can even change the world.

Now NUI Galway is setting a national example in how to make higher-level education more inclusive. Through a unique offering of scholarships, the University is working to ensure that more people can achieve their human potential. In so doing, it is also strengthening Ireland’s social and cultural capital on a global level.

Access is Key to Education
NUI Galway Access Programmes are empowering students of wide-ranging backgrounds to overcome obstacles to academic and personal success. From disability and economic hardship to the subtle but devastating effects of self-doubt, the obstacles that many school leavers and mature students face can be daunting. But for nearly 20 years, Access has helped generations of students tap into their motivation.

Under the guidance of Access Officer Imelda Byrne, the programme develops students’ college readiness and fosters skills and strategies that offer a lifetime of benefits—to the students, their families, and the community.

Profiles in Academic Excellence
For Hannagh McGinley, NUI Galway scholarship programmes are supporting her in becoming the first Traveller in the world to earn a doctorate. Without Access, says McGinley, “people like me would like feel very lost and uncomfortable in institutions such as Universities because they were never designed to accommodate ‘the likes of us’.”

Access not only made the transition to University possible, says McGinley, “it also played a huge role in making sure I stayed.” She cites supportive friendships she made through Access and says that the programme was “crucial for developing confidence. When you have been taught by the system, both covertly and overtly, that people like you are not as entitled to an education as others, the psychological impact is complex and devastating and should never be underestimated.”

She adds: “By the time I reached Access, I was a broken person and had extremely low confidence. Access really helped to alleviate some of the adversity I was experiencing and rebuilt some of my confidence and as a result I had more energy, which could be used to tap into my own resilience.”

From No Expectations to a World of Options
Johnny O’Rourke also found academic and personal success through Access. Today he’s earning a second master’s degree in Business at Oxford. From NUI Galway, he holds a B.A. in Sociology, Economics, and Political Science and a Master’s in Social Work.

But at age 15, he was out of school, seemingly for good. This was despite his being a self-directed learner with an inquiring mind.

“As a child I was a voracious reader. I read anything that was in front of me.” By age 12, he had transitioned from devouring tabloids to reading The Economist, classics like Dickens’ Great Expectations, and work by Chomsky, Foucault, and others.

He was also trying “to connect what I was reading to what I was seeing around me, which was very high levels of unemployment, lots of mental health issues, and other issues that we typically associate with disadvantaged areas.”

So why did he leave school so young? Growing up in a working class family, says O’Rourke, there was “no expectation whatsoever” of continuing one’s studies past a certain age. “A lot of my mates were leaving school at about that time, too.”

O’Rourke makes clear that this isn’t a criticism of working class communities, but rather a reminder of the need to increase awareness of, and access to, third level education. He notes, for instance, that popular media seldom make an association between working class people and University.

“I believe wholeheartedly that if we want to improve access for people from working class backgrounds, we have got to start the familiarization process much earlier in terms of [conveying] the function of a university.”
Two pivotal events led Johnny O’Rourke to NUI Galway. “In primary school, people from the University came over and organized a [field] trip to the college.” It was something that stayed with him, albeit in the back of his mind. A seed had been planted.

Then in December of 2004, O’Rourke went to a holiday party and struck up a conversation with a fellow guest. By this time, he had begun working in construction, and as he recalls, was “seizing on the opportunity to talk with someone about these things I had been reading about.”

The guest was Dr. Elaine Keane, lecturer in Sociology of Education & Research Methods in the School of Education at NUI Galway since 2006. “During the conversation, we touched on the fact that I’d left school quite early, and she expressed surprise that I hadn’t continued my education given my interests.”

Dr. Keane recommended that O’Rourke look into the Access Programme.

“My attitude has always been to throw myself into different things, so I applied and got in”

Thanks to gaining access to NUI Galway, O’Rourke has spent 10 years engaged in social work and community services in several countries, including Ireland. “I’ve worked with Aboriginal families in Australia, Palestinian families in the Middle East, elderly people with dementia in the U.K., and in child protection in Ireland.”
Adding Access to the Equation

Now O’Rourke, who describes himself as “intrinsically motivated by the health and social care sector”, is considering how he might develop his expertise within a business context. He hopes to become a positive influencer of societal options based on the unique perspective of his lived experience and his insights into class structure.

None of this, he says, would have been possible without Access. “If you take Access opportunity out of the equation, in terms of my own life or experience, I would more than likely have been facing long-term unemployment.” He adds that, without Access, he “would never even have contemplated” his present options.

The Legacy of Learning

Asked how she wants her education to make an impact, Hannagh McGinley says, “I would really like to leave some kind of legacy to my daughter, my family and my community. I want to bring about positive change for Travellers, in particular in the area of education. I will use my education to challenge racism and raise awareness about the impact that racism has on every aspect of Travellers’ lives.”

What is her outlook for the future? “It is my hope that through education, all Travellers will be provided with the opportunities to reach their full potential and take their rightful places in society because at the moment too many young Travellers never get to realise their potential because of the all of the barriers and obstacles that have been put in their way.”

Keeping the Promise Alive

No student ever earns a degree solely for his or her own benefit. As McGinley says, “the knock-on effect of one person going to university is massive.” She mentions that friends and relatives who “would never have seen themselves as being university material before” are now starting to envision, third-level learning as doable. “When someone goes first and others see that it is okay, it encourages them to go, too.”

On a personal level, she says, there is also “the pride it instils in families and communities to see their own attending university. My mother feels such pride now and cannot believe she has children that went to university. I am delighted to know that she has stories of success to tell people when she is on the bus to work.”

Scholarships Matter

Asked why scholarships matter, O’Rourke says: “When we think of philanthropy or scholarships in general I think we miss the point a little bit. It is just about altruism, or is it actually about investing in a society that we want to participate in?”

“For me, it’s about a society in which we role-model what we expect from others, and where we’re investing not just in somebody’s education but also in our children’s and grandchildren’s education, because it’s an investment into society across the board.”

He concludes: “I think it is important for donors to connect what their money means for students who are able to access education on a scholarship. It is fundamentally a contribution to society, not to an individual alone. Because any educated person has the capacity to make better decisions, and better decisions can only have a net positive effect on society.”

The donation you make today impacts the quality of our world tomorrow. To show your support for broadening access to NUI Galway, please visit www.guf.ie

Johnny O’Rourke, NUI Galway Access Graduate and Award Nominee, with Professor Blaženka Divjak – Head of Department for Quantitative Methods, Faculty of Organization and Informatics, University of Zagreb, Croatia.

Hannagh McGinley, NUI Galway Access Graduate and Award Recipient, with Mr Jamie Merisotis, President/CEO of Lumina Foundation, USA.

Joyce McGreevy, BA ‘80, travels full time while writing about education, travel, and culture. Find her on Facebook or at joycemcgreevy@mac.om
Five renowned individuals became NUI Galway Honorary Graduates during the academic year. Their names join those of previous honorees, including the late Nelson Mandela, Hillary Clinton, Margaret Atwood, Anjelica Huston and Enya.

- Marie Mullen, actor and Druid Theatre co-founder. Doctor of Arts, 10 June 2016.
- Brendan Flynn, Clifden Arts Festival Director. Doctor of Laws, 10 June 2016.
- ConTempo, classical quartet, awarded jointly to Andreea Baniu, Adrian Mantu, Ingrid Nicola and Bogdan Sofei. Doctor of Music, 10 June 2016.
The Alumni Awards Gala Banquet took place in the Bailey Allen Hall, NUI Galway on Saturday, March 5, 2016. The awards were presented to six outstanding individuals.

Alumni Award for Arts, Literature and Celtic Studies – sponsored by AIB Siobhán Ni Ghadhra, Owner/Producer at Danú Media.

Alumni Award for Business and Commerce – sponsored by Bank of Ireland, Ruth Curran, Managing Partner in MERC Partners and Global Chair IIC Partners.

Alumni Award for Law, Public Policy and Government – sponsored by Galway University Foundation Dr Mathilda Twomey, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the Seychelles.

Alumni Award for Engineering, Science and Technology – sponsored by Aramark, Gearóid Faherty, Former CEO and Chairman of Eurand NV.

Alumni Award for Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences – sponsored by Medtronic, Professor Joe Murray, Professor of Medicine and Consultant, Division of Gastroenterology and Hepatology, Mayo Clinic.

Alumni Award for Contribution to Sport – sponsored by Bank of Ireland, Dr Paul Hession, Olympic and world champion sprinter and junior doctor in Tallaght hospital.

1: Back row (l-r): Dr. Paul Hession, recipient of the Alumni Award for Contribution to Sport; Gearóid Faherty, recipient of the Alumni Award for Engineering, Science and Technology and Dr. Joe Murray, recipient of the Alumni Award for Medicine, Nursing and Health Science; and Front row (l-r): Ruth Curran, recipient of the Alumni Award for Business and Commerce, Siobhán Ni Ghadhra, recipient of the Alumni Award for Arts, Literature and Celtic Studies; and Dr. Mathilda Twomey, recipient of the Alumni Award for Law, Public Policy and Government.

2: Dr. Ann Ryan and Liz McConnell

3: Catherine Cunningham, Liz Lacey, Dr. Ken Scally, Laura O’Donoghue and Emer Murphy of Medtronic.

4: Eoin, Geraldine and Paul Hession

5: Dr. John Breslin and Josephine Griffith

6: The Alumni Award for Engineering, Science and Technology was presented to Gearóid Faherty (third from right). Also pictured are, from left, Cormac and Muireann Faherty, Monica Doyle, Anne Kerrien and James O’Reilly.

7: Professor Donal Leech and Elaine Quinlan

8: Dr. Edward Jones and Mairin Gilvarry
9: Deputy Mayor Neil McNelis and Aideen McNelis
10: Ger and Mike Heskin
11: Annabel Munson and Patrick Reilly
12: Caroline Loughnane and Dr. Richard Pearson
13: John and Clare Fallon
14: Martin and Marina Hughes
15: Hugh and Olivia Hamrock, PJ and Mary Kavanagh and Margaret and Dave Barry, Bank of Ireland
16: NUI Galway President Dr. Jim Browne, Pádraig Ó Céidigh, Dr. Eamon Gilmore and Dr. Iognáid Ó Muircheartaigh
17: Ms. Justice Carmel Stewart of the High Court, Ms. Máire Whelan, SC, Attorney General, Professor Donncha O’Connell, Head of the School of Law, Dr. Mathilda Twomey, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the Seychelles and Ms. Justice Mary Faherty of the High Court. All pictured with Prof O’Connell are Alumni Award winners.
18: Will Leahy, Rachel Leahy, Caroline Murphy and Sean O’Rourke
ALUMNI EVENTS

Alumni Relations has held 24 events since the last edition of Cois Coiribe, comprising of 16 national events and eight international events, including New York, Boston, Chicago, San Francisco and London. You can see a snapshot of some of these events here.

Update your details with us at alumni@nuigalway.ie to be kept up to date with events in your area.
ALUMNI EVENTS

Mary Ferry and John O'Connor (BA 1966 graduates), Cumann Caoga Bliain Reunion, Galway, May 11, 2016.


Medical graduates from 1966 (L-R): Louis Byrne, Gus O’Gorman and Brendan Murphy along with their families. Cumann Caoga Bliain Reunion, Galway, May 11, 2016.

Alumni Golf Outing winners (L-R) Tom Cunningham, Carmel Browne, Iognáid O Muircheartaigh, Peter Crampton and Chris Curtin, Galway, July 2, 2016.

Retired NUI Galway graduates from Fáilte Ireland on a visit to the NUI Galway Campus with Brian Geraghty (BA 1961, H Dip in Ed 1962), May 31, 2016.

NUI Galway graduates with Dr. Jim Browne at the San Francisco Gala Dinner 2016 honouring one of the world’s greatest philanthropists, Chuck Feeney.
ALUMNI EVENTS

The 1975 Fitzgibbon Cup hurling team, gathered in the College Bar, NUI Galway, for the 40th Anniversary of their win, November 13, 2015.

Bernard McGuinness, Una Casserly and Ciaran O’Flaherty at the Irish Embassy in Atlanta, April 12, 2016.


Some of our alumni gathered at the Dublin Alumni Christmas Gathering, December 8, 2015.


ALUMNI EVENTS

Shannon College graduates with Dr. Philip Smyth at the Irish Consulate Alumni Event, New York, November 17, 2015.

NUI Galway graduates at the Irish Consulate Alumni Event, New York, November 17, 2015.

Dr Joseph D’Alton chats to graduates at the Boston Alumni Event, Brae Burn Country Club, May 6, 2016.

NUI Galway graduates with Aisling Nolan, Alumni Relations Officer, at the Boston Alumni Event in Boston on May 6, 2016.


Boston Alumni event at the Brae Burn Country Club, May 6, 2016.
1930s

A Anne Byrne, BComm 1936
We were honoured to welcome one of our oldest living graduates back to the Quadrangle – 101 year old, Anne Byrne (née Gannon) – pictured opposite with her daughter and fellow graduate, Una. Anne studied Arts and Commerce – one of two Longford County Scholars – and she graduated in 1936.

She was taught Latin by Professor Margaret Heavey, Irish by an 101lamh Tomás Ó Maille, Commerce by Professor Liam Ó Buachalla and Maths by Professor Eoghan McKenna.

She emigrated to England in 1939 – two days before World War II started – and later worked with the Readers' Digest Educational Service in New York.

1950s

Prof. Pauline Murphy, BComm 1956, HDip in Ed 1957
Professor Murphy’s family organised an 80th birthday party for her during the summer for which they had resurrected several photos from UCG, including one of her BComm graduation class sharing a joke with An t-Ollamh Liam Ó Buachalla! Journeys to Galway have been frequent for her over the decades, including one when Colm Ó hEocha was president. She recently attended an Alumni event with her daughter, Maeve. She is now Emerita Professor in University of Ulster.

1960s

B Patrick J. Hennelly, BA 1966, HDip in Education
Patrick J. Hennelly retired as Career Guidance Counsellor at Loreto College, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath in 2009. He is married to Noreen O'Brien of Skibbereen, Co. Cork, and they have three sons.

C On Tuesday, May 31, some of our alumni and their colleagues from Faíite Ireland made a visit to NUI Galway. They had a tour of the University, met with President Jim Browne and finished their day with lunch on campus. Pictured opposite is the group headed by Brian Geraghty BA 1961, with Dr Browne and the Student Ambassadors in the Quadrangle, NUI Galway.

Perry Lydon, MB BCH BAO 1967
Perry lives in Victoria BC, Canada. He continues to work as a psychiatrist with a special interest in Adult ADHD and this has been a very rewarding career. Perry expects to retire shortly and continue his interest in writing and gold-panning. He has his own placer gold claim on Lost Creek near Jordan River on Vancouver Island in Western Canada and welcomes NUI Galway graduates to come and try their luck!

Anthony J. Dougherty, MB BCH BAO 1960
Anthony is living in West Hartford, CT, USA. Opposite is a photo of him on his 84th birthday along with one of his sons, Patrick.

Professor John P Collins, MB BCH BAO 1964, MCH 1979, MD 1994
After a career as an academic general surgeon with a focus on breast disease and medical education, Professor Collins has now retired. He recently enrolled for a PhD at the University of Auckland looking at the attitudes of surgeons and the experiences of patients in the 19th century – using breast cancer management as the model. Currently John is a Visiting Research Professor at the University of Oxford, Visiting Fellow at Green Templeton College Oxford and Visiting Professor at the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland. He says: “My time as an undergraduate student in Galway was the happiest period of my life. I had some outstanding teachers and an excellent medical education.”

Dr Eoin Ó Dochartaigh, MB BCH BAO 1966 and Niamh Ó Dochartaigh (née Ni Nualláin) BA 1965 celebrated their golden wedding anniversary in the Ardilaun Hotel with family and friends this year. The pair married while still at University and worked together in Eoin’s medical practice.

Dr Tom O’Connell MB BCH BAO 1969 has been living and working in Muehlberg, Germany, for the past 44 years. In Germany, he further qualified as an anaesthetist and worked in that profession for 18 years. Since then he has been working as a psychotherapist. At the age of 72, he is still working seven hours a day seven days a week. If anyone from the Class of 1969 would like to get in contact with Dr. O’ Connolly, he has forwarded us his email address for contact: dr-tom-oconnolly@t-online.de

1970s

Fran O’Rourke BA 1971, MA 1974
Fran O’Rourke retired in June as Professor of Philosophy from University College Dublin, where he taught for 36 years. The Irish Academic Press recently published a volume of his essays, entitled Aristotelian Interpretations. With Ireland’s leading classical guitarist, John Feeley, he released last year a CD of Irish songs associated with James Joyce, recorded at a St Patrick’s Day concert hosted by the Princess Grace Irish Library in Monaco. In June 2012, Fran and John gave a recital for NUI Galway alumni in Newman House, Dublin. John Feeley played the guitar once owned by James Joyce. Fran may be contacted at orourke@ucc.ie. Pictured with President Michael D. Higgins and John Feeley.

D Dorothy/Dorothea Melvin, BA 1974, HDip in Ed 1975
Co-Founder and MD of the Galway Family Planning Clinic, Dorothy lives in Dún Laoghaire. Married to Gerald Dawe – poet, professor and fellow of TCD.

Ruth O’Donnell, BA 1973
Ruth O’Donnell studied illustration at the Institute St Luc, Brussels, from 1986 to 1990 and went on to specialise in printmaking and watercolour. She joined Graphic Studio Dublin in 1991 and has been working and exhibiting consistently in Ireland and internationally for the past 25 years.

Her still life imagery focuses on salient details of pattern and form while referencing art history and literary sources as well as her own preoccupations. Recent exhibitions include Alt is not lost, in the Graphic Studio Gallery, 2016 (solo exhibition), Finders and Keepers, an exhibition of artworks from the State Art Collection, DLR Lexicon, Dún Laoghaire, and the Watercolour Society of Ireland Annual Exhibition (winner of Adams Award), 2015. In 2014, she was artist in residence in the Centre Culturel Irlandais in Paris for three months.

Victor Laing, BA 1978
Victor Laing joined the Defence Forces in 1974 as a cadet and was commissioned in 1976 when he was posted to Collins Barracks, Cork. He served in various appointments at home and abroad until he was posted to Army Headquarters as a staff officer in the Military Archives in 1986. He was appointed Officer in Charge in 1999, a position he held until his retirement from the Defence Forces in 2012. A graduate in History from NUI Galway and Post Graduate Archival Studies from UCD. He is joint editor with Dr Michael Kennedy of The Irish Defence Forces 1940-1949 The Chief of Staff’s Reports, published by the Irish Manuscripts Commission in 2011.

On Monday 25 April, Victor was honoured by University College Dublin with the Degree of Doctor of Laws, honoris causa, for distinction in modern Irish History, in particular through the development and preservation of archives relating to military history for the period 1910-1923.

David Jackson, BSc 1979, PhD
Upon the completion of his PhD at NUI Galway, David completed both post-doctoral research on copepods, including an Ireland–France co-operative study. He spent five years working at the Shellfish Research Laboratory in Carna before joining the Department of Marine in 1990, as Manager of the Aquaculture Section in the Marine Institute. He has over 100 publications, including peer reviewed papers in high impact journals. Dr Jackson is currently leading EU funded research into improving the administration and regulation of aquaculture. He is co-chair of the International Council for Exploration of the Seas (ICES) expert group on aquaculture.

Mary Johnston, BA 1970, HDip 1971
Mary has been living in Trelawny since 1980 but says her heart ever remains in her beloved native Galway. She has returned to campus but with her now 13-year old grandson. He was very impressed with the campus and Mary hopes that he will one day attend Galway as a student like his grandparents and her son, Niall.

Eamon Gilmore BA 1976, MA (HD) 1999 was awarded an Honorary Degree of Doctor of Arts at the recent conferring in NUI Galway. She co-founded Druid Theatre with Garry Hynes and Mick Lally in 1975 and remains one of its leading corps of actors. She has appeared in many of the company’s most celebrated performances and has won numerous awards for her work, including the 1998 Tony Award for Best Actress in a play for Martin McDonagh’s The Beauty Queen of Leenane; the 2012 Alumni Award for Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies from NUI Galway; and the Special Tribute Award at the Irish Times Theatre Awards in 2013, for her “immense contribution to Irish theatre”.

Marie Mullen BA 1974, MA (HD) 1999 was an ICES expert group on aquaculture. Dr Jackson is currently leading EU funded research into improving the administration and regulation of aquaculture. He is co-chair of the International Council for Exploration of the Seas (ICES) expert group on aquaculture.
Congratulations to Colonel Maureen O’Brien BSc 1980, HDipEd 1981, who has become the first woman to be promoted to colonel in the Defence Forces.

Speaking to fellow NUI Galway graduate Sean O’Rourke, Col O’Brien spoke about her new role and encouraging women to enter the Defence Forces. She takes up the position of Director of Communications and Information Services.

She graduated from University College, Galway with a Bachelor of Science and Higher Diploma in Education, before being awarded a Cadetship in the Defence Forces in 1981.

1980s
Dr. Mary C. (Marie) Kelly, BA 1988
Dr Kelly is Professor of History at Franklin Pierce University in New Hampshire. Her recent book, *Ireland’s Great Famine in Irish-American History*, is published by Rowman & Littlefield and she is currently researching Irish-American engagement with 1916-era nationalism. She was honoured with the Holyoke, MA, St. Patrick’s Day Ambassador Award for 2016 for her work to promote expanded cultural relations between Ireland and the United States.

Kieran Whyte, MB BCh BA 1988
Kieran completed the full Challenge Galway triathlon, including the 3.8k swim, 180k bike distance and 42k run, in a time of 12.38 despite wet and windy conditions. Well done Kieran!

Dan Harvey, BComm 1983
Dan is a serving officer in the Irish Defence Forces, with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. His 39 years of service to date have involved him in a variety of operations both at home and overseas. An author of eight books on the Defence Forces and having been involved in major incidents on overseas peacekeeping service, he has lately broadened his topics to include the wider field of Irish military heritage.

Professor Mike Hartnett, BE 1987
Mike was the recipient of the Excellence in Marine Research Award at this year’s Marine Industry Awards. The Award was sponsored by the Marine Institute and was presented by the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Michael Creed. Mike is married to Cathleen (Cunningham) (BComm 1981) and lives in Salthill.

Kelebone Leisanyane, BEng 1984
We were delighted to welcome BEng 1984 alumnus Kelebone Leisanyane back to campus. Kelebone is Chief Executive Officer in Lesotho National Development Corporation. He met with his former lecturer and now President of NUI Galway Dr. Jim Browne on his trip to NUI Galway on Friday, April 8, 2016.

Aedhmar Hynes, BA 1986
Aedhmar was announced as one of the 50 most influential people in PR in PRWeek’s Power List 2016. Aedhmar is the CEO of Text 100, a global PR firm based in New York.

Helen Ryan (BE 1985, Alumni Award 2014) and Gearoid Faherty (BSc 1981, MSC 1985, Alumni Award 2015) have helped create 20 jobs in Galway with their investment in Nai Technologies, an innovative materials technology company based in NUI Galway’s Business Innovation Centre.

Congratulations to two of our graduates, Fiona Lydon, Solicitor (BA, 1988, LLB, 1990) and David Waters (BA, 1994, LLB, 1996) on their nominations by the Government for appointment as judges of the District Court.

1990s
Karen of Kennys Bookshop was delighted to pick up The Marketing Institute’s All Ireland Small Business Marketing Award for 2016. Karen is granddaughter of founders Des (BA 1939) and Maureen (BComm 1939) Kenny. Pictured opposite at the 2016 All Ireland Marketing Awards Dinner at the Hilton Hotel in Dublin was Karen Golden of Kennys Bookshop and Ann Walsh, MSc Marketing Practice Programme Director at NUI Galway.

Thomas Flynn, BA 1998, HDip in Ed, 1999
Thomas is currently teaching children with dyslexia the skill and tool of mind mapping. He is also an examiner of English, and continues to take an active role in the field of education.

John B Staunton cycled stage 20 of this year’s Tour de France, the day before the professionals. He rode the gruelling 144km route, which climbs over 4,000m through the Alps. After completing the ride, JB said: “In a bizarre way the ride reminded me of the three years I spent cycling from Salthill to college! However it wasn’t any way near as flat and of course it didn’t rain, which is always a bonus”.

JB has lived in the UK since his graduation and works for Dulux paints. He lives in Berkshire with his wife, Louise, and children, John-Cameron (8) and Erin (7).

Aris Munardan, MSc Hydrology, 1992
Aris is living in Indonesia currently and has great memories of Galway.

Gillian McGarry, BA 1993
Gillian was recently married to Billy Weir, in St. Isidore’s, Rome, by Fr Michael MacCraith, who is known to many as Professor of Irish.

Fergal Kearns, BA 1993, MIT 1995
Who is known to many as Professor of Irish, Fergal and his wife, Janet, welcomed a new addition to the family, Thomas Gregory Jaesun, in 2015. Fergal is currently living in Atlanta, Georgia.

Tom Rowan, BEng 1994, Higher Diploma in Business Studies, 1995
Tom Rowan of Rowan Engineering can now boast about having three civil engineers that have proudly qualified from NUI Galway! From left to right: Morgan Duggan (1995), Tom Rowan (1994) and Conor Whelan (2010). All three represented NUI Galway in various sports as students: Morgan Duggan – GAA (freshers cup but refused to get up for Sigerson Cup training at 7am for Tony Regan), Tom Rowan – Soccer (Collingwood Cup 1994-1996) and Conor Whelan – Rugby (2006-2007).

Tom would love to organise a reunion in Galway with the rest of the people from 1990-1996, including the Civil Engineering and the Higher Diploma in Business Studies classes. His email is tom.rowan@rec.ie if anyone would like to get in touch.

Lisa Chambers, BA 1997, LLB 1999
Lisa is an Irish financial services lawyer with more than 16 years’ experience in private practice and in-house at top tier organisations, including Matheson Solicitors, Man GLS, State Street Global Advisors Ireland Limited and HSBC Bank plc. She gained diverse international exposure from advising global clients and living in Ireland, the UK, France, Italy and the U.S. She is happy to speak to alumni who wish to explore the non-traditional sectors of legal practice.

Olive Loughnane, BComm 1996
Former Alumni Award winner, Olive Loughnane has finally received her World Championship gold medal for race-walking, after being upgraded from her 2009 silver medal. Well done Olive!

John Breslin BE 1994, PhD 2002
John was awarded the Information Technology Association of Galway Excellence award for outstanding contribution to the ICT sector in April 2016. This ITAG excellence award is conferred on an individual or organisation that has made a measurable, sustained and lasting contribution to the development of the Galway or West of Ireland region as an IT/software hub of international renown. John is Director of the Galway City Innovation District as well as being a senior lecturer in Electronic Engineering at NUI Galway.

Senator Rónán Mullen BA 1991
Rónan retained his Senate seat, having been elected to Seanad Eireann on the National Universities of Ireland panel.

Julie Spillane BE 1991, Diploma in Business Studies 1992
Julie is a senior leader in the technology industry who is heading up the new Accenture Centre for Innovation in Dublin. Already employing over 100 people from 20 different countries, the Accenture Centre for Innovation provides exciting opportunities for those looking to develop careers in innovation.

Fintan Monahan HDip Ed ’93
Pope Francis has appointed Fr Fintan Monahan as the new Bishop of Killaloe.

2000s
Renaud Brisset, B Eng in BEng in Mechanical Engineering 2003
After spending three years living in Letterkenny and Galway, Renaud moved back to France on graduation. He has been working as a HVAC engineer in Grenoble since 2006.

Michael Gilmore, BA Public & Social Policy 2011
Michael says: ‘Studying at NUI Galway was a highly memorable and rewarding experience, which equipped me with the competitive skillset needed to succeed in business, both in Ireland and the United Arab Emirates. Having graduated with an honours Bachelor’s Degree in Economics, I gained a rich insight into how legal, political and economic systems function globally.

Dr Grace McHugh, MB BCh BA 2002.
Grace is currently living in Harare, Zimbabwe. She is working as a physician treating adolescents and adults living with HIV. Dr McHugh has been living in Zimbabwe for the past seven years and enjoys the people and the opportunity to work at the centre of the HIV epidemic in Sub-Saharan Africa. For the past two years she has been doing an MD through NUI Galway using the work that she does on a day-to-day basis here—with the aim of highlighting the challenges of adolescents living with HIV.

She says: ‘It has been great to collaborate with my alma mater on my experiences overseas.’

Killian Collins, BEng in Mechanical Engineering 2007
Killian is currently working at Suncorp Bank in Australia - Customer Value Specialist. He married Valerie in 2014, whom he met in Galway in 2008. Valerie is expecting the couple’s first baby this year.
CLASS NOTES

Peter J. Carr RN, Dip HE Nurs, H Dip & A&E Spec Nurs, BSc (Hons), MMedSc (Health Informatics) PhD
Candiate and lecturer in Emergency Medicine. Peter is from NUI Galway’s inaugural class MMedSc Health Informatics 2008-2010. For more information, please see www.communitynews.com.au/guardian-

Marion Rose McFadden, Diploma 2012
McFadden is an artist and author with an interest in technology. Last year she launched The Sunbeam Path, a children’s Interactive fairy story in both Irish and English, with versions also available for Kindle and print. It is the first time this type of animated interactive iBook has been offered in Irish and it is a delightful whimsy, ful of quirky characters. Marion Rose has recently completed New Frontiers Phase I with her new initiative Ushirish, which networks Irish artists.

Elaine Dobbin, BA 2001 and HDip in Ed 2004
Elaine was married to a fellow graduate and member of the Hardiman Library staff, Jonathan Richardson, on campus in August 2015. She is a teacher in St Joseph’s Patrician College, the ‘Bish’, in Galway and is also on the national executive of INTOE (Irish National Organisation for Teachers of English). While a student, she was Lit’n’Deb Auditor (2000-2001) and editor of the college newspaper the same year.

Orna Joyce, LLM 2012
Orna has been working in the Philippines for two years. Since her arrival, she has worked across three UN agencies (UNHCR, UNOCHA and UNICEF) and two NGOs (Liter of Light and Relief International). Focusing on protection, non-state actors and indigenous peoples, she has contributed to humanitarian efforts in the post typhoon response and in Mindanao where the world’s two longest running conflicts are ongoing. She says: ‘This is a country of incredible beauty, the most wonderful people (very Irish in character), and immense opportunity. If anyone would like to know more, please don’t hesitate to contact me.’

Maire T. Robinson, MO 2008
Her debut novel, Skin, Paper, Stone, was nominated for the inaugural Annie McHale Award earlier this year. The book is set in contemporary Galway City, and eagle-eyed readers will recognise some familiar locations as a number of scenes take place on campus at NUI Galway. We look forward to reading it!

Martina is working in Dublin as a Group Financial Accountant for Markland.

Ann Walshe, BComm 2002 and HDip in Education 2003
Ann went on to train as a primary school teacher. She lives in Roscommon and is on the teaching staff at Brusna NS, Ballaghaderreen.

Aisling Arwen Scott, BA 2003, MA 2004
Aisling got married to Paul McNally on the 23 June 2016, in Brigit’s Garden, Co. Galway in a Celtic Handfasting Ceremony. She is working in the Access Office and Disability Office, NUI Galway.

Peter Horgan, MA Journalism 2011
Since graduating, Peter worked for the Munster Express and the Cork Independent. He was then hired as Account Director in CAMEO Communications before being appointed as Policy & Communications Advisor for Minister Seán Sherlock TD in the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and innovation and then the Department of Foreign Affairs. He is currently a Parliamentary Communications and Policy Advisor to Deputy Seán Sherlock in the areas of Public Expenditure & Reform and Communication, Climate Change and Natural Resources.

Niamh Lynch, BA 2004
Last summer, after 10 years in Spain, Niamh swapped the blue skies of Barcelona for the slightly more grey ones of Galway. She says: ‘It’s been a bit of a change and life in Galway as an entrepreneur, business owner and mother is a bit different to life as a student!’ She owns a digital strategy agency – niamhly.com - that helps businesses perfect their online ecosystem.

Karen J McDonnell, BA 2013
Karen’s degree is in Classics, History and Creative Writing. She had the opportunity to broaden her experiences last year, taking a diploma in radio production, while continuing to write. Most recently she was published in Poetry Northern Ireland’s Anthology for Holocaust Memorial Day 2016, and The Stony Thursday Book.

Charlie Carlisle, BSc 2011
Charlie would like to extend a warm welcome to all from the Class of Earth and Ocean Sciences 2011. He says: ‘If you are looking to see Canada, be sure to stop by Halifax, Nova Scotia, and say hello’. 

Nora-Jane Noone BSc 2004
Featured in the three times Oscar nominated blockbuster, Brooklyn, as Eilis’ {lovelorn} roommate Sheila. Nora-Jane is a Galway native, hailing from just up the road in Newcastle.

Peter Mannon BSc 2006
Sing ‘n’ Tonics are the alumni choir who under the direction of Peter won the National Chamber Choir Title at the Cork Choral Festival. Their prize is named after another NUI Galway alumnus, John Mannion. They have also had successes, second place in the ‘Make Me Smile’ section of the Killarney Choral Festival and winning the ‘Special Entertainment Award’ at the same festival.

Dr Carina Ginty M. Litt Education 2014
is the author of the Captain Cillian Learning Adventures www.captaincillian.com, which has become an international sensation for children’s books that has an Irish theme (an actual Irish adventure, like surfing in Sligo) and learning the Irish language. Her husband, John O’Connor (Postgraduate Diploma e-Business Analysis 2014), illustrates the books. Carina lives in Galway and also works at GMIT in the summer in Boston as a participant in the NUI Galway Summer Internship Programme, now in its third year.

James McCrudden BSc 2012
Country Markets Ireland will be celebrating its 70th anniversary in 2017 and the current President/Chair is James McCrudden. BSc 2012, a graduate from the BSc in Rural Development. James completed his BSc with NUI Galway part-time and this directly links with his work now with Country Markets Ireland.

Lisa Chambers BComm 2007
was elected to the Dáil as a TD for Mayo representing Fianna Fáil in the 2016 General Election.

Erika Fox BComm 2013
was named one of the Irish Central ‘Top 40 Digital Influencers’ in the U.S. Erika works full time in New York City on her fashion and lifestyle blog ‘Retro Flame’.

Ruth Cormican BA Law 2014
was awarded a Fulbright Scholarship to the University of Notre Dame to study for an LLM in International Human Rights Law. Ruth will also be spending the summer in Boston as a participant in the NUI Galway Law School of - Suffolk University Law School Summer Internship Programme, now in its third year.

Dami Adabari BA 2012
former VP for Welfare in the SU secured a job with CRU as a marketing Executive in Dubai.

Ian Corless BA 2013
was recently awarded a Fulbright Scholarship, and moved to Washington, D.C. this August to teach Irish in The Catholic University of America.

Stefaan Verbruggen, BE 2009 and Jack Stenson, MBS 2009 got married in the Aula Maxima in July 2016. Their wedding was the first same sex marriage on campus and was held in the Aula Maxima.

Paul McMahon MA, 2008
his debut poetry chapbook, Bourdon, is being published this November by Southword Editions. Over the last few years he has won 35 poetry awards, short-listings, and commendations, including first prize in The Keats-Shelley Poetry Prize (2015).
Ireland 1916-2016: The Promise and Challenge of National Sovereignty
Éire 1916-2016: Dóchas agus Dúshlán na Ceannasachta Náisiúnta

A major national 1916-2016 academic conference with contributions from home and abroad.

NUI Galway will host a 1916-2016 conference from 10-12 November 2016 with academic contributions from a broad range of Ireland’s universities and institutes of technology, as well as from a number of leading international figures.

www.nuigalway.ie/anationrising
www.ireland.ie
Mike Williams, 1947-2015
Charismatic geologist who breathed life into the past

Mike Williams, who died in July 2015, was a charismatic geology professor whose enthusiasm took him a long way from dry tomes and dusty lecture halls.

He was happiest climbing cliff faces and exploring deserted beaches. A Welshman who settled on Ireland’s Atlantic coast, his sense of wonder at the natural world was infectious.

Through his teaching at NUI Galway and the fieldwork he undertook, Williams showed that the process of change and renewal in the earth’s crust was constant.

On finding a 7,500-year-old drowned forest on the northern shores of Galway Bay, its ancient tree trunks exposed by storms, he observed a continuum of change. The forest died because the water had cooled, and the sea level had risen, and the cycle of change went on.

Williams taught his students to cross boundaries into other disciplines. Specialism was important, he insisted, but so too were curiosity and perspective.

Tsunamis

After the earthquake in the Indian Ocean in 2004, when the ensuing tidal waves killed 230,000, Williams warned that Ireland too could be vulnerable to a tsunami. A volcano near Las Palmas, if it erupted, could send a huge wave in our direction.

The effects of the Lisbon earthquake in 1755 had been felt in the Corrib when parts of the Spanish Arch were knocked away, he noted. After that, when major weather events occurred, the Irish media looked at the ‘tsunami professor’ Mike Williams for comment.

But observing change measured in geological time, he was seen as challenging the ‘received wisdom’ that climate change, as we know it today, is caused by man’s recent behaviour over a much shorter time scale, and thus could be reversed.

This led some to accuse him of being a ‘climate change denier’, but for others, such accusations were a measure of how polarised that debate has become.

Passion for Theatre

A great passion was the theatre, and he appeared in early Druid Theatre productions in Galway including Famine, Dial M for Murder, and A Doll’s House. But acting couldn’t be counted on to pay the mortgage or feed hungry mouths, so the lecture theatre remained his stage, while students also recall his presentational flair when on digs.

His colleague Tiernan Henry put it thus: ‘Mike could read and talk a landscape back into being and he could hold multiple eras of history, geology and geography in plain sight all at the same time.’

At his retirement as Professor of Earth and Ocean Sciences in 2012, Williams noted that his published research had attracted numerous scathing comments from all over the world – ‘and that’s just the way I like it,’ he added.

Williams died of cancer in a bed that, like much of the furniture in the family home, he had made for himself. Among his other pastimes were playing the violin, travel, writing poetry and baking bread. His body was donated for medical research.

He is survived by his widow, Margaret, and by his mother, Edelia (Del), his children, Rebecca (Gilbert), Daniel, Tom, Sian, Gareth, Gwilym and Meg, and his brothers Martin and Richard.

by Tiernan Henry and John Murray
REST IN PEACE

2015

Mr Christopher Hannon, BA 1964
Dr Richard O’Connell, MB BCh BAO 1966
Mr Niall Tomkins, BSc 2002
Ms Brid Langford, BA 1956
Dr Ross O’Driscoll, BA 1979, MB BCh BAO 1986

2016

Mr Maurice Mullins, BSc 1965
Mr Sean MacSweeney, BComm 1954
Mr Declan Wall, BA 1996
Ms Brigid Mullins, MSc 2008
Mr Dermot Lyne, BA 1964
Mr Canice Clarke, BSc 1974
Mrs Orla Ruthledge, BComm 1963
Mr Kieran Dooley, LLB 1978
Mrs Caítriona Loughnane, BSc 1963
Rev Andrew Johnson, HDip in Ed 1974
Ms Agnes O’Laoghaire, DipWS 1996
Mr Michael Cummins, BA 1936
Mrs Kathleen Long, BA 1946
Dr James Dunne, LLB 1991
Mr PJ Mara, Galway University Foundation Board Member 2005-2016
Comdt (Rtd) Liam Ó Coinne, Galway University Foundation Board Member 2003-2016
Mrs Maureen Hancock, BSc 1937
Professor Martin Carroll, BA 1958
Ms Claire Timmins, Dip Gaelige 2010
Professor Seán Lavelle, Retired from College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences (Experimental Medicine)
Professor Dick Butler, Retired from College of Science (Chemistry)
Professor Martin McHug, Retired from College of Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies (Psychology)
Professor Padraic Keane, Retired from College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences (Anaesthetics)
Dr Christy O’Connor Jr, D. Arts, honour’s causa 2006
Dr Christy O’Connor Sr, D. Arts, honour’s causa 2006
Comdt (Rtd) Dave Hyland, BA 1972
Dr Wilfred Albuquerque, MB BCh BAO 1963
Mr Joe McDonagh, BA 1975
Mr Séamus Ó Géidigh, BA 1980
Professor Mike Williams, Dip 1996 Retired from Earth and Ocean Sciences
Mr Leo Mattimoe, BA, LLB 1969, HDip in Ed 1970, Dip 2009
Mr Jim Woods, BE 1940
Mrs Maureen Hancock, BSc 1937
Mrs Briga Murphy, BComm 1933
Mr James Faherty, BComm 1983
Professor Aongus Curran, MB BAO BCh 1988 MD 1998

Rest in Peace
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Whether you are at home or abroad, we would love to hear where life has taken you. Reconnect with your alma mater and join us at one of our upcoming events and reunions across the world!

The achievements and successes of our alumni as leaders, decision makers, innovators, entrepreneurs, teachers and volunteers are some of the reasons why our graduates make us proud. Your story will inspire our students. Get in touch. We’re only 11 digits away.

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Visit us Gate Lodge, University Rd, NUI Galway
“ONLY A LIFE LIVED FOR OTHERS IS A LIFE WORTHWHILE.”

Albert Einstein

At NUI Galway we take the greatest pride in YOU, our alumni, and your achievements. We know that while we can’t take all the credit, your time here certainly helped put you on the right path. Now we are asking for your help to give someone else that same start. The Alumni Fund at NUI Galway has been supporting Student Scholarships since its inception, giving disadvantaged but deserving, talented young people the chance to reach their full potential...please consider giving something back and change a life forever.

To support the Alumni Fund at NUI Galway, please complete and return the donation form accompanying the magazine. To make an online donation visit www.guf.ie or call +353 91 493536.