



NUI Galway  
OÉ Gaillimh

## Sustainability

### *Terms of Reference*

April 2020

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# Introduction

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The NUI Galway Sustainability Strategy 2017-2020 sets out a vision of establishing the university as a leading, green, smart and healthy campus. The Strategy was developed by the Community and University Sustainability Partnership (CUSP) team following a yearlong comprehensive and inclusive engagement process with the campus community. The NUI Galway Strategic Plan 2020-2025 commits to build on the work of CUSP to embed sustainability in our culture, operational policies and governance structures and empower our communities to be champions of sustainability. As a signatory to the SDG Accord, NUI Galway commits to embed the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into our education, research, leadership, operations, administration and engagement activities.



The **Community and University Sustainability Officer Role (SO)**, the **Community and University Sustainability Partnership (CUSP) General Board**, the **CUSP Executive Board** and the **University Sustainability Advisory Board** have been established to progress and embed the sustainability vision of the university. The **CUSP General Board** serves as an advisory function to the **Deputy President & Registrar** through the **University Sustainability Advisory Board**. The **CUSP Executive Board** represents the **CUSP General Board** on the **University Sustainability Advisory Board**. The **SO** reports to the **Deputy President & Registrar** and directly supports the **CUSP General Board**, the **University Sustainability Advisory Board** and the **CUSP Executive Board** on all matters relating to campus sustainability - see *Figure 1 NUI Galway CUSP Structure*. The following document sets out the work plan and reporting structure of the **SO** and the purpose, organisation and membership of the **CUSP General Board**, the **University Sustainability Advisory Board** and the **CUSP Executive Board**. A five year review will be conducted, led by international experts in sustainability in third level institutions.

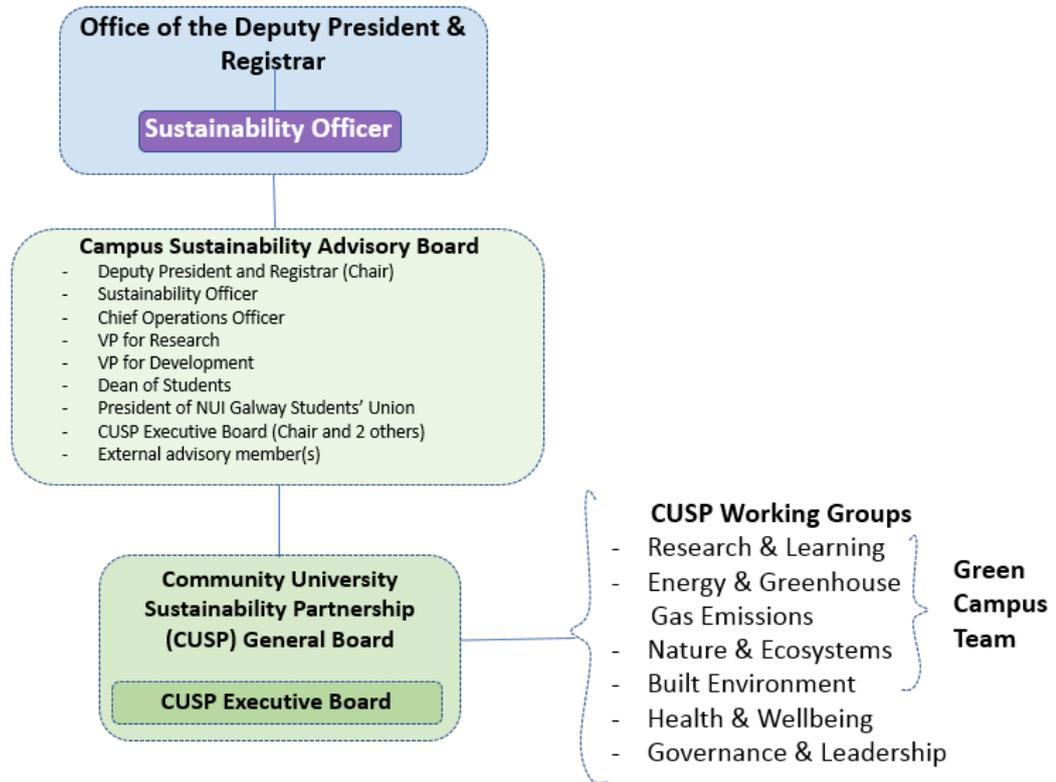


Figure 1 NUI Galway CUSP Structure

# University Sustainability Advisory Board

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## *Purpose*

- Provide strategic oversight of the University's commitment to sustainability as detailed in *NUI Galway Strategic Plan 2020-2025* and the SDG Accord
- As a signatory to the SDG Accord, demonstrate leadership in sustainability by aligning all major efforts with the SDGs, including education, research, operations, administration and engagement activities.
- Support the development and implementation of the NUI Galway Sustainability Strategy 2017-2020 and beyond.
- Demonstrate leadership for sustainability by collaborating with key staff across all disciplines to advise on necessary support and resources to improve sustainability performance.
- Undertake high-level strategic analysis to inform decision-making in the allocation of resources for the implementation of sustainable operations across NUI Galway.
- Recommend for approval and drive forward sustainability-related policies, procedures and action plans. Support work that is already underway in the development of strategies to engage the campus community and other key stakeholders.
- Play a key role in development of strong governance structures and support the integration of sustainability into daily business at all levels of the University.
- Oversee the production of interim sustainability reports and report annually to UMT, Academic Council, the Support Services Committee and Colleges.
- Act as Ambassadors for Sustainability.
- Work closely with external strategic partners to raise the profile of NUI Galway amongst key national and international audiences.
- Engage on behalf of NUI Galway in the developing network of universities promoting sustainability.

## *Organisation*

- The University Sustainability Advisory Board is chaired by the Deputy President & Registrar and has a direct reporting line to the Office of the Deputy President & Registrar.
- The University Sustainability Advisory Board is advised on all matters related to the University's commitment to sustainability by the CUSP General Board and SO.
- The University Sustainability Board meets at least two times a year, once each semester.

- Copies of all minutes are forwarded to the University Management Team and held by the Deputy President & Registrar's Office. Minutes are published on the University website.

## ***Membership***

*The University Sustainability Advisory Board consists of the following members:-*

1. The Deputy President & Registrar or appointed Deputy (Chair)
2. Sustainability Officer
3. Chief Operating Officer
4. Vice-President for Research and Innovation (or nominee)
5. Vice-President for Development
6. Dean of Students
7. President of NUI Galway Students' Union
8. CUSP Executive Board (Chair and 2 others)
9. External representative(s) with expertise in sustainability

# CUSP General Board

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## *Purpose*

- Align all our major efforts with the SDGs targets and indicators, including education, research, leadership, operational and engagement activities.
- Inform, advise and make recommendations to the University Sustainability Advisory Board on all matters relating to campus sustainability, including governance, policy, resourcing and implementation of sustainability.
- Report to the University Sustainability Advisory Board on the status of campus sustainability performance.
- Support the delivery of objectives, targets and measures of success set out in the NUI Galway Sustainability Strategy 2017-2020, and subsequent strategies thereafter, through the establishment of 7 sustainability working groups aligned to the themes of Research & Learning; Energy & Greenhouse Gas Emissions; Nature & Ecosystems; Health & Wellbeing; Built Environment; Governance & Leadership; and Communications & Engagement.
- Work with the Research & Learning working group to embed the SDGs into our education and research and inform, encourage, support and monitor developments in teaching and research for sustainability.
- Work with Built Environment, Energy and Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Nature and Ecosystems working groups to embed the SDGs into our operations and to sustainably manage our campus.
- Work with the Governance and Leadership working group to embed the SDGs into our leadership activities and to scale sustainability successes beyond the campus by building sustainability partnerships with neighbouring communities, national bodies and partners across Europe and the globe.
- Work with the Communication and Engagement working group to embed the SDGs into our engagement activities. Aim to involve members from all key stakeholder groups in our sustainability activities including students, staff local communities and other external stakeholders
- Disseminate information and feedback on sustainability accomplishments, tools, and challenges.
- Support the development of sustainability for the University's competitive advantage:-in recruitment, fundraising, financial and resource management, and funded research.
- Act as ambassadors for sustainability both in and outside the University.

## *Organisation*

- The CUSP General Board shall determine its own internal structure, and shall govern by consensus whenever possible. In the absence of consensus, a two-thirds majority of the CUSP General Board members shall be required to alter the terms of reference or take other official actions, including elections, endorsements, structural reorganization, and all other decisions. Subcommittees of the CUSP General Board shall be governed in likewise fashion. All decisions shall be subject to review by the CUSP Advisory Board.
- The members of the CUSP General Board shall elect a Chairperson(s) following a democratic election process. To be eligible for election of Chairperson, the board member must have played an active role in the work of the CUSP General Board for at least one year.
- The elected Chairperson(s) shall serve a tenure of three years, with a maximum of two terms. The responsibilities of the Chairperson(s) shall include setting the agenda and distributing it to members before each meeting, facilitating meetings, and serving as a liaison for the CUSP General Board. The Chairperson(s), working together with the Sustainability Officer, shall be responsible for soliciting nominations to all CUSP General Board seats for the following term of service before the last meeting of the current term of service. The Chairperson(s) shall also be responsible for convening the first Committee meeting in the term following his or her term of office.
- The Sustainability Officer shall be Secretary to the General Board, with responsibility for maintaining records and minutes of meetings.
- The CUSP General Board has a direct reporting line to the University Sustainability Advisory Board.
- Each of the Sustainability Working Groups will be chaired by a member of the CUSP General Board.
- Each CUSP General Board member is required to actively serve on one of more of the Sustainability Working Groups.
- The CUSP General Board is advised on matters related to sustainability by the SO and the Sustainability Working Groups.
- The CUSP General Board meets between 4 and 6 times per year.
- Copies of all minutes are forwarded to the University Sustainability Advisory Board.

## *Membership*

- The CUSP General Board member constituency is intended to broadly represent all campus constituencies; and provide expertise in operations, teaching & learning, research, student life, health and wellbeing, nature and ecosystems, marketing, communication, engagement and community.

- For a new member to join the CUSP General Board, a proposal is presented to the Chair and the proposal is raised as an agenda item at the next CUSP meeting for approval among members.
- The CUSP General Board consists of the following members:-<sup>1</sup>
  - Chairperson(s)
  - Secretary (Sustainability Officer)
  - Representative from the Community Knowledge Initiative
  - Up to 2 Representatives from Local Community Groups
  - Student Union President and nominated Vice-President
  - 3 Representatives from Student Societies (to be nominated by Students Union Societies Chairperson)
  - Director of Financial Accounting
  - Director of Student Services
  - Senior Marketing Officer
  - Innovation and Engagement Officer
  - Representative from Information Services
  - Manager of Commercial Services
  - Environmental Health & Safety Officer
  - Head of Facilities Management & Services
  - Head of Business Support Services
  - Head of Buildings Services, Utilities and Energy
  - Assistant Director, Estates Operation
  - Representative(s) from each of the Schools
  - Representative from each Research Institute (The Ryan Institute, Whitaker Institute for Innovation and Societal Change, Moore Institute for Research in the Humanities and Social Studies, Lifecourse Institute, Data Science Institute, National Centre for Biomedical Engineering Science)
- From the CUSP General Board, a leader for each of the working groups will be selected:
  - Research & Learning
  - Nature & Ecosystems
  - Energy & Greenhouse Gas Emissions
  - Health & Well-being
  - The Built Environment
  - Governance & Leadership
  - Communication & Engagement (cross-cutting across all working groups)

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<sup>1</sup> This wide-ranging membership is deliberately intended to be inclusive and reflective of the holistic campus/institutional approach to sustainability outlined in the CUSP Strategy.

# CUSP Executive Board

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## *Purpose*

- Represent the CUSP General Board on the University Sustainability Advisory Board.
- Provide a forum from which the Deputy President & Registrar /or representative can solicit advice and recommendations from senior campus leadership on the creation and implementation of sustainability principles and policies to guide the campus.
- Distribute administrative responsibility, decision-making, and planning among CUSP General Board Members.
- Review and assess budget and funding strategies to support sustainability and implementation of the strategic plan.
- To review proposals for major campus sustainability initiatives and bring forward recommendations to the CUSP General Board.

## *Organisation*

- The CUSP Executive Board is chaired by the Chairperson of the CUSP General Board.
- The CUSP Executive Board is a sub-committee of the CUSP General Board.
- The CUSP Executive Board is advised on all matters related to the University's commitment to sustainability by the CUSP General Board and the University Sustainability Advisory Board.
- The CUSP Executive Board meets a minimum of one time between meetings of the CUSP General Board.

## *Membership*

- The CUSP Executive Board shall be composed of the following members:
    - The Chairperson(s) of the CUSP General Board.
    - The Sustainability Officer.
    - Two additional Members of the CUSP General Board, elected from the CUSP General Boards membership and ideally serve a minimum of two years.
  - Upon resignation, the CUSP Executive Board Member shall inform the Chairperson(s). The CUSP General Board shall then elect a replacement from its Membership to serve out the remainder of the current term of service.
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# Sustainability Officer

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## *Purpose*

In conjunction with the Deputy President & Registrar, Chief Operations Officer, Bursar (or nominee), President of NUI Galway Students' Union, CUSP General Board and University Sustainability Advisory Board the Community and University Sustainability Officer will:-

- Take a lead role in the implementation of the NUI Galway Sustainability Strategy 2017-2020 and subsequent strategies thereafter.
- Organise university-wide committees with the CUSP team, Buildings Office, Senior Administrators, Deans, Heads of Schools and other academic and technical staff, Students' Union and School representatives, for the development of policy and implementation of sustainable operations across NUI Galway.
- Build relationships with key staff whose responsibility in the 20 prioritised areas will guarantee that sustainable practices will be embedded there by the end of the Sustainability Strategy 2017-2020.
- Create and implement the NUI Galway Sustainability Strategy beyond 2020 with support from the University Sustainability Advisory Board, the CUSP General Board and the wider university and local communities.
- Collaborate with key academic staff across all disciplines to oversee and develop sustainability-related teaching programmes, research and innovation.
- Work with the Research Office and Research Institutes to assist early-career academic staff to take advantage of national and international funding opportunities for sustainability research.
- Work with the CKI team and Students' Union to drive cross-university, student-led, community-linked volunteering to effect behavioural change around sustainability.
- Build capacity in sustainability practices by employing on-line tools and guidelines (e.g. Sustainability Tracking, Assessing and Rating System) for universities, customising these for NUI Galway, facilitating the development of new tools for accelerating sustainability activities, and benchmarking of NUI Galway activities according to best international standards.
- Develop quantitative metrics, with the help of existing expertise in accounting, to demonstrate financial savings and income to NUI Galway from the activities of the Sustainability Officer.
- Work with Senior Administrators (e.g. Financial Accounting) to develop international best-practice reports detailing NUI Galway's achievements in Corporate Social Responsibility.
- Provide baseline reports on current efforts, articulating goals and strategies for improvement, and publishing online annual operational plans, targets and impacts with a view to promoting NUI Galway's ambition to lead on sustainability.

- Develop sustainability activities with local external actors, especially Saolta University Healthcare Group and Galway City Council, whose activities impact on NUI Galway, and local industry and communities interested in practical sustainability solutions.
- Drive the external communication of NUI Galway’s sustainability strategy and align the brand of the university with the concept of sustainability.
- Represent NUI Galway in the developing network of universities promoting sustainability, and progress targets of the National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development.
- Act as an Ambassador for sustainability at the University.

## Organisation

- While the post-holder will have frequent (e.g. fortnightly) meetings with the Chair of the CUSP General Board, the post is located within the Office of the Deputy President & Registrar and the post-holder will report to the Deputy President & Registrar as Chair of the University and Sustainability Advisory Board (see *Figure 2 Reporting Structure of SO*).
- The SO will work directly with the Chief Operations Officer, Bursar (or nominee), President of NUI Galway Students’ Union and Representatives of the CUSP General Board on all matters relating to campus sustainability.
- The SO will directly support the work of the University Sustainability Advisory Board as a representative member of the CUSP General Board.
- The post-holder will liaise with the Director of Student Services, Deans of Colleges and Heads of Schools, Buildings and Estates Office, Research Office, Senior Administrators in NUI Galway, Student’s Union and CKI representatives, Director of Financial Accounting, Marketing Office and those responsible for sustainability in external public agencies, e.g. Saolta, Galway City Council, to ensure the implementation of the NUI Galway Sustainability Strategy 2017-2020 and the formulation of the next one.

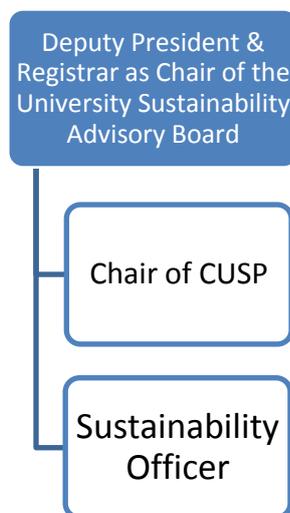


Figure 2: Reporting Structure of SO

## University Sustainability Advisory Board Members



Professor Pól Ó  
Dochartaigh,  
*Deputy President &  
Registrar*



Michelle O'Dowd  
Lohan,  
*Community &  
University  
Sustainability Officer*



Dr. Jamie Goggins,  
Chair,  
*Community & University  
Sustainability  
Partnership (CUSP)*



Professor Lokesh Joshi,  
*Vice President Research*



Dr. Lorraine McIlrath,  
*Community  
Knowledge  
Initiative (CKI)*



Pádraic Toomey,  
*Student Union President*



John Concannon,  
*Vice President  
Development*



Professor Michelle  
Millar,  
*Dean of Students*



John Gill,  
*Chief Operating Officer*



Jim Gannon,  
*Commissioner at  
Commission for  
Regulation of Utilities*



Dr. Michele Halsell,  
*Assistant Director  
Sustainability,  
Penn State*