A record of the main speeches given by the
Provost of Trinity College Dublin,
Dr Patrick J Prendergast

Academic Year 2011 - 2012
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Speech at the Opening of the 14th International Congress of Celtic Studies

The Dining Hall, Trinity College Dublin

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Delegates of the Fourteenth International Congress of Celtic Studies,

I’m delighted to be here today, welcoming you to Trinity College Dublin. Or, I should say, welcoming this congress back to Trinity College.

Because, as you know, the inaugural Congress of Celtic Studies was held in Dublin in 1959, when it was jointly organised by Trinity and UCD.

At this inaugural congress 52 years ago, my predecessor, Provost A. J. McConnell, welcomed the delegated to a reception in the College.

And the newly appointed President of Ireland Eamon de Valera opened the Congress itself.

With some emotion, de Valera boasted that Ireland was “the only Celtic country to have its own independent government” – maybe not the most tactful observation for some of the delegates!

Before A.J. McConnell became Provost, Trinity was perceived as somewhat isolated. It must have meant a lot to A.J. McConnell to collaborate with UCD in hosting this important event. Even though it was more than three decades after independence, there was still a mutual suspicion between the new state and its oldest university.

Bur McConnell as Provost worked hard to make Trinity more accessible and a university for everyone in Ireland.

He achieved this by nurturing events in which Trinity collaborated with other institutes, in Ireland and abroad, thus furthering the exchange of research and ideas.

* * *

Today is my first ever speech as Provost – I took up my position only this morning. You only ever get to make a first address once so this is a special occasion for me.
I am particularly delighted to be following in the footsteps of McConnell in welcoming delegates of the Congress of Celtic Studies.

Trinity is again a co-organiser - on this occasion, with NUI Maynooth and the Dublin Institute of Advanced Studies.

And I would like to thank Professor Damien McManus, who is head of Trinity’s Irish department as well as co-organiser of this congress, for inviting me to welcome you this evening.

The study of the Irish language in Trinity goes right back to the foundation of the college in the late sixteenth century. Which means that Trinity is among the first universities in the world to promote Celtic studies.

In May this year, Queen Elizabeth the Second visited Trinity and we took great pride in showing her the Aibidil - an Alphabet and Catechism - which was the first book ever printed in the Irish language in Ireland. It is 440 years old this year, and was commissioned by her namesake, the first Queen Elizabeth, in 1571.

The first Queen Elizabeth, who granted Letters Patent for the founding of the university, also paid for the manufacture of a Gaelic typeface to print an Irish translation of the New Testament, which was published in 1603. She appointed clerics to important ecclesiastical positions on the basis of their fluency in Irish. And she was herself a proficient linguist, who knew some words of Gaelic.

It would be nice to think Queen Elizabeth did this all out of love of Irish.

But of course Elizabeth’s reasons for promoting Irish were fundamentally strategic: she wanted to spread the protestant religion.

According to the ideals of the Reformation, that meant preaching in the common tongue and printing the bible in the vernacular.

A century after Elizabeth’s death, Fellows of Trinity were still raising money to maintain an Irish lecturer in the School of Divinity, so that divinity students could learn to preach in Irish.

Even more importantly, the College continued to add to its rich collection of Irish manuscripts in the Library.

I don’t need to remind you how fortunate Trinity is in holding one of the world’s most important collections of Irish language manuscripts.

You have just had the opportunity to view part of this collection in the Long Room.
We’re exceptionally proud of all our manuscripts, including the twelfth-century Book of Leinster, the fifteenth-century Annals of Ulster, and of course the world-famous Book of Kells, which was presented to Trinity in 1661.

If you look round the walls of this Dining Room you’ll find the portrait of a notable benefactor of Irish manuscripts to the library. Lord John Beresford was appointed Chancellor of this university in 1851. He was also Archbishop of Armagh and he donated to Trinity the Ninth century Book of Armagh, which tells, in Latin and Old Irish, the history of St Patrick.

As it turned out, the Reformation was much less successful in Ireland than in Britain. The greater part of the population did not convert to Protestantism.

However, what did remain from these early endeavours was the legacy of Irish study at Trinity College – and we are extremely grateful for that!

This legacy meant that Trinity was in a brilliant position in the early nineteenth century when Celtic Studies began to be established as an academic discipline across Europe. The first Chair in Irish in any Irish university was established in Trinity in 1840.

The original ‘Dr Seuss’, the man who is called the ‘father of Celtic Studies’, Johann Kaspar Zeuss, author of the ground-breaking ‘Grammatica Celtica’, was actually invited to take up an appointment in Trinity in 1856.

Unfortunately he died of tuberculosis before he could take up his chair. But I like to think of those Nineteenth century connections between universities across Europe.

This congress is the inheritor of those connections. And now it has gone global with delegates from thirty countries, from as far afield as Japan, China, and Australia.

During its long history, Trinity has nourished world-class scholars in Celtic studies. In the Nineteenth century, John Henthorn Todd, professor of Hebrew, began cataloguing the library’s Irish collections and inspired the publication of the Ancient Laws of Ireland.

In the Twentieth Century, Gordon Quin, a lecturer in this college, was General Editor of the Royal Irish Academy’s magisterial ‘Dictionary of the Irish Language’.

Another lecturer, Eleanor Knott, produced the standard textbook for Classical Irish poetry.

And I must mention Máirtin Ó Cadhain. He was a radical Marxist and nationalist. And he is one of the most important Irish writers of the century, a
pioneer of modernism. We are rightly proud of him in Trinity and we have a lecture theatre named after him in the Arts Building.

Trinity’s great tradition in Celtic Studies continues to this day. I note that two members of the organising committee of this congress, are Trinity graduates and members of staff:

Damien McManus is head of the Irish department and Katharine Simms was a distinguished lecturer in Medieval History until her retirement this year.

Damian and Katharine worked together on the “Bardic Poetry Project”. This involved the Departments of Irish and Medieval History in Trinity collaborating together, and then cooperating with the School of Celtic Studies in the Dublin Institute of Advanced Studies, to produce a database and full corpus of texts of Classical Irish poetry, including over 600 unpublished poems, many from manuscripts in Trinity’s Library.

It is a great achievement. I congratulate Damian and Katharine and all involved. One of my pledges as Provost is to protect and enhance Trinity’s reputation as a truly multi-disciplinary university which encourages cross-faculty collaboration and research cooperation with other institutes.

The Bardic Poetry project is exactly the kind which I hope will flourish during my own tenure. Projects which are substantive, scholarly, and ambitious, and which make a lasting impact in their discipline.

I note that a third member of the organising committee, Professor Liam Breátnach of Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, is also a former Trinity member of staff.

And Professor Breátnach, like the fourth member of the committee, Professor Ruairí Ó hUigín of NUI Maynooth, is a graduate of UCD’s distinguished school of Irish and Celtic Studies!

*      *      *

In his opening speech to the first congress, President de Valera expressed the hope that it would prove a stimulus to Celtic research and study in many lands. He may be shocked at everything else that has happened in Ireland over the last fifty-two years, but he’d certainly be delighted to see the Congress back here and flourishing.

I would like to re-affirm these hopes for continued stimulus and study.

Many of Trinity’s valuable Irish manuscripts contain texts that have never been published, or satisfactorily edited.
Our new humanities institute, the Trinity Long Room Hub, offers fellowships for scholars to come and work on research in Trinity.

We would be honoured and delighted if some of you here present would consider returning to Trinity in the future – as Long Room Hub Fellows – and work on these texts.

What better use of these Fellowships could there be than to work on an Irish-language manuscript which is only to be found in Trinity?

* * *

Over the next ten years I will give a large number of speeches as Provost. Many of these will be about the challenges facing higher education in Ireland, and how we can best deliver our core mission in education and research. But I am delighted that my very first speech was not about these challenges.

Instead it was an opportunity to remind us of this university’s long commitment to Celtic studies.

And reaffirm our support for an area that is fundamental to our strength as a university, and to an Ireland that is confident of what it has contributed, and will continue to contribute, to the world of scholarship.

In closing, I would like to say you are all very welcome and I hope you enjoy this reception here in the Dining Hall.

Thank you.

* * *
Medical School Tercentenary, Alumni Gala Celebration

Marquee in Parliament Square, Trinity College Dublin

Ladies and Gentlemen, Friends and Alumni,

It’s my great pleasure to be here tonight, welcoming you to this Tercentenary Alumni dinner.

It’s a wonderful occasion and a wonderful turnout.

Gathered here in the Dining Hall are around 250 graduates with their families. Many have come from far afield: from Nigeria, India, Australia, Norway, Singapore, Canada and other countries.

But Medicine has always had the most cosmopolitan profile of any School in Trinity, so I would expect no less!

We are always delighted to re-connect with our alumni, but tonight is a particularly special occasion because of the Tercentenary.

It’s been quite a year. This Gala dinner is only one of many glittering Tercentenary events.

The quality of these events has been superb. I particularly enjoyed the Human+ exhibition in the Science gallery and ‘The Best Doctors in the World’ exhibition in the Old Library.

And as Dermot has said, we are all thrilled with the new Biomedical Sciences Institute where the School of Medicine is now headquartered.

Medicine alumni were most generous in helping the University meet the funding gap for the building. In this Tercentenary year we received €300,000 from medical alumni.

I thank those who contributed with all my heart. It is through your generosity that our future doctors will have state-of-the-art facilities, and it is through your generosity that Trinity’s Medical School will continue to take its place among the best medical schools in the world.

* * *

The School of Medicine is one of Trinity’s oldest and most distinguished schools.
We all know the great Nineteenth and Twentieth century Trinity physicians, Robert Graves, William Stokes and Denis Burkitt, because they have given their names to ‘Graves disease’, ‘Burkitt’s Lymphoma’, and ‘Cheyne Stokes respiration’.

I would also like to mention Eva Jellett – partly because she’s the daughter of a Provost, John Hewitt Jellett. But mostly because she was the first female graduate in medicine from Trinity in 1905. She then went to India to run a hospital for women. So she’s an excellent example to my daughters of what a provost’s daughter can achieve!

Her niece was the artist Mainie Jellett and I was thrilled to find one of her pictures hanging in the Provost’s Office when I moved in. Her cousin Henry Jellett, also a Trinity graduate, was Master of the Rotunda. I mention him because medicine seems to run in families. The great William Stokes was son of one Trinity Physician and the father of another.

And here tonight we have a number of medical dynasties:

Dr Patricia Lip is here with her son, Gerald.

There are sibling groups: Grannum and Susan Sant, and Lim Hwee-Ling and Teh Hui Pin.

You all know Professor Peter Gatenby, Trinity’s Professor of Clinical Medicine. He is here with his son Robin.

There are too many husband and wife teams to mention them all. But I do want to mention Professor Dermot Kelleher and his wife Dr Jean Holohan because they are about to celebrate their 30th wedding anniversary!

And I want to take this opportunity to pay tribute to Dermot for leading the School of Medicine for the last six years and for organising the Tercentenary celebrations. It is my good fortune that Dermot will continue on the senior management group as Vice-Provost for Medical Affairs.

Many of you know that the 19th century is often referred to as ‘the Golden Age of Irish medicine’. During this year’s celebrations, Professor Kelleher remarked that we are currently “in a golden age of biomedical science in Trinity”. He is referring to Trinity’s ground-breaking research in areas like Immunology, lung cancer, and eczema.

I am personally aware of the School of Medicine’s excellence. I’m an engineer and my research has focussed on medical devices. This has involved creating an interdisciplinary environment, combining engineering and medicine. Trinity is now at the forefront of next generation medical device research.
This is only my 18th working day as Provost. I am delighted that my second official speaking engagement is to School of Medicine alumni in the Tercentenary year.

I congratulate you all on being alumni of a School which is in its second golden age – and certainly not its last! I thank you all for the part you have played in creating this golden age, and I look forward to meeting many of you later.

It’s now my great pleasure to present these anniversary scrolls to the members of the Tercentenary Board.

[There are six members of the board:

Dr. Michael Asbury, non-executive Chairman of Photopharmica Ltd.
Dame Beulah Bewley, past President of the Medical Women’s Federation, former member of the General Medical Council, UK
Dr. Steven Drury, Consultant Histopathologist, New Hampshire, USA
Dr. Stanley Quek, Chief Executive of Frasers Property Groups, Singapore
Mr. Dave Shanahan, Global Head of Life Sciences, IDA Ireland]
Prof. Adrian Hill, Professor of Human Genetics, Wellcome Trust Principal Research Scientist, Oxford University, was Trinity Scholar, but graduated from Oxford]
Ladies and Gentlemen – Alumni and Friends,

It’s my great pleasure and privilege to address you tonight. This is one of the most important events in the Trinity calendar and it’s wonderful to look round and see so many of you gathered here in the Dining Hall.

As Melissa has already pointed out, present here tonight are alumni from as far back as 1949 and as recent as 2001.

I haven’t counted exactly how many different academic disciplines are represented, but I know that there are graduates of geology, theoretical physics, political science, veterinary science, microbiology, modern languages, commerce, engineering, occupational therapy and many more.

Trinity’s diversity of disciplines is to be treasured, and you are the collective embodiment of that diversity.

* * *

There are about one hundred and eight thousand [108,000] Trinity students and former students on the planet today: that’s 11,500 undergraduates, over 5,000 postgrads, and close to 92,000 alumni, living in over 130 countries.

Once a Trinity student, always a Trinity student. We regard our relationship with you as life-long. And so tonight I want to take this opportunity to tell you a bit about what’s going on in your university–about the changes we’ve made, and the changes we’re hoping to make.

And I want to talk about the different ways in which you can engage with the College, because your support is absolutely crucial to us.

And I want to introduce myself. I have been provost for 19 working days – I took up the position on 1st August. I hope during the ten years of my provostship to get to know as many of you as possible.

* * *

I entered Trinity as an undergraduate in 1983, up from a place called Oulart, in County Wexford – a place known only to hurling enthusiasts, and
historians of 1798. I graduated BAI in mechanical engineering in 1987. I think there are quite a few engineers here tonight. For me, being part of the Trinity community was a transformational experience and it changed how I viewed myself and the world. I remained to do a Ph.D., and returned as a lecturer in 1995.

I was inspired by Trinity. I guess that’s obvious since I’ve chosen to spend most of my career here!

But I did work in various European countries: I did post-doctoral research in Bologna and in the University of Nijmegan in the Netherlands. And I held visiting professorships in Warsaw, Delft, and Barcelona.

As a graduate myself, I know how attached one gets to this place. The moment you walk through the Front Arch into Front Square, you’re in another world. The buildings are the physical manifestation of Trinity’s uniqueness.

I always feel that, in Trinity, it’s the interplay between the physical environment, the intellectual environment, and the social environment that motivates people and makes this such a dynamic place to study and work. And that makes so many graduates want to stay in touch after they leave.

When I think of my time as a student, obviously I remember my lectures – some of them anyway! But like you I remember just as well the social, cosmopolitan atmosphere of the clubs and societies. There are now I believe over one hundred Trinity societies, from A to Z: that’s from ‘Anarchist’ to ‘Zoological’ by way of ‘Juggling’, ‘Paintball’, and ‘the Pirate Party’.

I am glad to say that the Pirate Party is not a venue to dress up as Johnny Depp – it’s devoted to defending civil liberties and personal freedom, which seems more in the Trinity spirit.

And traditionalists among you will be delighted to know that the older societies are still going strong. When I was campaigning to be elected provost, I had to address The Hist. Students do have a vote in provost elections, and they took pleasure in putting us candidates through the wringer.

We also now have the Ultimate Frisbee society – which I would certainly have joined as a student. I’m trying to think of the societies that might be around when my youngest child, now aged seven, attends Trinity. Which of course I will heavily pressurise him to do!

* * *

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The growth and diversity in college societies is just one amusing sign of the way Trinity keeps changing.

Let me bring you through some of the other changes:

Some of them you will have seen for yourself over the past few days if you participated in the Alumni weekend programme. The new Biomedical Sciences Institute, the Science Gallery, and the Long Room Hub.

I hope you will agree with me that these buildings manage to showcase the best of contemporary architecture and to reference our older, well-loved buildings. I think the word that architects use is “conversation” – apparently the Long Room Hub is having a “conversation” with the Campanile across the way. I can see the Long Room Hub from a window in my house and there are a few things I would like to say to it as well.

As Provost, I’m looking forward to continuing this architectural conversation: I’m particularly interested in developing the east end of the campus. The old chemistry extension is to be replaced. We will develop this space into something as inspiring as Front Square.

*   *   *

This mix of old and new – the traditional and the radical – which is so manifest in the College’s buildings and in the college societies - is intrinsic to Trinity, and I feel very strongly about having more of that.

For this reason, I have to say, that I do not fully buy into the notion of rationalisation. Some of you will be familiar with this term. Rationalisation favours culling university activities to a few core strengths. It’s something many people are in favour of for Irish universities.

But Trinity derives its strength from its diversity and its multidisciplinary environment.

My own research depends on this interdisciplinary environment. Combining the strengths of engineering and medicine has put Trinity right at the forefront of next generation medical device research – a position it still holds today. It’s this kind of interdisciplinary research that is the key to the economic recovery of Ireland.

But Trinity is also proud of the humanities: there’s a reason why we’ve called our libraries The Ussher, the Lecky and the Berkeley.

One of our recent graduates from the English department, Belinda McKeon has just published a novel, Solace, whose main character is a Trinity research student. It’s getting great reviews on both sides of the Atlantic.
I don’t think the Lir building was included in your programme this weekend because it hasn’t been officially opened. But if you stroll up Pearse Street to Grand Canal Dock you will see this new academy for Dramatic Art, which is formally associated with RADA in London. RADA is one of the oldest and most prestigious drama academies in the world. We’re tremendously excited by this wonderful opportunity.

I am afraid that rationalisation, rather than crystallising our strengths, would mean sacrificing our diversity, which is our strength.

*   *   *

Trinity continues to excel academically. We are ranked 52nd in the top 100 world universities, and 14th in Europe. I think you will agree that that is a formidable achievement given our relatively low funding base by international standards.

As Provost my focus will be to further develop Trinity’s role as a global university. I won’t go into all the ways I hope to achieve this but here are a few of my priorities:

- I’m proud that Trinity is the first choice of Irish school-leavers with the highest points - but at the same time I worry about that phrase ‘highest points’. Is a purely points-based admission system really the best means of attracting exceptional students? I want to ensure that we’re getting the best and the brightest, and that our procedures are fair to all groups in society. I’m not interested in people’s socio-economic background, but in their ability to meet the challenges of the kind of education we offer.
- “Best and brightest” also applies to staff. We need to cast the net far and wide to get the best people working here;
- I’d like to see more students involved in international student exchanges. We should strengthen our global reach by establishing a strong network of reciprocal relations with other world-class universities;
- And we have a crucial role to play in increasing employment in this country through the social and commercial impact of our research.

These are large ambitions in challenging times. I don’t need to remind you that universities in Ireland are facing a funding crisis since 2008.

We cannot compromise our commitment to research and our distinctive tradition of high quality education. Your children deserve the quality of education which you enjoyed.

We will need to rebalance the mix of public and private funding to maintain and strengthen our quality of education. I do not take an ideological position
on this. I take a pragmatic one. Students may have to make a greater
financial contribution to ensure a top quality higher education because low
quality for free is not worth anything.

But I know that we can achieve our ambitions by engaging with the public,
with other universities, with networks across the globe, and with you, our
alumni.

* * *

Trinity cannot grow in strength without the input of its alumni – our past
students.

Many alumni already support the College financially and for that I would like
to extend my thanks and the thanks of all our staff and students. Your
contribution can make the difference between struggling along and achieving
excellence.

In this context I’d like to mention the Trinity Annual Fund, which is our tax-
efficient alumni giving fund. In your “goodie bags” there is a brochure on the
Alumni Appeal 2011.

This year’s appeal will support postgraduate research and the Trinity Access
Programme which transforms the lives of students from disadvantaged areas
and enables them to study at Trinity.

There are currently over 2,000 postgrad research projects in Trinity. These
range from developing treatments for killer diseases to advancing equality in
the developing world. So by giving to Trinity you’re not just helping our
current students but contributing to a better future for everyone.

I should say of course that all levels of support are welcome. I think there’s
sometimes a perception that in order to support your alma mater, you have to
endow a building. Well obviously we won’t say no to a building, but our model
is more the Obama election campaign – look what can be done by lots of
people giving what they can.

I buy into the evolving global idea that alumni can remain connected to the
home university throughout their lives. Financial support is only one way in
which you can retain a stake in Trinity’s continuing success.

There are for instance currently hundreds of alumni involved in College
activities as mentors or as volunteers.

And many more alumni act as the College’s ambassadors worldwide.
Whenever you talk about your education or great student experience, you’re
spreading the word about Trinity.
But I know that I’m now preaching to the converted: by coming here tonight you’re affirming your commitment to this university. So what I really want to say is thank you very much and do stay in touch.

The Alumni Office is constantly improving ways of communicating and engaging. It is currently extending its overseas branch network and implementing an annual programme of events for alumni on campus.

The Alumni Office is also introducing ‘Front Gate Online’ which allows graduates to connect with former classmates. I will have to use it myself to find out where all my fellow BAI’s 1987 have got to!

There’s also a bi-monthly e-zine and we’re on Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter. In fact some of you could be tweeting about my speech right now, which is something I admit I find it hard to get my head round...

* * *

This is my third speech as Provost. I’m taking up my new role amid a social and economic crisis not seen for almost a century. This is daunting. Decisions made now will have repercussions for generations to come. But I welcome the challenge.

With the support of all its wider community, Trinity has the innate strengths to meet the future head on. Trinity is and will become an ever more globally-engaged institution with a track-record of delivering for Ireland on the world stage. It is a great university because it encourages debate and it has never been afraid to adapt and change. With your help and support, I look forward to the challenge of the next ten years.

And I look forward to meeting as many as possible of you after dinner.

Thank you

* * *
Saturday, 3rd of September 2011

**Electric Picnic: IGNITE Talk**

*Stradbally, Co. Laois*

1) On the first of August, I took office as the 44th Provost of Trinity. And I moved into an eighteenth century mansion at number 1 Grafton Street. All the slides I’m going to show are photos taken, in one day, by my three children, Eimear, Eilís, and Pierce. This one’s of my new front door taken by Eimear – she’s here in the reflection.

2) Through these images I want to talk about what Trinity College means to me, and to give you some of my ideas about education and about the importance of a university’s physical environment as it develops over time.

3) I first entered Trinity in September 1983: through front gate, under the arch, and out into the great expanse of front square. This approach – under the arch into darkness and out to a beautiful open space - is for me a metaphor of what a university should do for the mind.

4) Learning is about seeing, and new ways of seeing. Students and lecturers in Trinity are fortunate in that whichever way they look – up, down, around – there’s always something new, inspiring, or unexpected to see.
5) If you look closely at the cobbles in Front Square, you’ll see that every one of them is different – different colours and sizes. Recently space has been created between the cobbles for access paths - making it easier for those with disabilities to get across.

6) No picture gallery of Trinity is complete without an image of the campanile. But in over twenty years studying and lecturing in Trinity I honestly never saw the Campanile like this. “Look up Daddy”, said Eimear. If we want new experiences we need to find new ways of looking.

7) Also, I never knew that there was a door into the Campanile. See the empty bottle carefully balanced on the ledge. Our students need to socialize but it’s good to see that they are careful to put empty bottles out of harm’s way...

8) What strikes everyone who walks through Trinity is the mix between the old and the new in the architecture. In the last few years we’ve built striking new buildings like the Ussher Library, the Long Room Hub, the Biosciences Institute.

9) These new buildings don’t imitate the old ones. What would be the point? But they reference them. I was struck by these next three photos because they all show round windows but they’re all quite different and from different eras. This one is from the 19th century Graduates Memorial Building.
10) This mix of old and new is intrinsic to Trinity. Trinity derives its strength from its diversity and its multidisciplinary environment, from the constant interplay between the traditional and the radical. This shows the round windows in the Berkeley Library.

11) The Berkeley caused controversy when it was built in 1967. But it’s now an inspiration to contemporary architects so the college was right to take that risk in the Sixties …… And this is the round window from the Ussher which was opened in 2003.

12) As a student I spent a lot of time in the 1937 Reading Room. I don’t think we’d build something called a ‘Reading Room’ now – it sounds too bookish.

13) But I’m mindful of former Trinity student, Edmund Burke’s quote: ‘Reading without reflecting is like eating without digesting’. Whichever way we access our information, we need to reflect on it. Maybe we should build a ‘Reflecting Room’…

14) Trinity College was first established to consolidate the Tudor monarchy and to spread Protestantism. It was built to convey prestige and to impress. And today, the very stones still convey authority.
15) I want to say a little bit about authority in higher education. Who has the authority to define the answers to the questions: Who learns? And how do they learn?

16) There was a time when religion determined what or where you could learn. As recently as the 1960s Catholic archbishops were denying Catholics the right to study in Trinity, but fortunately that’s not an issue now.

17) There was a time when gender determined if you could learn or not, and this is still an issue: Dentistry is mainly learned by women. Engineering mainly by men. Where you’re from is a factor. Whether your parents value education is critical. This image by the way is of a manhole cover outside the rubrics.

18) My position is: I want Trinity to get the best and the brightest regardless of the socio-economic-cultural background. This is another image of the same manhole. Eilis thought it looked like the sun. I take it as a symbol of the best and brightest. And it’s another round window...

19) As Provost, I have the privilege of living in a fabulous house. Like my predecessors, I want to be worthy of this house and to do something important with this job.
This image is very like the first one I showed you except that it includes the doorbell, inviting people to press for entry. Answering all callers to Trinity and answering for Trinity’s greatness: that’s an image I’m happy with.

I want to thank my kids for taking these photos and helping me see Trinity in a new way. [They’re all here today for free because they’re all under twelve]. As I said, it’s my first month as Provost. In my last month, in ten years’ time, I intend to go round with my kids to take another twenty images – to mark how my ideas, and theirs, have changed.

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Ladies and Gentlemen, colleagues, friends:

I’m glad to have this opportunity to say a few words to you on the occasion of the funeral of Professor R.B. McDowell.

I knew him less well than many of you here but I do recall him saying that whenever he would attend a public event he would often be called upon to speak. And when asked why he was never stuck for words, he replied that he never attended any event without preparing a few words in advance, just in case. And despite having no advance notice, he would entertain the gathering with his quick wit, store of anecdote, and his unrivalled historical knowledge. And he also admitted that, in his later years, he much preferred to give a talk rather than to listen to one. This principle I think he extended to many aspects of his life as he got older: he told me once on Commons that “it is essential to get hold of the conversation and never let it go”.

When thinking about what to say this afternoon I was reminded of the lines by John Betjeman in honour of a recently deceased academic:

“That old head so full of knowledge,
that good heart that kept the brains
All right,
Those old cheeks that faintly flushed
as the port suffused the veins”

…. I don’t know Professor McDowell’s taste in poetry but I always thought him a Betjeman kind of man.

And I wondered what Professor McDowell would do if could see so many gathered here today to pay tribute to his life, and to honour his passing.

He would almost certainly tell me to sit down and instead entertain us himself with a lively run through his life and times. After all, he writes in his memoir than when he was Junior Dean he would see the Provost regularly – and he always expected the Provost to do whatever he recommended.

So maybe we should let Professor McDowell - R.B. - to so many, Brendan to his friends – speak for himself.
In the collection of anecdotes published about his time as Junior Dean he provides what he calls ‘a useful background’:

I was born in September 1913 and was educated at RBAI and Trinity College Dublin. I entered TCD in 1932, graduated BA in 1936 and PhD in 1938.

What he doesn’t add is that he completed his Ph.D. in just 21 months, and that it was one of his greatest works, later published as ‘Irish Public Opinion, 1750-1800’. Or that, at the time, he was the only History Ph.D. student at Trinity, which is a revealing insight into what Trinity was like at the time, and how it has changed.

He continues:
Then, after being engaged in a variety of occupations - including librarianship, school-mastering and deputy lecturing - I was appointed a lecturer in Trinity in 1945, elected a Fellow in 1951 and held the post of Junior Dean from 1956 to 1969.

He writes in his memoir that he felt he had now become ‘a man of action on a small scale’. And many of the legendary stories of his time at Trinity date from this period.

He continues:
Much of my time was spent in reading and writing. Reading proved to be both intellectually enriching and self-indulgent – I read strenuously, but also for amusement, for instance a quantity of novels.

And we know from his memoir that he especially loved detective stories.

What’s less well known is that he once lost confidence when he was an undergraduate, and thought about giving up his studies to become a novelist. He started a book, set in an aristocratic country house, but when he showed it to someone he was told that he had confused the functions of the butler and the footman and should stick to writing about what he knew. He went back to History.

He always loved reading. He enjoyed telling the story of taking a train in Northern Ireland in the 1970s and looking up from his book when he realised that the train had not been moving for some time. The carriage was deserted. A member of staff went by, and informed McDowell that there had been a bomb scare and that everyone had been evacuated. But they had decided to leave him reading because he was so engrossed in his book and they didn’t want to disturb him.

As for writing, he said he sometimes found it enjoyable, though often it was against the grain.
McDowell was being far too modest. As anyone who has ever read one of his books knows he was one of the great writers, whose books can be enjoyed for their stylistic verve as much as for their historical scholarship.

He never lost his love of writing. His insightful study of Henry Grattan was published in 2001, shortly after his eighty-eighth birthday; his memoir “McDowell on McDowell” a few years later.

He remained remarkably prolific, even in retirement. Two years ago he oversaw the completion of the project on the writings of Wolfe Tone, which was published in three volumes by Oxford University Press. And he continued to work on another [great] Trinity graduate, Edmund Burke, until relatively recently. Burke, even more than Lecky, was his lifetime fascination and kept him thinking until the end.

Whether in his books, or in person, McDowell was a great communicator. He was a professor in the true spirit of the word. He professed the discipline of history. And in doing so, he challenged us all to think about the world differently.

McDowell ended his Trinity career as the Erasmus Smith Professor of Oratory. And he was certainly an orator. As an undergraduate, he was Secretary of the College Historical Society, and he won its prestigious Gold Medal for Oratory. Later he was a distinguished vice president of the Hist. He delivered a spellbinding oration on great figures from the history of the Society in 1970, on the occasion of its bicentenary. He ended his speech with a tribute to Lecky, and I think his description of the virtues and the values of the great historian can be applied equally well to McDowell himself:

‘He had two or three great virtues. He aimed at precision. He wanted to get things right. He tried to understand people’s points of view. His own spiritual home was the nineteenth century’.

And McDowell’s gave a warning then: as valid today as when he delivered it at that Hist debate more than 40 years ago:

‘We live in an age where there are sections of the world which pride themselves on the immobility of their convictions, on the fact that they are totally deaf to argument and that they are ready for ruthless action’.

McDowell suggested we should champion ‘the more sedate and less spectacular qualities which the eighteenth century and the Victorian age cultivated. Knowledge, reason, persuasion, the capacity to listen and to try to comprehend – these are of more value’.

There is a danger that McDowell will be remembered as a character – a source of endless anecdotes, sometimes fantastical, occasionally even true.
But that is to simplify the man. He was first and foremost a scholar – a scholar whose work was engaged with his contemporaries. He believed in addressing history to the educated world. No other historian has painted the Anglo-Irish world of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as well as McDowell, and no one has described it with such elegance and such style.

Shortly after my election as Provost I visited R.B. out in Celbridge. I wanted to pay tribute to one of the great figures in Trinity history – someone who helped write its history, and who eventually became a part of it. We discussed times past and plans for the future. Discussing the merits and otherwise of provosts he had known. He kept apologising for keeping hold of the conversation. But in truth I was happy to listen. I was struck by his wisdom, and kindness.

So let us all pay tribute to someone who was not just a great Trinity man, but a great scholar and a great friend – someone who inspired generations with his love of learning, and who will continue to inspire us as we remember his life’s work in the years to come.

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23
Opening of the 2nd International Research Conference – Building a Picture of Ageing of People with Intellectual Disability: Future Directions for Ageing Well

Edmund Burke Theatre, Trinity College Dublin

Minister, colleagues, distinguished guests and delegates,

I’m delighted to welcome you to Trinity College Dublin for the second international conference on Ageing of People with Intellectual Disability.

I know that many of you attended the first conference, which was held less than a year ago.

Trinity’s on-going study into ageing and intellectual disability is unique, the first of its kind in Europe or internationally. It is also the only study with the potential of comparing the ageing of people with intellectual disability directly with the general ageing population.

Ageing is a core research area for Trinity. Five years ago we established the ground-breaking Irish Longitudinal Study on Ageing, which has put this university at the forefront of cutting-edge research in ageing.

This longitudinal study, which we call TILDA, is among the most important and exciting research initiatives in Trinity, and indeed in Ireland and Europe.

In Europe, we live in an ageing population. Next year, the proportion of the population in Ireland over 65 will exceed, for the first time ever, the proportion under 5. This has already happened in other EU countries.

We are living through a period of profound demographic change, which will affect a wide range of policies, including health, social care, and transport.

But ageing is under-researched. Or it has been, until now. Too often people rely on assumptions about older people. TILDA replaces assumptions with hard data and concrete findings that can be used strategically by policy-makers and practitioners.

* * *

This week I was reminded never to make assumptions about ageing. On Monday, I had the privilege of giving a funeral address for a 97 year old man who never retired: Professor R.B. McDowell.
Some of you will know the name. He was a Trinity historian and Junior Dean, and one of the most memorable figures to tread the campus in the 20th and 21st centuries. A lot of his fame was down to his longevity. He first entered Trinity as a student in 1932; he was still living in the College in 2007.

He confounded any assumptions people might have about ageing. Two years ago, when he was 95, he finished editing the 3 volume edition of Edmund Burke’s correspondence. So it seems fitting that today we’re here in the Edmund Burke theatre.

Burke remarked once that “the first and simplest emotion which we discover in the human mind is curiosity”. R.B. McDowell never lost his curiosity. It’s what kept his mind fresh.

Curiosity is the desire to get beyond assumptions to the truth.

A few months ago TILDA published the first wave of its findings on ageing in the general population. One of the media headlines I remember is: “Older people lead way in volunteering!”. Normally it’s glamorous gap-year students volunteering in India who make headlines. It was good to see their grandparents get their due.

Another finding was that older parents are more than twice as likely to give a financial transfer to adult children then to receive one. So much for being a financial drain!

Not all TILDA findings were so positive. Evidence emerged of under-diagnosis of depression and anxiety. Among older people with objective evidence of depression, 78 per cent do not report a doctor’s diagnosis of depression. That is not a comforting finding.

*   *   *

I think it is fair to say that if people make assumptions about older people, they make even broader assumptions about older people with intellectual disability.

People with intellectual disability, young and old, face particular challenges.

I am delighted that Trinity is at the forefront of promoting social inclusion for this section of society. We do this through the National Institute for Intellectual Disability, or the NIID. It was established in 1998 to promote inclusion through education, research, and advocacy.

Today’s increased life expectancy of people with intellectual disability is a cause for celebration. It is indeed one of the success stories of the last
century. But it presents a challenge: we know little about the effect of ageing on this population group, in Ireland, or in any country.

That is why we have set up this study to inquire into it.

I look forward to the research findings which will be presented here today. They will help bridge our knowledge gap about this sector of society.

* * *

As provost, I am immensely proud of all Trinity’s research initiatives, but I think that today I am allowed to say that TILDA holds a special place for me. As dean of graduate studies in 2006, I had the opportunity of helping with the establishment and funding of TILDA.

I am also particularly attached to TILDA because it encapsulates those values in academic research which I most wish to promote.

Let me take a moment, if I may, to look at the scope of this remarkable study, which will run until 2016:

- Thanks to TILDA, Trinity continues to lead in a global way into research in ageing – and by global, I mean nationally and internationally. TILDA makes Trinity a first port of call for researchers all over the world seeking information on older people.

- TILDA also exemplifies our commitment to be engaged, locally and nationally, with key policy issues. Trinity recognises its responsibility to place its research at the service of this country and of society.

As I have mentioned, TILDA’s research is vital across a wide range of policy issues. The study into Intellectual Disability has broadened TILDA’s remit. That’s evident from the profile of the experts gathered here today - experts in Learning Disability and Disability Law as well as in Ageing and Health.

- TILDA showcases multidisciplinary collaboration across departments and between institutions of higher education. Most of the major academic institutions in this country have collaborated with TILDA, making this very much a national project.

TILDA researchers hail from a wide range of disciplines including: epidemiology, geriatric medicine, demography, social policy, psychology, economics, and nursing, showing the value of a multi-discipline university.

Trinity’s School of Nursing and Midwifery is the principal investigator in today’s study on ageing and intellectual disability. This School is relatively new, certainly in Trinity terms. It was established in 1996. But it was recently
rated the leading School of its kind in Ireland and I would like to congratulate the staff and the leadership in the School in this achievement.

And it is now becoming a European reference point for ageing research in people with intellectual disability.

I echo the School’s hope that today’s study, and TILDA’s research in general, can be replicated within other European countries, thereby facilitating coordinated EU policy in this area.

By replacing fear about ageing, and fear about disability, with knowledge and accuracy, we can draw up rational policies that will help improve the quality of life of all older people, and will help their continued contribution to society.

Ladies and Gentlemen, thank you for your attention.

It is now my pleasure to introduce Kathleen Lynch, Minister of State with special responsibility for Disability, Equality, Mental Health, and Older People.

* * *
The Inaugural Speech of Dr Patrick Prendergast as 44th Provost of Trinity College Dublin

The Public Theatre, Trinity College Dublin

Minister, Ambassadors, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Before coming into office as the 44th Provost of Trinity College Dublin, I made a formal declaration before the Board, as required by the College statutes. This declaration was first set into the Latin statutes of Trinity more than four centuries ago. I want to read it to you now, in English not in Latin, because I stand by the words of this declaration, and I would like to repeat them before everyone:

I, Patrick John Prendergast, on admission to the office of Provost of this College, solemnly declare that I shall faithfully observe the Statutes and all regulations lawfully enacted in accordance with them, and that so far as in me lies I shall see to it that they are observed by others; that I shall decide all matters equitably, without discrimination and without fear, favour or prejudice; that I shall be prudent and vigilant in conserving and promoting the interests of the College and its reputation for scholarship and sound education; and that I shall strive at all times to promote concord and amity among its members.

I’m struck by the continued relevance of these provostal commitments. Since the foundation of the College, what have been our core commitments? To develop the College’s reputation for research and scholarship, and to deliver sound education.

And what have been our core values? Equitable decision-making, prudent management of the College’s affairs, not succumbing to fear, and the promotion of concord and amity.

Trinity has delivered on these commitments and has stood by these values. Trinity’s global reputation as a leading university is something we are all proud of. In a tangible way, it enhances the standing of the whole country. Because Trinity enjoys all the advantages of a strong tradition, fine buildings, world-famous alumni, and a location in the heart of Dublin city, it might seem that our success is pre-ordained; an entitlement.

But I don’t need to remind you that this university and this country have faced incredible challenges over the past four hundred years, and that nothing is pre-ordained. Trinity has risen to these challenges by a
combination of stubbornness and adaptability: we have been stubborn about sticking to our values; we have been adaptable about the ways and means of delivering on our commitments.

Today, Trinity College, the whole education sector, and indeed the whole country, face particular difficulties. I don’t say that they’re the worst in four hundred years, but they’re bad enough, and they’re much tougher than I could have foreseen when I became Vice-Provost in July 2008. That was only three years ago. So much has changed, even since my election in April this year.

I want to talk about these challenges, and how we might meet them. And I want to reflect on the commitments and values that I’ve declared that I will uphold. I hope to show that it’s through applying an adaptable spirit to our age-old commitment to research, scholarship, and a sound education that we can best equip ourselves to surmount those challenges with confidence, and to do it with pride.

PERSONAL CONTEXT

Four centuries is a long time. My ancestors were smallholders in Wexford, and little did they know that Cromwell was about to wreak havoc on the county. University didn’t feature in my extended family until my generation: neither of my parents nor any of their siblings attended university, but many of their children did. In my generation, there are graduates in music, engineering, medicine, education, commerce and many more fields. And we’ve been able to use this education to pursue interesting careers.

I remember, as if it were yesterday, being accepted for engineering in Trinity and my parents driving me up from our home village, Oulart, in County Wexford, to live with my aunt in Blackrock. I remember that sense of expectation, of new choices and new opportunities. It’s a feeling that I know many here today have also experienced, because I know my family is not unusual in Ireland. Since my generation, higher education has opened up opportunities for many, way beyond the experience of our parents or grandparents.

Access to university, based on aptitude and intellect rather than status or family position, is one of the great success stories of the twentieth century, in Ireland, as in many parts of the world. It remains a core value of all Irish universities.

THE WORK OF THE UNIVERSITY – 1. PUBLIC AND PRIVATE GOOD
Entering through Front Arch in 1983, I had a sense of expectation of what my education would deliver. The surroundings heightened my expectations: I expected my mind to open out, a bit like that view that appears as you walk through Front Arch and out into Front Square. To meet great people and to be equipped with the skills to pursue an interesting career and to lead a fulfilling life; I think those are every young person’s expectations. And not just young people: students are now coming to university at every age, to fulfil a new expectation, one for lifelong learning.

Such expectations, if fulfilled, confer an obvious private benefit on the individual.

You might say that higher education is in their self-interest. But what’s striking about a university education is that, as well as giving the individual potentially greater earning power, it also gives a valuable return to society at large. The graduate within the community provides indispensible expertise in areas that benefit the public good; education, medicine, law, the arts, business, science, and technology.

In short, higher education is not only a private good, but it’s a public good. I think recalling this duality, these twinned and inseparable benefits, helps us to understand our role as educators and to understand how higher education should be funded.

THE WORK OF THE UNIVERSITY – 2. SOUND EDUCATION

I want to look now at this concept of a sound education. What does ‘sound’ mean to us? It means solid, assured, unshakeable, in the right place. We want to deliver a grounded education, one that readies our graduates for the volatile nature of the contemporary job-market and for the diversity of modern life. Such an education could indeed gear them towards getting a particular job, and satisfying a particular employer. But if that is all we did as educators, we would fall short of our role of acting fully in the public good.

In her inaugural address, our Chancellor, Mary Robinson, asked: “Are our students to be taught to be mouthpieces of orthodoxy or critics of the system?” When things are going well, it can be tempting to mouth orthodoxies, since the orthodoxies seem to be working. But inevitably, sooner or later, we pay for such laziness and complacency. And in today’s uncertain world, it would clearly be irresponsible to turn out students only capable of regurgitating codified information, because the codes keep shifting.

If not codes and orthodoxies, what do our students need?

A recent Trinity survey of employer expectations showed that employers of our graduates value critical and independent thinking; excellent
communication skills; and students who have developed a capacity for responsibility and initiative through extra-curricular activities.

The Trinity curriculum is strong in all these areas. On the extra-curricular front, I note that we now have over one hundred and fifty clubs and societies, from A to Z – that’s from ‘Anarchist’ to ‘Zoological’. We want our graduates to leave here genuinely transformed by their education, from what has happened both inside and outside the classroom. And so we aim at constructing a rigorous yet flexible curriculum that allows the student space to develop.

We don’t always get the balance right. Last week I got an email from a final year student. He was upset because he has classes scheduled for three evenings a week. He’s also a sporting club captain so this gives him a terrible choice: he can miss either half his lectures, or two thirds of his training sessions.

He wrote that he may have to consider his position as captain, though he considers this extra-curricular activity to be very important to his CV. He told me that he “finds it completely hypocritical of the College authorities to encourage extra-curricular activities such as sports, but then timetable fourth-year lectures in the evening when they know sports clubs train”. I wrote back to tell him I agreed with him. This is clearly part of a wider problem. I’ve asked members of my administration to work with the Students Union, who I must say have been excellent on this issue, to ensure that problems like this don’t arise in the future.

We’re ambitious for our students and we want them to be ambitious for themselves. As this story shows, our ambitions sometimes come up against timetabling. But because we’re secure in our commitments, we’re not afraid to be self-critical, and we’re not afraid of changing the way we do things. In the ten years of my provostship, I hope to respond positively to reasonable demands for change and improvement.

I think it would be pretty hypocritical to demand creativity, innovation and initiative from our students, without displaying at least some of these traits myself.

As our most sardonic alumnus, Jonathan Swift, remarked: “A man should never be ashamed to own that he has been in the wrong, which is but saying... that he is wiser today than yesterday”.

Students who are every day wiser than they were yesterday; students engaged in lifelong learning, who are sound in their foundations but not stuck in their opinions: that’s what we want. That’s who will reap most private benefit and who will sow most public good.
You don’t get these kinds of students by packing them into a huge lecture theatre with a lecturer holding forth at the pulpit. How can they learn to change their opinions if they’ve never had a chance to voice them in small, secure settings?

How can they rethink an experiment if they haven’t performed it themselves in the lab? How can they come to intellectual maturity, without the pastoral support of their teachers? And if they’ve never done primary research, how can they learn to see difficulties as opportunities?

THE WORK OF THE UNIVERSITY – 2A. RESEARCH-LED EDUCATION

I’d like to consider next how research drives sound education. Like a lot of the world’s top universities, Trinity derives many of its educational principles from the late eighteenth-century German educationalist and founder of the University of Berlin, Wilhelm Von Humboldt. His idea of students actively engaged in research alongside their professors in a common enterprise of discovery has proved remarkably potent and influential.

Not all universities subscribe to Von Humboldt. There are universities where academics are divided into research streams and teaching streams. They may well deliver a fine education— it’s not for me to judge that— but it’s not the kind of research-based education that develops the strengths in critical enquiry that I’m talking about. Instead of a common academic enterprise of education and research, there is division and compartmentalization. How can students learn the value of critical enquiry unless they engage in research alongside their professors?

In many countries around the world, in Asia in particular, they are investing now to create some universities that deliver the kind of research-based education we have. Sometimes I wonder if we in Ireland really realize the value of what we have. Are we prepared to throw it away?

The workload of the staff who strive to deliver this kind of education must be recognized. It requires dedication and commitment and is really not reducible to simplified measures. It’s easy to count lecture hours, less easy to quantify the one-to-one between student and professor that occurs during research projects. How much time does it take to do a research project anyway? It’s almost like asking how long is a piece of string. Anyway, it’s the results that matter, and that’s what we should be measuring. But instead, we’re focusing relentlessly on inputs. Just because outputs are harder to measure doesn’t mean we shouldn’t be trying. Because that’s how to assess the value of the education we offer.
THE WORK OF THE UNIVERSITY – 3. ADMISSIONS

The kind of research-based education I’m talking about is not for all, though it should be open to all. Let me speak for a moment about admissions. Yes, we can develop creativity, initiative, and open-mindedness through the ways I have just outlined. But the student should display prior potential and aptitude in developing in this way, otherwise the process is pretty thankless for both student and professor.

My position on admissions is simple: I want the students with the most aptitude for the education we offer, regardless of their socio-economic background. Are we getting them? We’re getting a lot of them, I know. And we’ve done the right thing in creating the Trinity Access Programme which is a leader in opening up university education to those who would not otherwise access it. But, as a country, we have yet to devise a system efficient and subtle enough to match up all school-leavers to the right course, in the right university. I know that there are excellent students falling through the system, just as there are less suitable students sailing through, because they’ve been well-trained in what to give the examiners. This is really frustrating. It creates a downward pressure on the kind of education we’re asked to deliver.

But I’m preaching to the converted. I know that while there may be differences about how to reform, we’re all mostly agreed on the necessity of reforming the admissions process. I note the recent publication of the Hyland report. Like most educators, I welcome the attention it has generated. I congratulate the Minister for all he has done so quickly in this area. I look forward to next Wednesday’s HEA and NCCA conference. I’m confident that whether it’s through interviews, aptitude tests, contextual information or a combination of diverse enrolment paths we’ll be more successful in matching students to the courses which best suit their aptitudes and skills, recognising the diversity that can be achieved among this country’s universities and institutes of technology.

THE WORK OF THE UNIVERSITY – 4. ENGAGING WITH SOCIETY AND INNOVATION

I want to return to the topic of the public and private good, because I think our commitment to engaging with society has acquired a new resonance in recent times. Trinity engages with society in many ways, through student volunteering and public engagement of staff, and working together with our local community, but today I want to talk about our engagement through innovation.
University research is feeding into the economy more directly than ever before. The connection between high-tech companies, university research, and excellent graduates has become ever more important with each passing year.

I don’t normally throw around buzzwords but in this case I think it’s useful to employ the term ‘innovation ecosystem’. The biological metaphor is apt: it gets across the idea of different players, or organisms, interacting to sustain a flourishing environment. And because the word ‘delicate’ is often attached to ‘ecosystem’, it gets across how subtle this interaction is, and how the balance has to be right for economic growth.

The innovation ecosystem involves the public and private sectors; it involves individuals, enterprises, higher education institutions, and governmental bodies interacting in the right regulatory environment to create jobs and open up new opportunities. It recognizes that entrepreneurship is a private sector activity.

Here, in this country, we aspire to an economy where knowledge is turned into wealth – a so-called knowledge economy. When I talk about knowledge I don’t just mean knowledge in the scientific and technological sense. As long as you’re creating knowledge at a faster rate and to a higher level than your competitors, then you’re opening up opportunities for innovation, ultimately with the potential of creating jobs and wealth and improving society.

Trinity’s latest institution, which will be officially opened shortly, is The Lir. It’s an academy of dramatic art, with courses for actors, playwrights, and directors. That’s all knowledge. That’s job-creating innovation.

Trinity is first and foremost about knowledge, and is therefore a key player in the innovation ecosystem. We’re the country’s leading university, and home to some of Ireland’s most ground-breaking research. We relish the responsibility that this position brings.

One of the ways in which Trinity is helping to grow the ecosystem is through our high-level graduate employment in the lynchpin companies of this economy.

An example of this is the SFI-funded CRANN Nanoscience Institute. It’s had fifteen of its research graduates recruited by Intel in the last six months. Actually, over half of CRANN PhD graduates ultimately go into industry. This recruitment of Trinity researchers by a global technology leader based in Ireland shows the different players within the ecosystem interacting. Among our spins-out, Havok has transformed the gaming and virtual worlds. Trinity genetics gave rise to Identigen, the ‘traceback’ technology which provides quality assurance to millions around the world. Havok and Identigen are just two Trinity spin-outs. There are many, many more that I could mention.
QUALITY IN JEOPARDY

In order to deliver its core mission, Trinity needs the resources and conditions to function to the best of its ability. Trinity, like other Irish universities, responded excellently to the increase in resources which it was fortunate to receive after 1995. In the boom years the expenditure in Irish third level education almost doubled. And, as a result, the number of students entering Irish universities also almost doubled. The response of the sector was tremendous. In Trinity’s case this was accompanied by a phenomenal rise, building on centuries of achievement, to international prominence in the university rankings: 43rd in the world in 2009. 43rd. No other Irish institution, public sector or private sector, ranks anywhere near as high in its global category. To put the figure in context, we have just one Irish-owned company in the Fortune 500, which is currently at 428.

Trinity is a great Irish success story. The whole higher education sector is a great Irish success story. Irish graduates are appreciated the world over. However global competition is not static. And it seems as though everyone has caught on that investment is now the key to a flourishing university sector. Investments made through private fees and public funds in many countries are currently greatly outpacing us. Of course, like everyone, I appreciate that there is a financial crisis in this country - which I will come to in a moment. But I do feel that there may be a resistance to the idea of spending money on universities which goes deeper than the immediate crisis.

Even at the height of the boom, even after the doubling on expenditure which I’ve just mentioned, the total spend on a student in an Irish university was still only at the OECD average, and well below the EU average. In 2008, Ireland ranked 10th in the 12 EU countries that supplied data in terms of expenditure per student over the course of a degree. Why was funding per student so low, even at the height of the boom?

To answer this question, you may want to look at the ratio of public to private expenditure. In 1995 we had a ratio of 70 per cent public to 30 per cent private. In 2007 it was 85 per cent public to 15 per cent private. I think we are the only OECD country to have decreased private contributions during those years of global expansion.

Another thing we may want to re-examine is the way we fund. At the moment, payment to universities is based on the division of a fixed pot. The amount each university gets depends on how many students all the other universities enrol. There is no direct measure of quality, or indeed assessment of the degree of subvention needed for a particular course. It’s only about numbers, so much so that one commentator talks about ‘headage’ payments. Herding in students without knowing, or even caring, whether we have enough
resources; is that really what we want? It’s not even what we want for our sheep. If we want to think in terms of quality, not quantity, then that should be reflected in the way we fund.

But I appreciate that this huge increase in student numbers happened very rapidly. We’re still thinking through the repercussions. Many in the sector now perceive the need to reform the funding model.

I welcome, as I’m sure everyone here today does, the increased access of Irish students to university education. Opening up a Trinity education to more students is an achievement. But it’s not an achievement if what they’re getting isn’t actually a Trinity education.

When I first started lecturing here in 1995 I supervised three final year project students each year and I was able to spend significant time with each student. My colleagues in mechanical engineering now have eight or more such students, plus more Masters and PhD students than we had in 1995. Of course it’s great to have more PhD students but it’s not great if we can’t give them the time they need, or if we’re doing it at the expense of time with undergraduate students.

If we take on more students we need to take on more staff and have more resources available to run the courses. Unfortunately the opposite has happened. Funding per student has been reduced year on year for the last three years. And what has been the result? An unfortunate slipping down the global ranks for Ireland’s top universities. A few weeks ago Trinity got its new ranking: 65th in the world. We have fallen 22 places since our height. The metrics are unequivocal: we do not now employ enough academic staff, by international standards, for the number of students we have.

It is not a great feeling to fall out of the top 50, though actually this drop is not as bad as it might have been because of our continued reputation among employers and the worldwide standing of our academic staff. But we can’t rely for long on past reputation in such a fast-changing world, where, for instance, Nanyang Technological University (NTU) in Singapore shot up the ranks to overtake us this year, although it was only founded twenty years ago. I am afraid that some high-tech employers have already begun to question the quality of our graduates.

Even if you’re not the worrying type, you should start worrying now. Our national strength as an educational hub is in jeopardy. We have no right to mortgage future generations by dodging this issue; they will not thank us. And we have no right to prevent those who want a high quality education from paying for it if they can afford to do so. The reality is that if the best students can’t get a top quality higher education here, they will go abroad for it, and they would be right to do so.
THE GOVERNMENT'S DILEMMA AND WHAT WE CAN DO FOR THE GOVERNMENT

We recognise the significant capital investments of recent years. But the recurrent investment is below average. And we cannot continually eke out resources without prospect of renewal. There needs to be a plan for sustainability. The time has come to stop eking and to start investing in order to bring our spend up to the level of other countries.

To quote one of the most brilliant of all Trinity alumni, Edmund Burke, whose statue looks out from Front Arch to College Green: “Mere parsimony is not economy. Expense, and great expense, may be an essential part in true economy”.

I acknowledge the government’s dilemma here. Of course I do. We all do. And the engineer in me wants to propose a solution. My position on tuition fees is well known by now. Inevitably, it sometimes gets reduced to simplistic headlines, but I don’t think this issue is simple. The introduction of fees is a matter for the utmost consideration. We are currently working on a proposal about how private contributions can be increased. We’re examining dual track funding and looking carefully at models in other countries, including Australia and China, where such funding models are used. We look forward to sending this proposal to the HEA.

Another area to focus on is flexible innovation, or improved interaction within the innovation ecosystem. There are those who would have us quit R&D expenditure in universities because the payback is not rapid enough. I think this is a mistake born of impatience and lack of confidence. Turning research into wealth requires sustained development. How do we do this better? I don’t have the answer to this question, but there are many here in this audience who do. Some of them have contributed to the Innovation Taskforce Report. It’s critical that we listen to them so that innovation can flourish here, as in other locations of the world. Funding for research helps pave careers for our young people in the knowledge-intensive industries of the future. Yes, such funding is a bet on the future. But given the smartness and competitive ability of our young people, it’s a safe bet.

I’d like at this point to say a word about philanthropy, because it’s widely recognised that philanthropy propels us to excellence in many areas. Some of our generous benefactors are here today, and I thank them on behalf of the College.

All around Trinity, in our buildings and in our research projects, there is evidence of your generosity. I know that Trinity means something unique to each of our alumni, and that many are willing to contribute to its continued greatness. I look forward to the growth of philanthropy as an investment arm
for Irish universities. But philanthropy cannot in itself solve systemic underfunding. It cannot plug a hole left by insufficient private and public funds.

Another area which may help with the investment dilemma is inter-institutional collaboration. The HEA-led initiatives in this regard have been excellent and have added to the sector tremendously, in shared-services, and in procurement, for example. But the pace of change is incredibly fast. Sometimes the goalposts do move, and what we’re now seeing is the emergence of higher education as a globally traded and borderless activity. Staff, students, and research projects are increasingly switching countries and institutions, going to where the money and expertise is. This has created a wonderful energy and dynamism in the sector. But it’s a big change, which we must learn to meet with creativity and adaptability.

Thanks to the HEA, we now have excellent collaboration across the island of Ireland, which has allowed us to embark on ambitious research projects, such as TILDA, the Trinity-led Irish research initiative on ageing. But let’s have national priorities relating to global networks. Let’s build links beyond this island. Ireland is fortunate in its global reach: our well-connected graduates are found all over the world; our academics keep up constant contact with their colleagues in other countries; our embassies raise our profile and keep our contacts up to date. I think we should now be turning our attention to global academic networks, and using them to add value to what we do, rather than just national networks. But if we want to do this effectively, we need to release some of the constraints acting on higher education. To compete globally, I need to have flexibility and decision-making powers, the same flexibility that other presidents of leading universities can count on, particularly with regard to hiring and promotions. At the moment, I need to get permission for what I do.

There’s a current national tendency towards increased regulation. I understand why. Certain institutions behaved irresponsibly, even disgracefully, during the boom. Of course we want to regulate such behaviour. But heavy regulation is not a panacea, nor an infallible doctrine. There are many examples we can choose from, in the energy or telecoms sectors, where deregulation has improved service provision and stimulated growth.

I would suggest that the government does not need to shelter us within the framework of a nationally-regulated system, but could instead open us up to competing globally. Trinity cannot compete for Ireland on the world stage with our hands tied behind our backs. Too much constraint and sheltering removes choice, and if you remove all risk, you limit the opportunity for success. To quote Oliver Goldsmith, who also looks out onto College Green: “To aim at excellence, our reputation, and friends, and all must be ventured; to aim at the average we run no risk and provide little service”.
As a matter of fact, we want nothing more than to venture and pit ourselves against other universities of our standing, no matter where they are on the globe.

Let me stress that insofar as regulation ensures accountability, I welcome it. It’s when regulation threatens to emasculate decision-making that I feel the need to cry halt. If government can regulate in terms of outputs, and leave universities to deploy resources to best effect for the education of our students, then universities can prosper as employers, and act as an inward focus for students to come from abroad.

If this could happen, Irish universities delivering quality education to large numbers of students could be big creators of jobs. But in this country, we have twisted ourselves into a position where we are forcing universities to shed jobs rather than create them. It doesn’t make sense. Why aren’t we turning Ireland into an educational hub?

Increased regulation is inversely proportional to trust. We are currently suffering a chronic lack of trust, and so the Pavlovian response is to demand more regulation.

But we’ve got to get trust back into the system. Ireland cannot prosper without it. Nothing flourishes in a climate of fear and suspicion. Trust is linked to accountability. Institutions worthy of trust are happy to be held accountable for their decisions. This is where I think Trinity can help restore trust because we are very strong on accountability.

Remember that Burke’s emphasis was on “true” economy. He was the most accountable of people, the least inclined to excess or corruption. Following the logic of his position, I believe that in this particular situation he would wish, as I wish, to ensure that fees are kept as low as is compatible with high quality in education and achievement in research. As the head of a university I need to be able to put my hand on my heart and say that all monies, both public and private, are used to best effect in the education of our students. I absolutely realize the important role that the government of the people has in this.

I want to be held accountable. “Come fix upon me your accusing eye. I thirst for accusation”. I want the government to point its accusing finger at me and demand: “Are you spending the money properly?” – “Are you spending it properly, relative to the quality of your outputs, by international standards?” I know we can be confident about our accountability and I know we’re worthy of trust because during the now notorious boom years, Trinity behaved responsibly. We didn’t lose the run of ourselves. We adhered to our age-old values of prudence and vigilance. And we will continue to do so.
One of my predecessors in office liked to call Trinity ‘a small republic of letters’. This conveys its cohesive identity. It’s a community of 16,740 students and 3,300 staff. Almost half of Trinity’s academic staff are citizens of other countries, and the majority, like me, have studied or worked in other countries. We are global, but local too; Trinity is part of all our identities.

Trinity operates within a global academic commonwealth, an increasingly borderless entity which is removing all barriers to the free flow of people and ideas. I would like to see Trinity taking full advantage of and trading vigorously within this entity.

I think, as academics, we’d all like to say, with Erasmus: ‘Ego mundi civis esse cupio’; ‘I long to be a citizen of the world’. Erasmus certainly lived this citizenship. He was associated with Paris, Louvain, Oxford, Basle, and of course, Rotterdam, where I did a sabbatical.

Ego mundi civis esse cupio. But Trinity is also, proudly, a part of this country, this city, this neighbourhood. For the past few weeks I’ve been immersed in McDowell and Webb’s history of Trinity. That’s partly to learn more about the university which was good enough to elect me. It’s also, of course, in homage to the great R.B. McDowell, who died recently, aged 97, and at whose funeral I was privileged to speak.

What I’m most enjoying about their book is the constant interplay, the to-and-fro, between the internal processes of the College, and the animation and agitation beyond its gates. I think the authors intended to concentrate on the ‘small republic of letters’ and to keep Irish politics at bay, but found that they couldn’t. At one stage, writing of the mid-nineteenth century, they apologize for ‘straying for too long from our main theme, the College as a centre of education and scholarship, and devoting too much space to political, religious and constitutional issues’. But, they note: ‘for over a decade these were [in fact] the major preoccupation of the Fellows’.

To anyone who feels I have strayed too far from education and devoted too much time to matters political and financial, I can only make the same excuse:

it’s a major preoccupation, and it’s unavoidable. All universities interact with the body politic in which they’re situated. But not that many are as embedded as is Trinity in the life of their capital and their country. It takes about three minutes to walk from the Nassau Street Gate to Leinster House. What happens in Ireland affects Trinity and, ultimately, what happens in Trinity affects Ireland. That’s the symbiosis which McDowell and Webb couldn’t escape, and which I don’t want to escape. It’s what gives me the right, I think, to talk about trust and accountability, because when things go
wrong, we are all affected. Equally Trinity’s accountability, excellence in research, and international standing, can be a key component of how we regenerate the whole country. When I think of Trinity performing vigorously within the global academic commonwealth, I know that it’s playing for Ireland on the world stage.

A university which admits some of Ireland’s best students based on merit and aptitude; a university which develops them through research and sound education; a university which knows it can count on public support, because it serves the public good; a world-class university which plays for Ireland on the world stage; that is what I aspire to for Trinity. That is what I became Provost to do. If I may repeat the words of my declaration, “so far as in me lies” - that is what I will dedicate the next ten years to achieving.

Thank you very much.

\footnote{The actual figures are 57,090 in 1995 and 96,436 in 2010.}

* * *
Thank you very much Ryan (Bartlett, President of the Students’ Union) for that introduction.

Welcome to Trinity! To this great university – which together we can now call our university.

I’m delighted to be here with you, at the start of your great adventure.

I remember very well my first week at Trinity, so I think I’ve a fair idea what many of you must be feeling – a combination of nerves and excitement - enthusiasm and a small amount of trepidation.

I came here as an undergraduate in 1983 to study engineering. I remember my first week – coming in during Freshers week to take a course in chemistry for engineers.

And I’ll never forget how I felt when I first walked through the Front Arch and into Front Square. I felt the history all around me, I felt the energy everywhere I went, and I felt like I had become part of a new and exciting world.

I’ve never lost that sense of excitement about Trinity. It was the reason I did my Ph.D. here, and later returned as a lecturer. And it was why I was so honoured to have been elected last April by the staff and the students to lead Trinity as Provost over the next ten years.

I want all of you to have as good an experience as undergraduates - and maybe later as postgraduates – as I had. I hope that, like most of our graduates, you’ll develop a lifelong attachment to Trinity. So I’ve been thinking about what I can tell you that will help maximise your student experience.

I’m speaking as a former Trinity student, as a lecturer who spent many years teaching undergraduates, and as the head of this university who wants you to realise your potential - for your own sake. And for Trinity’s sake.

There are lots of things that make Trinity a special place to study and to work. You can see it all around you: the fine buildings, the long and distinguished history, the city centre location, the fact that we’re Ireland’s
university on the world stage. I guess these are the reasons why you chose to come here.

But of course what ultimately makes Trinity special is the quality of its students. You are what make this a great university. So it’s in your own interest, and the university’s interest, that you really make the most of your time here.

You will all have worked hard to be admitted to this university. You deserve to be here – let no one take that achievement away from you. But you have won for yourself a privileged position. And in return much is expected of you.

It costs upwards on 30 thousand euro per year to educate an undergraduate student, and the vast majority of that is paid by the Irish government. Your parents have made, and will continue to make, sacrifices that allow you to be here. Your professors and the staff in Trinity will likewise work hard for you to achieve your potential. This is a life-changing opportunity, made possible by the dedication of many individuals. Don’t take this opportunity for granted – don’t waste it.

Today I want to say a bit about the kind of education we offer - which is a rounded education that extends to extracurricular activities. And I want to say something about the resources and the people available to help you orientate yourself - around the College - and around your studies and your student life.

Trinity is a big university. There are currently over 16,700 students – that’s many more than when I entered in 1983. The education we offer is demanding and requires more critical and independent thinking than you will have been used to from school. I know all this can be overwhelming, especially in the beginning. But it doesn’t have to be. The more you can familiarise yourself with our way of doing things, and the more you can avail of our resources, the more rewarding you will find this experience.

THE TRINITY EXPERIENCE – 1. EDUCATION

You have come through one of the toughest pre-university systems in the world – the Leaving Cert. Congratulations for getting through it so well! But the kind of learning the Leaving Cert promotes is exam-focused – whereas a Trinity education is about learning to think for yourself.

A recent Trinity survey of employer expectations showed that employers of our graduates value:

- critical and independent thinking;
- excellent communication skills;
and students who have developed a capacity for responsibility and initiative through extra-curricular activities.

The Trinity curriculum is aimed at developing these skills. You are about to embark on a voyage of discovery with your tutors, lecturers, and fellow students. How can you make the most of it?

I think three things are key to excellence in academic studies:

- First, cultivate discipline. Go to your lectures and seminars and complete your coursework. Get into a regular pattern of study as soon as possible. Use the library and the computer resources available to you. If you leave study to the last minute, you’ll panic, and there’s no way of making up for lost time;
- Second, reflect and analyze. Get in the habit of thinking deeply about what you read, or what you discover during lab work. Actually, analyzing and reflecting is a facet of cultivating discipline. If you do your essays and coursework, you’ll automatically get in the habit of reflecting, because this work is aimed at making you think. Your lecturers do not want you to regurgitate what they say in the lecture theatre. They want you to think things through for yourself. But if you don’t do your essays and coursework, unfortunately you will face exams with a Leaving Cert mindset, which is not going to get you through;
- Third, speak up in public. Use tutorials and seminars, to speak up and debate your position. This will help you strengthen your arguments and it will develop those communication skills that employers are looking for.

THE TRINITY EXPERIENCE – 2. EXTRACURRICULAR

It’s not just what happens in the classroom, the seminar, or the laboratory. It’s the entire Trinity experience. We have hundreds of clubs and societies, all looking for you to join them. These clubs and societies keep multiplying. There are certainly many more than when I was fresher. We had never even heard of Paintball …

Today, whether your interest is chess, comedy, horse-racing, juggling, boxing, politics - you name it…there’s a club or society for you. And if your interest isn’t being catered for, start one of your own.

In clubs and societies, you’ll have fun, make friends, and get a different perspective on the world. Employers favour graduates who have a life outside the seminar and exam hall, because that’s evidence of a rounded individual with a thirst for experience. If you hold positions of responsibility in the society, all the better. And it doesn’t matter whether it’s playing Ultimate
Frisbee (I have no idea what that is!), or debating at the Hist, the result is the same – you broaden your mind and you broaden your educational experience.

Insofar as a university education is a preparation for life, we want to get across the message that life is for living, and that there’s a balance to be struck between working hard while enjoying life as well.

**ORIENTATION AND FINDING YOUR FEET**

Joining clubs and societies also helps with orientating your way around College. The more activities you’re involved with, the more familiar, and the friendlier, the College becomes. So get to know what activities are on offer, and where everything is – the library, the lecture theatres, the canteen, the shops, and so on…. Make use of the orientation documentation mailed to you.

I also think it’s useful to understand a bit about how the university is run and who is responsible for what. As Provost, I have ultimate responsibility. But this is a large university, so of course I need a team to help me run it. Some of my team are here today. I’d like to introduce Dr Amanda Piesse, who is Dean of Students. Her job is to develop and coordinate policies to promote the student experience beyond the classroom.

Dr Patrick Geoghegan is the College’s Senior Lecturer. His role is to coordinate undergraduate teaching and learning and to oversee admissions.

Dr Claire Laudet is the Senior Tutor and she oversees the tutorial service provided to undergraduate students offering student support in all aspects of College life.

Let me tell you a little about this tutorial service. Trinity is unique among Irish universities in that we assign all our students a College Tutor when they begin. Your tutor is not there to help you write better essays or to study for your exams. There are other people to help with these academic issues.

Tutors have a pastoral role. Over the next four years your tutor will be your administrative guide if you have any problems finding out how College works. Your tutor will be your confidential counsellor if you experience any kind of personal difficulties – and will put you in touch with professionals who can help. Your tutor will be your confidential advisor should you ever get into any kind of difficulty in College, and will ensure that correct procedures are followed, and that you are never in a vulnerable position. Even if you are in the wrong!

There are all kinds of services available to help you through College – there’s an accommodation advisory service, a Disability service, welfare and health
services, careers advice... Your tutor will help you to avail of the service you need. But tutors aren’t just for trouble-shooting. You can talk through everyday, practical issues with them.

For instance some of you may have to get a part-time job to make ends meet. That’s life, and a job can help you develop skills and responsibility. But if you’re spending too much time on your job, your studies may suffer and, after all, you are here to study. So if you’re worried about getting this balance right, talk to your tutor.

FAMILY

I’m concentrating on College services, but of course in terms of support, there’s no substitute for family support. Something I would like to emphasise is the importance of your parents and your wider family and your friends at home. Do keep in contact with them. Tell them how you’re doing. Build up a mature relationship with them.

THE TRINITY COMMUNITY

You are now a member of the Trinity community. This is a community of 16,700 undergraduates and postgraduates, of 3,300 staff, and of 92,000 past students, or alumni, living in 130 countries. Because Trinity is world-famous, it’s a highly visible community. What happens in Trinity is news.

For instance Havok is a software company for the gaming industry which was co-founded by a member of our computer science faculty. Havok products are used to drive special effects in movies including The Matrix and Charlie and the Chocolate Factory. Havok is often in the news because it’s always winning awards, including, recently, an Emmy from US television.

And some of you will have seen Trinity in the news last week. You might have read the spoof story about a certain lecturer - Dr. Conan T. Barbarian - whose profile was briefly posted on the School of English website.

This story went global. Within 24 hours of the profile being uploaded it was being reported in the Irish Times, the Washington Post, Sky News, Fox News, and even the New Zealand Herald. Most of the journalists praised the ingenuity of the hacker, and the humour of the story. Whoever put this up didn’t realise just how quickly things could go viral, and just how much the rest of the world pays attention to what happens in Trinity.

If you ever doubted that you had joined a university on the world stage here is proof! This is a community visible on the world stage - and you are now part of that community.
Your membership is not just for the next four years, or however long you study here. You will be a valued member of Trinity for the rest of your life.

Our past students, our alumni, often feel such affection for this university that many of them contribute their own money to build new faculties and libraries, or to found scholarships and prizes. In your turn you – as, I hope, well-paid and responsible members of society - will be asked to support the greatness of this College and I ask you to remember this day when you started here – and to ensure that others, in later generations, can feel as you do now.

Here you have the opportunity to reach your potential, because every single one of you has the potential to achieve great things. Whatever you want to achieve.

And my promise is that we will do everything in our power to help you to reach that potential.

The rest is up to you.

We know that you will be able to face the challenges of the future with confidence, because the Trinity experience will have transformed how you view the world, and how you view yourself.

I am reminded of a line from that great Irish poet, Michael Hartnett: ‘I pity the man who must witness the fate of himself’.

You may sometimes have felt that life was forcing you in a certain direction - that you were fated to follow a certain path and fulfil certain expectations. Well, you don’t have to be a bystander to the ‘fate of yourself’ – education is how you can transform your own destiny.

I would like to wish you all the very best of luck in your studies and in your extra-curricular activities.

I look forward to keeping in touch with you - this year and in the years ahead.

Thank you.

* * *
Celebration of the 20th Anniversary of the
Moderatorship in European Studies

Trinity Long Room Hub

Ambassadors, Distinguished guests, Colleagues, Students past and present, Ladies and Gentlemen.

You're all very welcome to the Long Room Hub for the twentieth anniversary of Trinity College’s European Studies course.

The Long Room Hub is Trinity’s Arts and Humanities Research Institute. It was opened a few years ago to promote scholarship in the Humanities, and to foster interdisciplinary research across the university’s arts and humanities Schools, and the College Library. I can’t think of a better event for the Long Room Hub than this current celebration, because European Studies has embodied interdisciplinary collaboration since its inception twenty years ago.

Students of this course study Europe’s past and present through several disciplines – among them History, Political Science, Sociology, and Economics – and through two languages. They choose between French, German, Italian, Polish, Russian, and Spanish. All students spend a year abroad becoming fluent in their major language.

Different Schools collaborate successfully to deliver this course - under a unifying hand of the Course Director. I am delighted to see here today not only the current course director, Dr Edward Arnold from the Department of French, but so many past course directors, including the very first director, Professor John Horne from History, who will address us shortly.

The linguistic focus of the course is something I admire. By insisting that students learn two languages, this course gets across a core message: Europe is a culturally diverse, polyglot continent. So don’t sit on your laurels when you know one foreign language, get on with mastering another, and then another... Our students should be up for this, and it’s great to see them challenged in this way.

Fluency in other languages is not only useful for travelling abroad and reading world literature at home – more importantly, it’s the key to cultural understanding. If you want to appreciate another culture, learn the language. The intellectual and historical context is important too.

I’m reminded of that story of the king who could speak, what - ten? - languages, but had nothing sensible to say in any of them. So it’s great that
this course emphasizes the history of ideas and the evolution of European thought.

I’m fortunate enough to speak a little Dutch, because I studied in Nijmegen and did a sabbatical in Rotterdam, and I have three bilingual Dutch-speaking children. Of all European languages, Dutch is perhaps the least obviously ‘useful’ because just about everyone in the Netherlands speaks English. You can get along fine without Dutch. But learning languages is not just about making yourself understood at the meat counter. Knowing Dutch gives me a little insight into that country of polders, stroopwafels and Van Gogh. And I don’t doubt that if I had greater fluency, I would have greater insight.

I was fortunate also to have had a Council-of-Europe scholarship in Bologna in 1990/1991 and spoke quite a lot of Italian then. Learning a new language enables you to think differently – to have different kinds of conversations: in a way you can reinvent yourself.

Seeing things from another’s point of view is key to committing to the European Union, which is premised not just on tolerance of other European cultures, but on an appreciation of their value to you, and to how you see the world.

One of Trinity’s best-known alumni is also one of our greatest Europeans. It’s impossible to imagine the career of Samuel Beckett without his astonishing mastery of French, a mastery which he began during his studies here in Trinity, but which, of course, he perfected living in Paris.

Reading Professor Nicholas Grene’s review of the recent publication of Beckett’s correspondence in last Saturday’s Irish Times, he mentions how Beckett translated his own French into English – saying that only he could produce the “queer kind of English that my queer kind of French deserves”.

I don’t expect all our European Studies students to write a modernist masterpiece in their second language, and then render it back into the native tongue. But I do think this course gives the potential to develop a deep and a broad understanding of the forces that shaped Europe, and a truly global perspective, which is indispensible whatever one’s chosen career path. It is simply a great education.

European Studies is a challenging and popular course, and this is reflected in the high entry points. I don’t like to make a facile correlation between high points and the strength of any university course, but in this case I think the demand for places does reflect the challenge and interest of this course, the calibre of the students, and the commitment of the academic staff who contribute year after year to deliver an excellent course on ever-reducing resources. It’s great to see so many staff, students and alumni here today, and I look forward to talking with you later.
In conclusion, let me just note that this course was established in 1991, during a time of great change for Europe – Germany had just reunified and the USSR had collapsed, opening up the possibility of EU membership to the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. The idea of adopting a common currency was on the table. The EU rose impressively to these challenges: we now have a Union of 27 members and counting, and we have the Euro.

But with regard to the Euro, we are currently somewhere between fraught and in crisis. And this, in turn, is testing some of the principles of the Union itself. This crisis is challenging all EU heads of state and government, and their advisors - and indeed all of us. In meeting this challenge in the long run, we will be relying on young people who have a sound understanding of the political and economic context, who speak European languages, and who appreciate why the European Union was brought into being in the first place.

This summer I read the Memory Chalet by the late great Tony Judt who remarked that “Undergraduates today can select from a swathe of identity studies.... The shortcoming of all these para-academic programs is not that they concentrate on a given ethnic or geographical minority; it is that they encourage members of that minority to study themselves - thereby simultaneously negating the goals of a liberal education”.

I agree with Professor Judt on what constitutes a liberal education. And when it comes to Europe, we are dealing with a rich, complex, diverse entity – I don’t think it’s possible to confront the current crisis from only a national viewpoint.

No-one could accuse European Studies of turning out students who are narrow in focus or who “only study themselves”. I would like to heartily congratulate staff and students on their achievement, and to take this occasion of the 20th anniversary to celebrate the depth, diversity, and interdisciplinary collaboration of European Studies - which prepares students so well for dealing with the depth, diversity and inter-state collaboration of the European Union.

Thank you very much.

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Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

I’m delighted to be here today to honour this wonderful international exhibition, Dublin Contemporary, and to celebrate Trinity’s long-standing commitment – indeed our passion – for the visual arts.

I’m reminded every day of this passion because the Provost’s House - where I’ve lived the past two months since taking up office - is a showcase of Irish art. There are paintings by Jack B Yeats, Louis Le Brocquy, Norah McGuinness, and Mainie Jellet on my walls. I’m becoming familiar with the different styles but I don’t think I’ll ever get blasé about living with these masterpieces.

Having access to contemporary art comes with my job, but it’s a privilege I share also with Trinity undergraduates. Thanks to the College Picture Hire Scheme, students can also have a Le Brocquy, a Scott, or a Jellet on their walls. They can choose from among the College’s 700 modern and contemporary art works by Irish and international artists, including Picasso, Henry Moore and Camille Souter.

This inspired scheme was initiated in 1959 - the brainchild of George Dawson, Professor of Genetics. Professor Dawson wanted the College to acquire a contemporary art collection as a counterpart to its historic collections, and he wanted to involve the students. He sought to stimulate creativity and break down fear of the new and unknown. And he recognised that Trinity College had a reputation as a significant patron of the arts since the early 18th Century, and that it should build on this reputation.

Thanks to Dawson, Trinity was the first university in Ireland to open an art gallery - the temporary ‘exhibition hall’ in the Berkeley Library in 1967. Ten years later this commitment to art found permanent expression in the Douglas Hyde Gallery.

Last year was the 50th anniversary of Dawson’s Picture Hire Scheme. We held exhibitions and published a commemorative volume of our collection – a volume called ‘George Dawson: an unbiased eye’, edited by the Curator of the College Art Collections, Catherine Giltrap.
Trinity’s participation in Dublin Contemporary is the latest manifestation of our commitment to the visual arts, and our role as pioneering patrons of contemporary art in Ireland.

Dublin Contemporary is turning out to be a triumph. It’s the first major international exhibition of contemporary art in Dublin in over twenty years. The curators have done a phenomenal job. This isn’t a round-up of the usual suspects and celebrity names. It’s a challenging, provocative, and beautiful mix of 114 Irish and international artists. I may not have time to take in everyone and everything, but I’ve been hugely impressed and delighted with what I’ve seen. Dublin Contemporary is being held in a few key venues: Earlsfort Terrace of course, the RHA, the National Gallery – and, the reason for us being here this evening – it’s being held too in Trinity College.

Since the 1960s, Trinity has been one of the key names associated with the promotion of contemporary art in Ireland. Professor Anne Crookshank was on the first Rosc organising committee in 1967, and the Berkeley then hosted an exhibition of American banner artists, including one by Roy Lichtenstein, which the students selected for our permanent collection.

Now, forty years later, Trinity staff and students are again involved in a vital international exhibition, and we have the privilege of exhibiting another great American 20th century painter, Alice Neel, in the Douglas Hyde Gallery.

The ALICE NEEL exhibition was an eye opener for me about the boundaries of portraiture. I congratulate John Hutchinson, Director of the Douglas Hyde, for putting on this exhibition. I also thank Catherine Giltrap, curator of the Trinity art collections – and Dr Yvonne Scott for their work for Dublin Contemporary.

And I’m delighted that our students have the opportunity of participating in such a radical exhibition. This expands their experience and understanding and helps them forge relationships and open doors for their careers.

I hope our students are challenged by some of the works in Dublin Contemporary. I know that we are constantly challenged by our students. This is why George Dawson was so adamant about student involvement – it wasn’t just about what he could do for them, but what they could do for him. Students kept his ideas fresh.

Trinity is a natural partner for Dublin Contemporary, not only because of our proven commitment to visual art but because we occupy an iconic space in the heart of this city.

Braco Dimitrijević is a pioneer in conceptual art, and an innovator of art in the public realm. In 1971 he created the first installment of his ‘Casual Passer-by’ series. He has since repeated this process in locations worldwide.
including the George Pompidou Centre in Paris and the Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven.

Now he’s come to Dublin - and where does he choose as the best location for his iconic installment? The front of Trinity’s Regent House on College Green. Of all the places in the city, this is where his work will have most impact, will be seen to best advantage by a great number of people.

Brian O’Doherty is one of Ireland’s foremost and radical artists. He is not only a visual artist but a remarkable critic and novelist, so he’s uniquely qualified to take on the daring task of making an installation piece about Samuel Beckett. ‘Hello Sam’ is being performed all month at the National Gallery, but on 13th October, it will start out at Front Arch and proceed through College to the National Gallery. The following day Brian O’Doherty will discuss his work in the Trinity Long Room Hub.

Of course, Beckett was a Trinity student and we have a campus theatre named after him. It’s great that this university is being incorporated into O’Doherty’s exploration of Beckett.

As I said in my inaugural address two weeks ago, Trinity is both global and local. We have many international staff and students and an international reputation, but we are also proudly embedded in the life of this city - our capital city - through our history, culture, and location.

Our unique place in Irish life is what inspired the positioning of the Douglas Hyde Gallery. It’s deliberately placed at the pedestrian entrance to the College to provide a bridge between city and university. Paul Koralek, who designed the Berkeley Library and the Arts Building, once commented that the most important piece of architecture he ever designed at Trinity was actually “a void” – the entrance at Nassau St.

The Douglas Hyde, placed right at that entrance, or void, invites locals and visitors into Trinity.

In two weeks Trinity will officially launch the Lir, the National Academy for Dramatic Art at Trinity College. Dublin theatres are hugely excited about this because the Lir offers professional and vocational training for actors, directors, playwrights, stage-managers.

And of course there’s the Science Gallery. As the Irish Times critic Shane Hegarty remarked: “It may have ‘science’ in the title, but each exhibition at the gallery proves it to be the most creative, innovative and artistic venue in Ireland”.

As part of Dublin Contemporary, the Science Gallery is launching the exhibition ‘Surface tension, the future of water’. Visitors can get water
samples from their taps tested; they can also see works by renowned artists Petroc Sesti, David Holden, and Fergal McCarthy.

I’m an engineer. When you think water and engineers, you might think “drainage”. But as this exhibition shows, art and engineering collaborate. Both benefit from expanding their horizons. I’m sure that George Dawson, who was a botanist and geneticist, would be thrilled at the concept of the Science Gallery.

It’s truly exciting to be Provost of a university which engages so directly with society, and which is so involved in innovating, in the wide sense of the word. Innovation can come through science, technology, the arts, and humanities. All these have the potential to create jobs and improve society.

Dublin Contemporary is innovative. It educates and stimulates local interest in the arts; it draws visitors and international attention to Ireland; it improves our image at home and abroad.

Over the next six weeks or so, Trinity will host exhibitions, talks, screenings, and performances as part of Dublin Contemporary. I hope to attend as many as possible and to see many of you at the events.

This is an opportunity for us to honour Trinity’s place in Irish cultural life and to celebrate the wonderful tradition of visual art in our university.

On Thursday Catherine Giltrap will conduct a behind-the-scenes tour of our art collections. We may not all get a chance to take this tour – I believe it’s already very booked up. But I want to stress that we who work and study in Trinity are fortunate in our proximity to great art, and we should make the most of it – it should inspire us as we go about our teaching and research work.

Trinity juxtaposes the old and the new, the historic and the contemporary, the local and the international. We know how lucky we are - no-one could pass Front Square or Pomodoro’s sphere without feeling uplifted. But over the next few weeks let’s pay special attention to all the art in the College, in all the unexpected places.

“I never understood the educational value of bare walls,” said George Dawson. He also never understood the point of amassing art and not displaying it.

The College walls - from the Provost’s House, to the libraries, to the Dining Hall, to undergraduate bedrooms are visually alive, expressive, and challenging.

As Provost, I have, of course, many ambitions for the College. One of my ambitions is to add a truly iconic – or perhaps I should say iconoclastic - art
work to the college’s permanent collection. So I’m delighted now to announce our intention to commission a contemporary artwork, to join Henry Moore, Alexander Calder, Arnaldo Pomodoro and Michael Warren on campus.

This artwork will commemorate the great Ernest T.S. Walton, a Professor of Physics at Trinity College from 1947 to 1974. Sixty years ago, in 1951, he received the Nobel Prize for Physics. The new artwork will be unveiled in 2012 to mark Dublin’s year as European City of Science.

I am thrilled that, through this commission, we will yet again make the connection between science and art, and that we will enliven our 400 year old campus and venerable buildings with something radical and contemporary.

The wonderful thing about Trinity as a space is that it keeps expanding our horizons and our understanding. Some of our aesthetic decisions provoke initial shock and consternation – like the Berkeley Library when it first went up. But our bold decisions in the visual arts don’t detract from our legacy. They are an addition. They help us to keep evaluating, appreciating and expanding that legacy.

Since I was an undergraduate I’ve loved that moment of walking under Front Arch and out into Front Square. For the next month Braco Dimitrijević will help me experience afresh this familiar walk.

Thank you Braco. And thank you to all the organisers of Dublin Contemporary.

* * *
Thank you for inviting me here this morning. I’m delighted to be here. Since being appointed Provost three months ago, I have of course given many talks and addresses, but at 7:30 am this is the earliest one!

Our theme today is “Trinity College – a university of global significance”. Last month I gave my inaugural address as Provost, and I touched on this very theme. Well the words I used then were: “Trinity College – playing for Ireland on the world stage”. My inaugural address was wide-ranging – I couldn't go into this in as much depth as I would have liked. So I’m very grateful for this opportunity to expand on what I meant by “playing for Ireland on the world stage”.

This morning I’ll talk about some of the different ways in which I think Trinity can extend its global reach, and how this can benefit Ireland. But first I’d like to say a few words about Trinity and the RDS.

THE RDS AND TRINITY: PUBLIC GOOD AND INTERNATIONAL EXCELLENCE

I can’t think of a better setting for this particular talk than the Thomas Prior Room in the RDS. I’m not going to go into all the connections between Trinity and the RDS because I’d be here all morning, and I’m sure you’re all aware of them. But I read that Thomas Prior was a friend of our own Berkeley and Swift, and I know he’s the man responsible for that great quote:

“Whoever could make two ears of corn or two blades of grass to grow upon a spot of ground where only one grew before, would deserve better of mankind and do more essential service to his country than the whole race of politicians put together”.

The very first meeting of the Dublin Society in 1731 – when it wasn’t yet Royal – was in the rooms of the Philosophical Society in Trinity College. Among the fourteen founder members were fellows and associates of Trinity; and this connection between Trinity staff and members the RDS has continued ever since. Some of the RDS’ most distinguished members and presidents were from Trinity, including George Francis Fitzgerald – famous for discovering the formula for dimensional change as you approach the speed of light – and Charles Jaspar Joly, the geologist. I don’t recall much of his geology but he did organise a corps of students to patrol the rooftops of
Trinity College in 1916. And of course this connection between our two institutions continues to this day – I note several Trinity alumni here present.

But it’s not simply a question of personnel. Or at least the reason why so many have performed – and do perform – the dual functions of working for Trinity and for the RDS is because of the similarity in our core missions. Both core missions focus on promoting the public good, or – as you put in your literature – “advancing Ireland, both economically and culturally”.

Trinity and the RDS are in agreement about the best way to promote the public good. We want Irish people, Irish research and Irish events to be world-class, and we want to apply best international practice to our activities in all fields.

One of the Dublin Society’s first actions in 1731 was to order the printing of Jethro Tull’s revolutionary book on tillage, which had just come out in England and was causing a storm. The Society was adamant about applying its revolutionary techniques to Ireland.

Today the RDS alternates the prestigious Boyle medal for Scientific Excellence between Irish and international scientists – a commitment to recognising excellence that is both local and global – a commitment which Trinity shares.

GLOBAL SIGNIFICANCE AND THE RANKINGS

Trinity’s core mission today is to be Ireland’s centre of global academic excellence and so enhance the country’s position on the world stage. In any system of universities there needs to be a leading edge. Not all players on the team have the same role.

Being on the leading edge isn’t an easy position to be in, but we relish it. And we will set ourselves tough targets in this regard.

The initial title suggested for this talk was ‘Trinity College – becoming a university of global significance’. I removed the ‘becoming’ because while I think there are many ways in which Trinity can improve its global standing, I also know that the quality of our education and research is such that we’re already a global academic presence.

So the question I want to address today is how to up our game. In fact even to stand still, we will have to up our game, because of the way other universities, particularly in Asia, are upping theirs. Recognising a different set of competitors is the first step in upping your game.

You all know that, like other Irish universities, Trinity has been falling in the rankings. From a height of 43rd in 2009 we are currently, as of last week,
placed at 117. It’s not that Trinity or UCD or other Irish universities have suddenly started performing badly and have allowed their standards to slip. Far from it. It’s that other better-funded universities are going faster. To some extent we can also see that our reputation is affected by the negatives about Ireland in the international media – a significant part of the ranking metrics are derived from reputational surveys.

A word on the rankings. I know that some people think too much significance is placed on rankings. They believe that rankings are crude and arbitrary and that we should have our own codes of excellence. All I can say is:

- first, that the rankings use many different metrics and if you check out the top twenty universities you won’t find many surprises.
- second, the rankings are what everyone goes on internationally – a global university can’t ignore the rankings.

Of course in Ireland we know the nuances of our universities and where the best specific course is. But when students and staff on the other side of the world, or even on the other side of Europe, are trying to decide where to go, they don’t have time to ascertain the subtleties; they just look at the rankings. Ireland currently has no universities in the top hundred. This isn’t a good situation for the country. Especially since, for many years, we have rightly prided ourselves on the standard of our education.

* * *

I want to talk for a moment now about education in Ireland. We are very fortunate in this country on being able to draw on a great tradition of education. When I speak of Trinity and the RDS promoting the public good and advancing Ireland both economically and culturally, I know that we are not the only institutions in this country with this core mission. I know that we have a whole network of public institutions with this aim. There is such a thing as society – and we have our public institutions part proof of it.

The education sector in Ireland is dynamic and diverse. At third level, it ranges from the research-based education of Trinity to the more job-directed education offered by, say, some of the institutes of technology; we have exceptional and world-ranking academics; and we have the advantage, from a global perspective, of delivering courses in the English language.

At the primary and secondary level, we offer a broad, wide-ranging curriculum. We do beat ourselves up a lot about its shortcomings. And for sure more emphasis could be put on languages, maths and science and we all know the problems with the points system. Nevertheless, compared to many other countries, our students arrive at university with a thorough grounding in core disciplines, and most will have been encouraged by their
schools in extra-curricular activities such as sport, arts and music, and volunteering – all areas which future employers put great emphasis on.

The proof of the quality of our education is first of all that Irish graduates remain highly desirable employees the world over; and secondly that other countries are seeking to emulate it. Many of the resurgent universities in Asia are modelling themselves on precisely the research-based education which universities like Trinity has offered for centuries.

AN EDUCATION HUB

You hear a lot of talk about turning Ireland into a hub – an innovation hub, or a software hub maybe. Well, why not an education hub? This isn't an area where we'd have to reinvent the wheel. We have in place an enviable structure. Why aren't we making the most of it?

Europe, by reason of its history, culture, and influence, remains a top destination for students globally. Ireland could, and should have, a flourishing international student body. We should be known around the world as an educational hotspot. We are very far from this at the moment.

The truth is that we are currently mostly confining our excellent education to our own students. Speaking for Trinity – which has I think a more international student body than most Irish universities – I can say that just 22 percent of our students come from outside the Republic of Ireland, and just one third of those come from outside the EU.

Unfortunately, the way we think of education in this country can be quite inward looking. But at this stage in our history – in world history – such focus on the national looks like protectionism and can seem like a burying of one's head in the sand.

I can't speak for how other universities see this but we in Trinity wish to think strategically beyond this island in terms of making our student body more international and, just as important, giving our own students a more international experience through study abroad. Trinity already thinks globally in terms of staff recruitment – half of Trinity's academic staff are citizens of other countries.

We now want to face up to the challenge of internationalising the student body because we know that there is a demand globally for the kind of education which we offer.

I will talk in a moment about how Trinity proposes to face up to these challenges. But first I need to say a word about funding.
You probably all know my position on funding for higher education because it’s been reported fairly widely in the media. I’m not going to go into it in any length this morning but, equally, I can’t ignore it.

As I said in my inaugural address, global competition is not static. Investments made through private fees and public funds in many countries are currently greatly outpacing us. We do not now employ enough academic staff, by international standards, for the number of students we have.

For Ireland to succeed as an education hub we simply have to find ways of bringing more investment into the system – we need to think strategically about financing.

When I talk about the ways in which I want Trinity to step up to the challenge of globalisation, I’m aware that implementing my suggestions will require finance. Trying to implement improvements without sorting out the funding issue ... well I’m reminded of a quotation from one of our most brilliant medical alumni, Denis Burkitt:

“If people are constantly falling off a cliff, you could place ambulances under the cliff, or build a fence on the top of the cliff. We are placing all too many ambulances under the cliff”.

Trinity is currently falling down the ranks like those people falling off the cliff. Strategic funding is the fence on the top of the cliff – the first and most crucial way of preventing the plunge.

Ireland’s spend per student is below the OECD average. The proportion of funding for higher education in Ireland from private sources is also below the OECD average. We need to change this, and quickly. We should look flexibly at all the options, including having a graded or ‘ramped’ system of grants available for those in need funded in part by fees levied from those who can afford to pay. This could be funded through fees. Another scheme used profitably in many countries is ‘Dual Track’ funding.

A financing system based on grants, or on economic fees charged for a percentage of students on dual track funding, with the recruiting net cast on a global scale – this is what we need to turn Ireland into an educational hub.

That’s all I’m going to say about funding here. But it’s important that I say it because we can’t have globally competitive and highly-ranked universities unless there is some game-changing about how universities are financed.
Now I’d like to turn to the second part of my talk this morning: the ways to make globalization in higher education real – the ways in which I believe Trinity could play for Ireland on the world stage.

* * *

1. INTERNATIONALISING THE STUDENT BODY

STUDENT EXCHANGES

First, let’s look at student exchanges. Currently I think about 1 in 20 of our undergraduates goes abroad to study. Many of these are language students who benefit from the Erasmus programme.

My goal is for half our students to take a semester or a year abroad. I was recently in Melbourne and met Trinity students there, studying history, engineering, and science. What they were gaining from the experience in terms of intellectual and personal development was palpable to see.

I myself had the opportunity of studying in Bologna and the university of Nijmegan in the Netherlands. I’m an engineer, not a language student, but the corollary of living in these countries was that I did learn some Italian and Dutch. Learning these languages and experiencing la dolce vita and – I’m not sure what the Dutch equivalent is – het zoete leven – count among some of the most formative experiences of my life. It’s why I’m such an advocate of students going abroad.

What we the academic leadership in Trinity have to do is set up student exchange programmes with top-tier universities abroad. We have a good number of these already, but we must eliminate the ones from second-rate institutions and increase the number from peer-institutions. The result will lead to dynamic student exchanges: our students will go abroad for a semester or a year, and foreign students will arrive here. The campus will become more multicultural and more reflective of diverse experience.

RECRUITMENT

But we don’t just want students on exchange. We would like to offer a full Trinity education to students from all over the world. In order to do this, we have to recruit. I know ‘recruitment’ may seem like an odd word to use. But I think the usual word – ‘enroll’ – is a little passive. ‘Enroll’ doesn’t get across the purposeful, proactive activities required to attract the best students from abroad. We’re in a global competition for the best minds. We have to demonstrate that we have a better education to offer. I’m in no doubt about the value of our education. But we’re not currently demonstrating that value. To borrow another term from business, our selling could be a lot better.
Trinity recently appointed Professor Jane Ohlmeyer from the School of Histories & Humanities as Vice-Provost for Global Relations. This is an entirely new post, created with the express aim of improving our messaging abroad and focussing global interest on Trinity. By creating such a post we are seeking to coordinate our activities towards the core aim of opening Trinity to the wider world.

**THE DIASPORA – OUR ALUMNI**

One of the key ways in which I think we can help ‘sell’ Trinity is to enlist the support of our alumni. We should fully develop our alumni network.

The recent Global Irish Economic Forum, held in Dublin Castle, sought to strengthen ties with the Irish diaspora to develop Ireland’s global business and trade relations. Enlisting the Irish diaspora is a key component to the national strategy for economic renewal.

In Trinity our alumni are our diaspora. We have close to 92,000 alumni living in 130 different countries. Most of them carry warm memories and have deep attachment to their alma mater. Many are people of influence within their communities. If they could be shown ways to spread the message about their great education, I’m sure that they would be only too delighted to get involved. It’s a question of creating a platform which people can build on.

The reason why so many students from Asia come to Ireland to study medicine is because of the quality and international recognition of the qualification. This happened organically and naturally over many decades. We want to replicate, but speed up, this process for other disciplines.

**EXTENDING OUR PRESENCE: 1. OUR PHYSICAL PRESENCE – A CAMPUS ABROAD?**

If you look at the universities in the top ten of the rankings, one thing many have in common is campuses abroad. They establish themselves in other countries, not just through their reputation, but physically. Building campuses abroad is currently beyond Trinity’s scope. But we could think in terms of a study centre. You’ll be familiar with the concept of study centres abroad because for instance the Notre Dame University has one here in Dublin. That study centre is geared towards helping American students based themselves in Dublin. I don’t envisage a Trinity study centre in quite this way. I envisage a Trinity Study Centre in, for instance, India, where local students could come and study some Trinity courses and where Trinity staff could build real research links with partner universities. It would be a way of extending our reach, making important connections, and physically locating ourselves in a key university city.
Another way to extend Trinity’s global reach is distance or on-line courses. I don’t favour distance learning for Trinity undergraduates. The undergraduate education we offer is premised on a full, diverse experience, which is not just about the lecture hall and seminar room but about the College grounds, the sports halls, the clubs and societies, even the Pav and the Buttery.

I think everyone with a Trinity bachelor degree benefits from the full Trinity experience as part of their personal development. But when it comes to postgraduate studies this applies less. There is no reason why someone in India shouldn’t do a Trinity masters or PhD, making full use of Skype, emails, and conference-calls to maintain a strong relationship with their supervisor. Of course we currently have postgrad students living abroad. But we could have far more. And we could have more diploma students abroad. This is an area rich for development but to do this successfully we need to overcome government constraints.

These are some of the ways in which we hope to internationalise our student body. Now I want to turn to an equally important area: the internationalisation of research – or to be more precise inter-institutional collaboration on research.

2. COLLABORATING INTERNATIONALLY ON RESEARCH

Much of our research is of global consequence, there’s no doubt about that.

You know in the RDS about our ground-breaking immunology research, because you recently awarded Luke O’Neill, our professor of biochemistry, the Boyle medal for his pioneering work on the molecular understanding of innate immunity and inflammatory diseases such as rheumatoid arthritis.

Trinity’s discoveries in the area of immunology and their application in the treatment of poverty-related diseases constitute some of the most important medical research currently being undertaken anywhere in the world.

Groundbreaking research in lung cancer and eczema published in premier league journals will also help improve and save the lives of many.

In all disciplines, from conflict studies to bioengineering, from computational linguistics to smart cities, our research is of the highest quality and is peer-reviewed internationally.

Much of this research occurs as part of global networks.
TELLING GLOBAL STORIES

One of the things which I think we can do to expand our global networks is to articulate our mission, tell our global stories, let the world know just how good we are. Trinity does make world headlines. Recently it made headlines when the New Yorker pointed the finger at one of our computer postgrads, naming him as Satoshi Nakamoto, the pseudonymous creator of an online currency called Bitcoin, which has so far been used for $35 million of transactions. The student, Michael Clear, said he was flattered, but denied being Nakamoto.

Trinity doesn’t mind that kind of publicity. The creator of Bitcoin was, in the words of an internet security researcher, ‘some kind of genius’. And there was nothing illegal about it. So the association does Trinity and Clear no harm. It may even turn out that Clear is playing a double game. He told one interviewer: “I’m not Nakamoto, but even if I was, I wouldn’t tell you.” Watch this space, as they say...

But still, we’d rather be spreading global stories about the research we can stand by openly. The precise articulation of our mission will involve telling the story of Trinity’s excellence in a vivid and accessible way, and telling it strategically in places where we most want to be heard, and where we can have most effect.

And of course Ireland will benefit. That’s why I like to talk about Trinity playing for Ireland on the world stage.

GLOBAL, BUT LOCAL

My talk has focussed strongly on the global, to looking beyond these borders, to forging international links and networks. But I’m sure I don’t have to explain to this audience that if my focus is global, my impetus is local.

As the country’s leading university, and home to some of Ireland’s most ground-breaking research, we accept that we have a responsibility to the people of this country. We relish this responsibility. We are relentlessly focussed on success because we know what our success can mean to the whole country.

The ideas which I’ve been outlining here – student exchanges, a study centre abroad, a programme of distance learning, recruitment conferences and fairs abroad, global academic networks – all these will yield impressive returns for Trinity – but also for Ireland.

As an educational hub, Ireland will have an international student body, mirroring the international profile of its academic staff. University research
will be collaborative and inter-institutional, our expertise pooled with centres of excellence abroad. The resulting dynamism of the education sector will have a multiplying effect on the whole economy.

When I talk about creating an educational hub in Ireland, I envisage Trinity as the hub of the hub. Yes, I hope and believe we will be the first port of call for foreign students and for exciting research opportunities. But I know that Trinity can’t be a hub without Ireland – nor Ireland without Trinity. I celebrate our mutual interdependence. To quote Denis Burkitt again in his most famous quote: “Irish by birth, Trinity by the grace of God”.

We all want our universities to exceed expectations – for its own sake, yes – but also because of the advantage this brings our country.

Many thanks for your patience in listening to me this morning. I look forward to questions.

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65
The Official Opening of the Lir – the National Academy of Dramatic Art at Trinity College Dublin

The Lir, Pearse Street

Distinguished Guests, Friends & Colleagues.

This is a seminal moment in the history of Trinity College, in the history of Dublin, and indeed in the history of Ireland.

It was a Trinity student, Oscar Wilde, who said: "Theatre is the greatest of all art forms, the most immediate way in which a human being can share with another the sense of what it is to be human".

And for once Oscar was being entirely serious.

Theatre is not only, in Wilde’s terms, the greatest of all art forms, it’s also the most involving. A novel or poem involves the author and the reader. A play involves script writers, actors, directors, producers, stage-managers, lighting technicians, props and costume designers… I could go on. A drama is an economic force.

How many do the Gate and Abbey employ? How many visitors do they bring to Dublin? What part did the Druid Theatre play in Galway’s boom? Theatre is a source of entertainment, and more – it’s a means of self-realisation. Ireland’s theatres are central to any plan for social and economic regeneration.

Trinity, recognising the creative and economic potential of theatre, established Ireland’s first BA in Acting in the 1990s. When this course closed a few years ago, there was widespread mourning, but out of the ashes has arisen this truly remarkable new Academy of Dramatic Art.

It’s physically remarkable – a purpose-built, state-of-the-art building of theatre and dance studios, offices, rehearsal rooms and workshops.

It’s geographically remarkable – on the dock, beside Liebeskind’s wonderful Grand Canal Theatre and Trinity’s Enterprise Campus - extending a creative corridor the length of Pearse Street to Trinity’s Science Gallery.

It’s remarkable for the diversity and complementary nature of its courses: playwriting, acting, stage management, design.
It’s remarkable as a ground-breaker: the very first umbrella academy of dramatic art in Ireland.

It’s remarkable for the different people and institutions involved in its creation.

When Trinity discontinued its BA in Acting, my predecessor Dr John Hegarty set up a Forum on Actor Training. Many leading figures in the theatre industry in Ireland contributed.

The principal recommendation of the Forum was for the establishment of an Academy of Dramatic Art in Ireland - linked to a university but with a degree of autonomy so that it could flourish under a unique identity.

Forum recommendations are often shelved. But the energy, vision and great connections of Professor Brian Singleton led us to RADA – the world-famous Royal Academy of Dramatic Art in London.

I believe all great ventures rely on serendipity. Just as Trinity and the theatre community in Ireland were looking at possibilities for an Irish Academy, an Irish RADA graduate was asking herself why Ireland didn’t have an acting and theatre school to compare with RADA.

That RADA graduate was Danielle Ryan. Her father was the late Cathal Ryan. Sadly he didn’t live to see his daughter’s vision realised, but we all know how proud and happy he would have been.

The Lir has come about through the combined efforts of Trinity College, the Higher Education Authority, and the Cathal Ryan Trust. It’s officially associated with RADA whose global reputation in drama it aspires to.

It has benefitted from the brilliant advice of Garry Hynes, Michael Colgan, Dermot McCrum, and many others, including its cultural ambassadors - key professionals of international standing in the theatre and related professions.

With such partnerships and associations, The Lir has real potential to be world-class – a renowned centre of excellence, which will perform for Ireland on the world stage.

The very announcement of this new Academy back in 2009 inspired Trinity’s Creative Arts, Technologies and Culture Initiative, which is sparking collaborations across the university, linking the arts and sciences. The initiative marks a new approach to creative practice in Trinity.

Back in 2007, when Trinity was mooting the idea for an Academy of Dramatic Art, and Danielle Ryan was thinking about how to replicate RADA in Dublin, Ireland was in the middle of one of the biggest booms in its history.
Nobody foresaw how impressively fast Trinity's and Danielle's vision would become reality.

But equally nobody foresaw how quickly boom would turn to recession.

The Lir was always going to be a source of pride. But because of the miseries of these recession years, we need the sustaining energy of that pride now more than ever.

Among the pantheon of Trinity's remarkable alumni, probably no field has more glittering names than drama. I think of William Congreve, Oliver Goldsmith, Oscar Wilde, J.M. Synge, Samuel Beckett, Sebastian Barry, Michael Bogdanov, Michael Colgan, Selina Cartmell, Lynn Parker and Dominic West.

Now look to our new students, these lucky fledglings of the Lir's first courses, and wonder, what new names will join the pantheon?

Thank you very much.

*      *      *

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Good evening. I’d like to welcome you all to the Long Room...except that feels somehow wrong - considering that most of you saw the Long Room long before I ever did – you are ‘Trinitarians’ of longer standing than me.

So I’ll just say how delighted I am to have this opportunity to meet so many contributors to this wonderful book. I would think the Long Room has seldom gathered together so many distinguished alumni at the one time.

I loved the last volume of *Trinity Tales*, also published by Lilliput, about Trinity in the Sixties. It was a revelation to me. As I recall from that volume, the student body of Trinity in the Sixties seemed to be made up of English public school boys, and poets that were mostly from Northern Ireland. The few Catholics stood out and felt daring for being there. Girls weren’t allowed join the Hist or stay on campus after hours. The presiding geniuses seemed to be R.B. McDowell, nursing a glass of good sherry, and the fictional Sebastian Dangerfield, the ‘Ginger Man’. The College life depicted seemed wonderful but I can’t say I recognised it from my years as an undergraduate.

Now with this volume, we’re into the Seventies and a completely different Trinity. The presiding geniuses of this volume are Kader Asmal and Bill Graham¹ so politics and rock n’ roll are the order of the day.

The Sixties poets have been replaced by actors and directors - did everyone in the Seventies take a turn in Players? It certainly seems that way.

I note that among the stars of the Trinity footlights in the Sixties were many people now notable in Irish life, including the manager of our largest rock band², a food critic², a chart-topping recording artist², a playwright³, the director of the Gate Theatre³, and several now famous actors⁷.

In his essay, James Ryan gives the date of the glaring change instigated just before Michaelmas term at the start of the decade – on 7th September 1970 the ban imposed by the Catholic hierarchy on attending Trinity College was lifted.

Of the effect of this decision on the profile of the students, Caroline Preston writes: “Ireland, and more particularly, Dublin had claimed Trinity”.

¹ Kader Asmal
² illiput
³ Gate Theatre
Bloody Sunday hovers over this volume. I lost count of the number of essays that recount participating in the protest march on the British Embassy on 2 February 1972. I didn’t know until I read Robert O’Farrell’s account that a huge black banner hung on the front of the College bearing simply the number 13. Nor did I know till I read Kathy Gilfillan’s account that the crowd was “jocular as well as angry”.

These are not the kind of details you get in conventional histories of the College.

In a few years we will celebrate the centenary of 1916 - and it will no doubt be pointed out that, during the Rising, armed students defended the College from the rebels. Whatever one’s opinion of the actions of the students on these two occasions, what’s interesting is the difference that two generations wrought.

Naturally, the Troubles form a backdrop to many of the essays. But there was also a social revolution taking place. Not only were girls now debating and living on campus, but they were writing booklets on contraception. And the College was a hotbed of debate on matters of global, national and local concerns. Carol Coulter tells us that “Few weeks went by without a mass meeting being called on one subject or another on the front steps of the Dining Hall, usually attended by at least hundreds of students in Front Square”.

Well I can tell you that we’re currently in another age of global and national concerns, but in twenty years of working in Trinity I could count on a hand with amputated fingers, as the Gingerman says, how many mass meetings attended by hundreds of students I’ve seen in Front Square.

Yes, student atmospheres change radically.

But Trinity cobbles stay the same and all experiences are recognisably Trinity experiences - but the mood of a decade is flitting.

That is why Lilliput has done us such a service in trapping first the mood of the Sixties, and now of the Seventies. And I understand volumes on the Eighties and Nineties are in the pipeline. I look forward to the Eighties, my own decade as an undergraduate. I’m trying to think now what the spirit of that decade was and who were the presiding geniuses.

May I conclude by congratulating the editor, Kathy Gilfillan, on this marvellous book. She appears in many of these essays herself – generally wearing knee-high or platform boots but always to great effect.
I also congratulate all who contributed to it. And may I echo Robin in warmly thanking Kathy and Antony Farrell, publishers of Lilliput, for their great generosity in donating royalties from this book to the Long Room fund.

In her essay, Kathy writes of the ‘jolt of excitement’ she feels every time she walks into the Long Room. I hope that all present today, and indeed all Trinity alumni, always feel a similar jolt of excitement. Certainly the excitement of being an undergraduate at Trinity courses through this volume.

Thank you very much.

* * *

Footnotes:

1 Bill Graham, Hot Press journalist, alleged owner of the largest record collection in Dublin, he introduced Paul McGuinness to U2, died 1996.

2 Paul McGuinness

3 Paolo Tullio

4 Chris de Burgh (frequently mentioned as Players habitué but doesn't contribute essay to this book)

5 Daniel Reardon

6 Michael Colgan

7 Ingrid Craigie, Dillie Keane
Michaelmas Term Honorary Degree Dinner 2011

The Dining Hall, Trinity College Dublin

Chancellor, Pro-Chancellors, Distinguished Guests, Colleagues and Friends

We are coming to the end of a wonderful and momentous year in Trinity, the tercentenary year of the School of Medicine. This has been an occasion for us to evaluate and celebrate the remarkable achievements of this School.

We have had a year long of exhibitions, talks, gala dinners, and celebrations. We were particularly delighted that this year saw the opening of the splendid Trinity Biomedical Sciences Institute where the School of Medicine is now located.

The 19th century is often referred to as the Golden Age of Irish Medicine. During this year's celebrations, Professor Dermot Kelleher remarked that we are currently “in a golden age of biomedical science in Trinity”. He was referring to Trinity’s ground-breaking research in areas like immunology, lung cancer, and eczema.

Trinity is immensely proud of its research record and its role in the prevention of serious diseases. But we also know that good medical practice is about more than ground-breaking laboratory research. It’s about administration, finance, communication, patient care, understanding the role of poverty and other social determinants, and much more.

The phrase “All of human life is here” springs to mind. I know it’s now a cliché but I can’t think of a better phrase to convey the centrality of medicine to the lives of everyone on the planet, nor to convey the range of skill sets required to put in place a system of medical care which serves everyone in the community, including those with rare and crippling diseases, and those on low incomes.

The six recipients of honorary degrees today are all immensely eminent in the field of medicine. They have carried out ground-breaking research. Their names are known in medical circles around the globe. They are remarkable for their ability to communicate, and for their constant striving to improve human health - in terms of access to health care, preventing disease, eradicating health inequalities, understanding stress, commercialising research, and elucidating – for students and the general public - the abstruse and difficult world of medical terms and definitions.
These six men and women, recipients of numerous awards and distinctions, serve as role models for us, and our students, of what can be achieved in the field of medicine.

Lord Darzi of Denham, graduate of this university, pioneered minimally invasive and robot-assisted surgery. A shining light of Imperial College London, he took the plunge into politics at the behest of Gordon Brown, when he was appointed parliamentary under-secretary in the department of health in the last Labour government. He was driven by his commitment to the NHS. When his review on the future of the NHS was published in June 2008, the Financial Times noted that it was “the world’s most ambitious attempt to raise the quality and effectiveness of an entire nation’s healthcare”.

During the twenty-year period 1987 to 2007, Professor Charles Dinarello was listed as the world’s fourth most cited scientist. This was for his remarkable work in the area of inflammatory and infectious diseases. He is a pioneer in the discovery of the key protein, Interleukin-1, which has been the subject of over 60,000 publications. We are very proud to have him as advisor to our own School of Biochemistry and Immunology.

Professor Parveen Kumar is an international expert in the area of small bowel disorders and coeliac disease, but she’s most famous for changing the face of medical publishing. Generations of medical students around the world, including in this university, are grateful to her. In reaction to the dull medical textbooks she was dosed with as an undergraduate, she decided to co-author a book which would be comprehensible and even fun to read! Kumar and Clark’s Clinical Medicine, first published in 1987, is now in its seventh edition and is consulted by millions around the world - on a daily basis.

Last year, Professor Sir Michael Marmot published his report, Fair Society, Healthy Lives, based on a review of health inequalities which he conducted at the request of the UK government. The so-called Marmot Review cements his position as one of the world’s leading experts on health inequalities. For the past thirty years he has led the World Health Organisation’s Commission on social determinants of health. He is now an advisor to the Irish Longitudinal Study on Ageing.

If Professor Marmot has contributed to our understanding of the part that poverty and inequalities play in disease, Professor Esther Sternberg has helped us understand the role of stress. This is particularly important today and Professor Sternberg has lectured on stress and the current economic crisis. She is recognized everywhere for her discoveries in brain-immune interactions and the brain’s stress response in diseases, including arthritis. She’s also deepened public understanding in this area, with popular books arising out of her research, including The Balance Within: The Science connecting Health and Emotions.
At the Karolinska Institutet in Stockholm, where Professor Harriet Wallberg-Henriksson has been president since 2004, the emphasis is on creativity and innovative thinking. The Karolinska Institutet Innovation System seizes upon medical discoveries in order to start new enterprises and new commercial means of spreading their message to the rest of society. Professor Wallberg-Henriksson, whose own research is in the field of diabetics, is also a Member of the Nobel Assembly which awards the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine.

* * *

It is entirely fitting that as this wonderful Tercentenary year draws to a close we in Trinity College Dublin – Ireland’s global university - should bestow our highest public accolade, an honorary doctorate, on six remarkable doctors who encapsulate the richness and diversity of medical research and practice, and who demonstrate how the work of individual scholars can change the world.

I congratulate each and every one of our new honorary graduates. We are privileged to have you join the family of the University of Dublin.

* * *

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Address at St Andrew’s College

O’Reilly Hall, UCD

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Staff, parents, and students of St Andrews College,

I’m delighted to be here tonight though I should say that this is not my usual milieu! A provost of Trinity College doesn’t expect to be delivering an address in UCD’s O’Reilly Hall! But in the spirit of ecumenism which of course exists between Irish universities I’m very pleased to be invited to this fine building in this fine location to celebrate the academic achievements of the new generation.

I congratulate all prize-winners, and I congratulate St Andrews - both for nurturing such excellent students and for celebrating their achievements in such style.

I’d like to talk to you tonight, about Trinity College - since I am Provost of that great university. I know that some of you, having left school, are already students of Trinity, and I suspect that others of you are hoping to be students of Trinity.

There is a long-standing connection between our two institutions. Trinity is delighted to welcome new St Andrews students every year. This connection goes back to when St Andrews was founded in 1894 - as a Presbyterian School. You will know that Trinity has a foundation as an Anglican institution. And that now Trinity, like St. Andrews, boasts a multi-denominational and international student profile. I believe the ethos of our institutions is similar, so when I talk about what a Trinity education means, I think that many of the principles and practices will be familiar to you.

And I know our buildings – at least our modern ones - will be familiar to you because the same modernist genius, the London-based architect, Paul Koralek, designed our Berkeley Library and Arts Block in the late ‘60s, and your school building in the early ‘70s.

I always use the Berkeley as an example of how long it can take to assimilate the avant-garde. The library caused consternation when it was opened in 1967 – but it’s now accepted by architects as a seminal building. I don’t know if St Andrew’s buildings went through a similar baptism of fire. But the fact that it takes our eyes and minds time to get accustomed to the new doesn’t mean we shouldn’t be constantly surprising and testing ourselves.
As pupils of a prestigious school, you will have been primed to attend university. Rightly, it has been presented as the natural goal of your studies. But what does a university education really mean? Well, I can’t speak for other universities, but here’s what I believe a Trinity education means. I speak, by the way, not only as Provost, but as lecturer in the Engineering department for the past twenty years, and as a former student. I guess I can say I’ve seen Trinity from all angles.

I first arrived as an undergraduate in 1983 to study engineering. I remember my parents driving me up from Wexford to Dublin for Fresher’s week, and how proud they were for me.

I’ll never forget how I felt when I first walked through Front Arch and onto the cobbles of Front Square. I felt history all around me, I felt energy everywhere I went, and like I had become part of a new, exciting world.

I’ve never lost that sense of excitement about Trinity. And that’s something I want to stress – university helps prepare you, like nothing else, for the world of work and of professional careers, but it should also be exciting. There is no other time in your life when you have this amount of freedom.

Coupled with such a relative lack of responsibility - yes, of course you have responsibilities - to your lecturers, to your parents, and to yourselves - to study hard and to do your best to succeed. But in college you probably won’t have mortgages, office hours with work and management responsibilities, career strategizing – all the things that come later in life.

Making the most of these precious years is what a Trinity education is about and that’s why we stress the development of the whole person. We are not a college of narrow vocational training. We seek to deliver a well-rounded and grounded education – an education ‘sound’ in its values – and which readies our graduates for the volatile nature of the contemporary job-market, and also for the diversity of modern life, a life that is lived increasingly in a global sense in that one may have to move around and compete throughout one’s career with others around the world, whether it be in business, the arts, industry, or academia….

Trinity’s ideas about education – about the importance of critical and independent thinking, are met by our emphasis on primary research and scholarly work within the undergraduate curriculum – have a long and honourable tradition. In fact they go right back to the 18th century and earlier. But what I find fascinating is that our long-established educational ideals actually tie in perfectly with the demands of contemporary employers.

A recent Trinity survey of employer expectations showed that employers of our graduates value:
- critical and independent thinking;
- excellent communication skills;
- and students who have developed a capacity for responsibility and initiative through extra-curricular activities.

I’m pretty sure that those employers hadn’t studied the Trinity tradition or 18th century educationalists, so it’s striking - and I think proof of the intrinsic rightness of our education principles – that employers want the same thing from our graduates as we want.

At Trinity whatever you study – and of course the choice is wide, from History of Art, Philosophy, and Law, to Chemistry, Medicine, Engineering, Psychology, and Business – whatever you choose to study, we are looking to develop your critical and independent thinking – we want to give you a glimpse of the frontier of your discipline, and to engage with the leading minds in your field, whether it be through reading their work or, indeed, through being taught by them because many of the leading minds are actually teaching on the Trinity staff.

How do we do this? Through a number of ways: students meet with their professors one-to-one, and in small seminars where they’re encouraged to voice opinions. Where possible, they spend a semester or year abroad in other highly ranked universities, engaging with a new culture and getting experience of being a citizen of the world – remember Erasmus Ego mundi civis esse cupio – I long to be a citizen of the world. Having benefitted myself from study abroad – in the Netherlands and Italy – this is an area I want to develop during my provostship. At the moment almost all language students spend time abroad but it’s something I want for the majority of our students.

In their final years, our students engage on primary research alongside their professors – whether that’s within a laboratory conducting original experiments, or in a library doing original research into a particular period, or writer, or manuscript.

Although this kind of research-led and international education we offer is more demanding of staff and students and requires more resources, we won’t compromise or lower our standards.

Of course it’s not just what happens in the lecture room, seminar, or laboratory. It’s the entire student experience that counts. Employers stress extra-curricular activities because they know how important these are in broadening horizons and developing skills, and in encouraging initiative and responsibility.

I know that St Andrews with its fine playing fields and excellent debating is strong on extra-curricular activities, so in a sense the move from school to university is a natural progression for Andrews’ students.
But at university - or at least in Trinity – the range of extra-curricular activities is truly remarkable. As well as our playing fields and new sports hall, we have hundreds of clubs and societies. The number keeps multiplying – it’s hard to keep track, but as I always say, we cater for all tastes from A to Z - that’s from Anarchist to Zoological, by way of boxing, chess, comedy, horse-racing, juggling, paintball, politics and much more. If by remote chance, your interest isn’t catered for, you’re welcome to start a new club or society. In fact finding an interest not already catered for could become like that impossible game which I believe quizmasters play – finding a question which can’t be googled...

* * *

When I talk about a Trinity education and how it helps prepare for a future career and for life, I hope that what comes across is the excitement, independence, broadness, and flexibility of such an education.

The most important thing when you’re leaving school is to feel horizons opening out, giving you a sense of the manifest possibilities of life. This is not a time to close down or narrow your options.

One of my favourite lines is from that great Irish poet, Michael Hartnett: ‘I pity the man who must witness the fate of himself’.

Sometimes we feel that life is forcing us in a certain direction - that we’re fated to follow a certain path and fulfil certain expectations. But we don’t have to accede to the ‘fate of ourselves’ – education helps transform our fates.

I’ll conclude by saying that when, I talk about the Trinity experience, I know that the control we academics and college officers have over this experience is important, but certainly not decisive. Ultimately experience is internal to the individual person. What probably counts more in this is the influence of peers and indeed of the wider political and cultural life of the city which seeps through the gates.

This was brought home to me recently when I was reading the latest volume of *Trinity Tales*. These books are collections of essays from former Trinity undergraduates. The first volume concerned the 1960s. The most recent volume is about the 1970s. And the upcoming volume, which I hope to contribute to, is the 1980s.

What struck me is how entirely different the 1960s were from the 1970s and how different both were from the Trinity I entered in 1983. The 1960s seemed to be an era of English public school kids, glasses of dry sherry, very few Catholics, and no girls on campus after hours. The 1970s was all radical politics, student protests, women’s lib, and a great deal of amateur dramatics in Trinity Players - though since the Players habitués included Michael Colgan and Ingrid Craigie I guess they didn’t stay amateur for long.
Everyone who contributed to the books had a recognisably Trinity undergraduate experience, but the decade put its stamp on that experience. I have some idea how the Eighties might pan out because I was there and contributed to it.

Students leaving school now are part of – what will we call this current decade – the ‘teens’? This too will be a definable decade but we don’t know yet how it will be defined.

Defining it will be the job of the students in this room. Whether you go to Trinity, or to another university, or indeed whether you decide university is not for you, you will help define this current decade.

I look forward to seeing what you do.

Congratulations again on your achievements, and thank you very much for having me here tonight.

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Monday, 28th of November 2011

Retirement Commemoration for Muriel McCarthy, Keeper of Marsh’s Library

The Long Room, Old Library

Your Grace, Ladies and Gentlemen

You’re all very welcome to the Long Room. I recently read a memorable description of this room in the just published Trinity Tales. A former undergraduate, who is now a South African novelist [John Conyngham] described it as a “cathedral of books”. He writes of returning to visit, decades after he had left Trinity and Ireland:

“Standing once more in the towering vault, I gazed up at the curved wooden ceiling in its haze of golden light, and breathed in the dusty and resinous smell of centuries of learning.”

The only library in Ireland that can rival the Long Room for beauty and for centuries of learning is, of course, Marsh’s Library.

That reason alone would make this a fitting location to celebrate the achievements of Muriel McCarthy, Keeper of the Books in Marsh’s Library for over twenty years.

But of course Trinity and Marsh’s Library are not only joined by longevity, beauty, dust, and resin. As you know Marsh’s library was founded by a former provost of Trinity, Archbishop Narcissus Marsh. He was only Provost for four years, at the end of the 17th century, but this was time enough for him to register concerns and implement changes.

He came to Trinity from Oxford and records (I quote): “Finding this place very troublesome partly by reason of the multitude of business and impertinent visits the Provost is obliged to…”

Now personally, I wouldn’t use the word ‘impertinent’ but otherwise ‘Plus ça change…’“and partly by reason of the ill education the young Scholars have before they come to College, whereby they are both rude and ignorant.”

Well if the scholars of the day were ignorant before they came to College, it seems they didn’t have much chance to remedy this, because only the Provost and Fellows were allowed study in the Library. The students had to be accompanied by a Fellow, or even indeed by the Provost himself, who was obliged to remain in the Library with the reader.
I don’t know was this because the College feared that those “rude and ignorant” students might steal the books, but in any case Marsh saw the problems with this arrangement. As Provost, he was successful in reorganising the running of the Library - he improved the classification, shelving, and numbering of books, and revised the regulations - but he wasn’t able to change the statutes of the College to give students unchaperoned access to the Library. That’s why, 17 years after he’d left Trinity and was serving as Archbishop of Dublin, he founded, at his own initiative and expense, the first public library in Ireland.

And of course the remarkable thing about Marsh’s Library is that it’s still used as a library and the 26,000 books are for the most part still shelved in their original places. The link between Marsh’s Library and Trinity College has been preserved through the generations. Many of the Keepers of the Library have been academic staff at Trinity and that relationship has enriched both institutions. Two recent and notable examples are R B McDowell, the recently deceased Fellow of TCD, who was Assistant Librarian at Marsh’s Library between 1939 and 1943 and also Keeper between 1958 and 1974.

More recently, the great bibliographer Mary ‘Paul’ Pollard was Deputy Keeper of Marsh's Library and a librarian in Early Printed Books at Trinity. Her incomparable collection of historic children’s books - more than 10,000 volumes from the 17th to the early 20th century - was housed in her private apartment at Marsh’s Library and donated to the Library at TCD after her death in 2005. That collection now forms one of the key research strengths in the arts and humanities collection at Trinity.

So it’s for all these reasons – what Robert Frost called “countless silken ties of love and thought” – that we are so delighted to host Muriel McCarthy’s retirement celebration in Trinity tonight.

Muriel has had a remarkable career as an academic, a lay canon, and the first woman Keeper of Marsh’s Library. You will hear more about her achievements now from his Grace, the Archbishop, and from my colleague, Prof Jane Ohlmeyer.

But I should just note that the information I have shared with you on the relationship between Trinity and Marsh’s Library comes from Muriel’s book on the Library, and from her excellent entry on Archbishop Marsh in the Dictionary of Irish Biography. It’s a most erudite and amusing entry and I, for one, am glad that she gracefully rescues my predecessor Provost Marsh from the character assassination he was subjected to by another Trinity graduate, Jonathan Swift. Thank you very much.

*  *  *
Firstly I would like to say thank you to the Dean of Graduate Studies, Prof Veronica Campbell, for the introduction and for the organisation of the workshop. It's a pleasure to extend a warm welcome, an Irish welcome, and a Trinity welcome to you here today.

We all know doctoral education has been very important in universities, the medieval universities saw doctoral education as the qualification to teach. And doctoral education continues to be important. It's not one of these things that have fallen away with time. It continues to be ever more important as the skills of independent thinking and critical inquiry become even more valued. At least even more valued, by those of us who work in universities.

So I am delighted to welcome you all to Trinity College Dublin for the 5th Thematic Workshop of the European Universities Association Council of Doctoral Education. We in Trinity are very pleased to be hosting this workshop for the first time and I would like to extend a special welcome to the EUA Secretary General, Lesley Wilson, and David Gani, Chair of the EUA Council on Doctoral Education Steering Committee, and to all of you who have travelled from around Europe and indeed perhaps from further afield here today.

I am pleased also to be able to say that doctoral education has been a priority in Trinity for some time. In fact Trinity instituted the position of Dean of Graduate Studies in 1965, so we will be having our 50th in 2015, and we can celebrate 50 years of formalised doctoral training in Trinity College Dublin.

Doctoral education in Ireland has also been evolving at a furious pace in recent years, all throughout the Celtic Tiger years and now, even though we are in an economically challenging time, there has been no let up in the pace of change in doctoral education. Indeed Trinity has played a key role in this and supported the introduction of specific skills training in a structured Ph.D., further developing the apprentice Ph.D. model into a model that encapsulates elements of generic skills training. In fact, I would like to recognise the longest standing Dean of Graduate Studies in the country, Alan Kelly. Myself and Alan soldiered together in this when I was Dean of Graduate Studies here in Trinity and we and others pushed the idea of generic skills training as a collaborative activity between various Universities.
So I think Ireland provides a good example of how to incorporate skills-specific training - both discipline-specific and more generic training - within the Ph.D. programme. Exposing students to different environments through multi-disciplinary research projects is something that we have also encouraged here in Trinity. And in fact we are conducting something of an experiment because some years ago we funded innovation bursaries, which were Ph.D. projects joint between two supervisors from different schools. The idea is that these innovation bursaries should facilitate interdisciplinary Ph.D. training and that this would in some way have different outputs than normal Ph.D. training occurring within the individual discipline and it will be interesting to see if that is indeed the case.

Trinity has also recently developed guidelines for an industrial/enterprise Ph.D. as a mode of Doctoral training which will involve students acquiring skills in both the academic and industry/enterprise environments. And not just the enterprise technology environments but enterprises that work in the social entrepreneurship and creative industry sectors as well. Some examples of this are the recent Ph.D. programmes that incorporate internships in industries such as our Ph.D. programme in Clinical and Translational Research and our Ph.D. programme in Digital Arts and Humanities.

Finally, I am also delighted that Stephen McIntyre, a Director at Google, will give his view of what skills are needed in doctoral candidates should they move into industry. I think the workshop will facilitate a valuable sharing of experience and insights around the future development of doctoral education in Europe and how best to prepare doctoral graduates for careers in the academy and beyond.

I wish you well in the workshop and I hope that you find it inspiring and indeed that you enjoy your stay in Trinity and also have time to experience the highlights of Dublin.

Thank you very much.
Wednesday, 18th of January 2012

Welcome Address to the National Dementia Strategy Conference

Paccar Theatre, Science Gallery

Minister, Distinguished Guests, Colleagues and Friends

I am delighted to be here this morning to say a few words at the opening of this important conference on Developing a National Dementia Strategy for Ireland, and to welcome you, and Minister Reilly, to Trinity.

It has often been said that today’s increased life expectancy is a cause for celebration, and it is, but living longer also presents challenges - challenges which must be met by society as a whole and by government.

Dementia is an extremely debilitating illness and it is said that for every individual affected at least three other family members suffer. I was surprised to learn, what I’m sure the Minister knows and all attendees at this conference are only too well aware of: that dementia care costs more than cancer, heart disease and stroke care combined.

This conference has been organized to mark the completion of a major and much needed review of research on dementia in Ireland which was commissioned and funded by The Atlantic Philanthropies.

Its key findings will inform and underpin the development of a National Dementia Strategy by 2013 which the government recently committed to in its programme for government (2011-2016).

Any rational policy can only proceed based on data - contemporary data: so the review will provide essential direction of public policy for dementia in Ireland.

Collaboration is the key in many large research projects: Trinity is very proud to be associated with this important research, which was undertaken in a major inter-institutional collaboration by the:

- Dementia Services Information and Development Centre at St. James’s Hospital, Dublin
- the Irish Centre for Social Gerontology at the National University of Ireland, Galway and
- the Living with Dementia Programme in the School of Social Work and Social Policy at TCD
Trinity embraces opportunities for such important inter-institutional and interdisciplinary collaborations, which do not need to be directed from the centre but emerge in response to tackling societal needs.

Similar inter-university collaboration has already been seized through TILDA - The Irish Longitudinal Study on Ageing - a study of a nationally representative sample of 8,000 older people aged 50 years and over living in the community in Ireland. This Trinity-led collaboration puts Ireland at the forefront of longitudinal studies of ageing globally.

Ageing is one of Trinity’s key research priorities. The Trinity Consortium on Ageing (TCA) has been established to promote research and teaching across the university in ageing; to develop and sustain a comprehensive research agenda on ageing, and to broaden the interest of the College and wider community in ageing.

The remit of the Living with Dementia (LiD) programme in the School of Social Work and Social Policy - which aims to tackle the marginalization of people with dementia and to enhance service provision and impact on policy - is another example of Trinity’s commitment to ageing and dementia research. Through the LiD programme postgraduate research is being funded and an Ageing and Dementia module is being taught to Social Work and Social Policy undergraduate students. It shows how research informs undergraduate education in Trinity - research and education are really joined together as one common academic enterprise.

This brings me to how the findings of this research review highlight once again the fundamental importance of Social Science research to developing appropriate public policies.

This research review offers a clear example of the how this College in collaboration with other Institutes is working to advance the public good through engaging in research aimed at transforming public policy.

Today’s conference provides a forum for engagement and debate with people in Irish society and those from further afield - this is part of the public role of universities and why universities work in the public good. I congratulate the organisers for recognizing this and ‘making it happen’.

I would like to welcome all those who have travelled from abroad to be here to share their experiences and expertise as we set about creating a National Dementia Strategy for Ireland.

Finally, this conference, along with the research report launched here today and other Trinity College ageing research initiatives, are illustrative of the generosity of one external philanthropic organization - The Atlantic Philanthropies (AP) - and we are hugely indebted to AP who have been
instrumental in enabling researchers to create new knowledge that we hope will ultimately be translated into improved outcomes for people with dementia, and family caregivers.

I would like to congratulate all those who have contributed to this important report and to this conference - in particular the Living with Dementia research programme (LiD), School of Social Work and Social Policy, TCD; the Dementia Services Information and Development Centre (DSIDC) at St. James’s Hospital, Dublin 8; and the Irish Centre for Social Gerontology, NUIG.

It now gives me great pleasure to introduce a man who I think needs no introduction, our Minister for Health, Dr James Reilly.

* * *
Celebration of the Award to Professor Andrew Mayes of the 2011 Burkitt Medal for Biblical Studies

Saloon in the Provost's House

I am delighted to welcome you all here this evening to honour one of Trinity College’s most distinguished scholars, Professor Andrew Mayes.

I would like to extend a special welcome to his wife Elizabeth and his family and friends. I am very pleased that this is, in fact, the first reception I have held here in the Saloon since I became Provost.

Andrew’s lifelong relationship with Trinity and biblical studies began in the 1960s when he became an undergraduate in the School of Hebrew and Oriental Languages. He obviously had an interest in this area from an early age. An exceptional young student, he was soon elected as a Scholar of Trinity and after graduation spent time in Jerusalem and Edinburgh before returning as a lecturer in 1967.

He was elected to fellowship very early in his career in 1974, signalling the trajectory that has established him as a world leading scholar in biblical studies. His published works have focused on the areas of early (pre monarchic) Israel; the book of Deuteronomy and its related literary corpus; and the contribution of sociological studies to the study of Israelite religion and society.

In 1992 he was appointed to the Erasmus Smith Chair of Hebrew.

In addition to his teaching and scholarship, Andrew’s commitment to College has been exemplary.

He played a leadership role in the evolution of the School of Hebrew and Oriental Languages through its new foundation as the School of Hebrew, Biblical and Theological Studies in 1980 to its renaming as the Department of Religions and Theology.

He has also taken a keen interest in the development of the university as a whole and was Registrar from 1993 to 1997 and Vice-Provost from 1997 to 1999. In fact he was the Vice-Provost that chaired the JPC in 1998 when I passed through it.

At the same time, Andrew has been a very active member of the Royal Irish Academy, being first elected in 1992, later becoming Senior Vice President.
He also managed to contribute his time to the Society for Old Testament Study in England, editing a collection of essays by members reviewing new approaches and major developments in established approaches to Old Testament study over a wide range of topics.

Andrew retired from College in 2009 and it is very fitting that in 2011 the British Academy should have recognised his standing as being quote “among the leading British Old Testament scholars of today and has a well-deserved international reputation for his contribution to scholarship during an academic career spanning more than forty years”.

The Burkitt Medal was established by Professor Francis Crawford Burkitt in 1923 for presentation by the British Academy to scholars who had given special service to Biblical Studies. It has become an internationally esteemed award and Andrew joins a long list of distinguished scholars upon whom this honour has been conferred since its endowment.

As the British Academy further noted in their citation for Andrew's award:

‘His first publications, especially his monograph on early Israel (1974) remain landmark contributions in any discussion of Israelite origins. Several subsequent publications provided a judicious assessment of Israelite historiography itself, notably his book The Story of Israel between Settlement and Exile (1983) and his monograph on the book of Judges (1983)’.

I know I join with everyone here, Andrew, in congratulating you on this prestigious award and your outstanding as a scholar.

* * *
Launch of the Music Composition Centre at Trinity College Dublin

The Samuel Beckett Theatre

It's my pleasure and privilege to welcome you here this evening to celebrate the launch of Trinity’s new Music Composition Centre. And to enjoy a wonderful concert, which sees two of Ireland’s most exciting new ensembles perform the work of some great contemporary composers.

The talent gathered here tonight is remarkable. It’s a truly inspiring occasion for me, for the College, and particularly, of course, for the two founder-directors of this Centre, Donnacha Dennehy and Evangelia Rigaki.

Donnacha has been modest in his opening remarks. This Centre is very much his and Evangelia’s brainchild. Their dynamism is driving it.

And I'm greatly looking forward to the programme of concerts and events that they have planned for this year.

There was a time, and recent enough, when scholarly learning and artistic creativity were seen as separate and divided. To paraphrase Yeats, 'universities were monuments of unageing intellect'; and universities were not to be 'caught in that sensual music' that goes on in the world outside.

Actually this was never quite true in Trinity. We were early converts to the importance of musical creativity at least, and established a chair in music as far back as 1764 and many distinguished composers have since occupied it, including Robert Prescott Stewart, Hormoz Farhat, and Brian Boydell.

But it may be that Trinity did not showcase, or did not take sufficient responsibility or pride in, its artistic achievements. Certainly when I was a student here in the Eighties, there was less emphasis on artistic creativity, or at least less visible emphasis.

This theatre we're gathered in tonight didn't exist – neither did the Lir, our new national academy for dramatic art. There were no courses in acting, directing or film studies. The School of English had wonderful writers on its staff, including poets Brendan Kennelly and Eiléan Ni Chuilleanáin – but it didn’t have masters courses in creative writing, or literary translation.

This has all changed. Fostering artistic creativity is now a cornerstone of the College’s strategy for developing the arts and humanities. And I congratulate my predecessor, Dr John Hegarty, for the Creative Arts, Technologies and
Culture Initiative, or the CATC, which is sparking collaborations across the university, linking the arts and technology.

The Department of Music’s commitment to creativity that links the arts and technology goes back years. Over a decade ago it established the Masters in Music and Media Technologies in collaboration with the department of Electronic and Electrical Engineering. The course offers students great scope to orient themselves within the areas of Music and Audio Engineering, Composition, and Performance.

I’m a great fan of interdisciplinary collaboration and this masters is a particularly fine example of what can be achieved. I would like to congratulate my engineering colleague Dr Dermot Furlong for leading it. Much of the music which we will hear tonight is as a direct result of engineers and musicians sharing their knowledge and creativity.

The Department of Music – long a source of creativity in the university - is today a breeding ground for emerging composers and performers.

This is unsurprising when you consider the quality and creativity of staff and lecturers: Donnacha Dennehy, Evangelia Rigaki, Linda Buckley, Enda Bates. The three adjunct professors are international names known to everybody - Gerald Barry, Kevin Volans, and Bill Whelan. We will be hearing compositions from all seven this evening. And many of the musicians performing in the Ensembles are Trinity graduates.

So this is truly an evening celebrating Trinity's remarkable music talent. The new Centre will help build the profile of that talent. It will be a creative forum, drawing on Trinity's long tradition of instrumental and vocal composition to produce the radical composers of tomorrow.

The experience of studying in such a dynamic, liberated environment and under such expert guidance will encourage students to take risks with their own creativity and break new ground. This is the purpose of a university.

Artistic creativity is central to the human spirit. It is also intrinsic to any strategy for the social and economic regeneration of this country. Trinity is committed to playing its part, to playing if you like for Ireland on the world stage. This means fostering and harnessing creativity.

A few months ago I had the pleasure of opening the Lir Academy for Dramatic Art. Tonight I have the pleasure of launching the Centre for Music Composition. Both occasions make me proud of this dynamic university – continually evolving, ready to embrace change, ready to play its vital part in leading the future of this country.
I don’t need to say any more about creativity in the university because we’re about to hear the proof of it. I congratulate all involved in this initiative, and look forward to a great evening’s entertainment.

It’s now my pleasure to hand over to Bill Whelan who will deliver the inaugural address. Bill needs no introduction: he is known the world over for Riverdance, for which he received a Grammy Award. As producer, he has worked with music greats including U2, Van Morrison, and Kate Bush. He is currently working on a new theatre work commissioned by the New York Metropolitan Opera and Lincoln Centre. We are incredibly proud to have him as adjunct professor.

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Opening Address to the European Universities Association Study Visit on Implementing Full Costing to Support the Financial Sustainability of European Universities

Trinity Long Room Hub

Distinguished Guests, Colleagues

It is my privilege to welcome you to Trinity College Dublin this morning.

And it is a particular pleasure indeed to welcome the Secretary-General of the Department of Education and Skills, Bridget McManus, here to the Long Room Hub, built in part with funds from the Programme for Research in Third Level Institutions.

Trinity is delighted to host the last of the study visits of the European University Association’s Project on full costing – and to host this study visit, on behalf of seven Irish universities members, of the Irish Universities Association. I thank Treasurer Ian Mathews and his team.

Europe can proudly claim an unparalleled tradition for university education extending back many centuries. While academies of learning no doubt existed elsewhere, foremost in the Arab world, it was the European model of institutions, allowed to serve the public good according to their values of institutional autonomy and academic freedom, that prospered. Such institutions transferred readily to the new world of the Americas, and I venture to suggest have now become the global norm as they spread throughout Asia as well.

What universities have to offer has never been more important. And not just because they teach independent thought and critical inquiry – that central tenant of a university education is something citizens value - but because it is recognised by governments how important higher education is to the economic and social development of society in the creation of the so-called knowledge economy.

For this reason, securing the financial sustainability of our universities has never been more urgent.

Since financial sustainability depends – as it rightly should – to a considerable degree on the public purse, this EUA project is to be welcomed
for allowing participants to both learn from and implement the best practice of their peer institution across the European educational area.

Trinity is Ireland’s oldest university. It was founded 420 years ago in 1592 when a small number of Fellows and Scholars – teachers and students in our modern nomenclature, took up residence in the disused priory of All-Hallows, which was granted to them by Dublin Corporation. Many centuries of strenuous adaptation followed, English Civil Wars, Famine in the Country, the transition – sometimes painful – to being a university in an independent Irish state, to our current position as a top-ranking research-intensive university on the global stage.

Despite our history, and despite our longevity, we take nothing for granted. There are particular difficulties currently being faced by Trinity and the Irish education sector; indeed these extend to the entire country and Europe as a whole.

While we will face these challenges head-on, and ultimately become stronger for it, the current financial crisis has demonstrated that the universities need to develop the tools to improve their financial sustainability – it won't happen automatically.

Government funding is contracting year-on-year in the sector and we have to do more with less while we put in place strategies to replace the reduction in exchequer funding with new sources of funding while still fulfilling our core mission in education and research.

One element to support these strategies will be to identify the full costs of our activities.

The Irish full economic cost project is a collaborative achievement by the seven universities in the sector and aims to establish the full cost of all the activities of each university i.e. the costs of teaching, research and any other activities are produced. It is a significant achievement but it is perhaps useful to strike a cautionary note. Oscar Wilde’s quip about What is a cynic? “a man who knows the price of everything and the value of nothing”. The value that universities contribute to the public good is not reducible to a single number so there are limits to this kind of endeavour because taken to extremes they would make cynics of us all. I do hope there are no extremists here!

I hope you learn much from the conference and enjoy your visit to Trinity and Dublin.
Consul-General, Distinguished Alumni, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I’m delighted to be here to discuss this vital issue with you. I’ll speak for about 20 minutes overall.

At the outset I would like to thank the Consul General Gerry Staunton and his staff here who have been so helpful in arranging this event for Trinity alumni and friends.

Also Thomas Browne, Chair of the San Francisco alumni branch; it is a pleasure to thank you and the members of your branch committee.

So 'Innovation and the University'.

You are Trinity graduates working in without doubt the greatest innovation centre in the world.

Let me ask you to keep two questions in mind during my talk.

First: How has your Trinity education been of service to you as you work and live here?

The second question I’d like you to keep in mind is: What can Trinity do to ensure that an innovation culture takes hold in Dublin, our capital city? I know every university president in the world wants a Silicon Valley in their neighbourhood, but I’m not thinking in terms of replicating what’s here in Dublin; I’m thinking of innovation that builds on the particular strengths of Dublin and Ireland. For want of a better phrase, let’s call it Dublin Valley.

STATE OF INNOVATION 1: INTRODUCING THE ECOSYSTEM

I’d like to start by giving my assessment of the current state of innovation in Ireland.

Innovation is a national priority, at least in terms of stated public policy. According to a recent Innovation Taskforce, Ireland can claim certain advantages which could help us create this innovation valley in Dublin. These include:
• Favourable demographics (Ireland has the youngest population and highest birth rate in Europe);
• A strong educational standard;
• A favourable tax and regulatory environment;
• An international mindset;
• A reputation for cultural innovation;
• A large and talented diaspora;
• And an excellent group of innovative multinational companies who have brought high-level R&D activity into Ireland.

I'll come back to these claims later; I think some have perhaps been overstated.

But certainly in Ireland there is consensus about creating opportunities for people by building an economy that is not reliant on cheap labour, or unsustainable exploitation of limited natural resources - rather one that is based on the smart creativity of our people.

And there's agreement about the importance of universities in creating this knowledge economy.

We talk in terms of Dublin's innovation ecosystem. The biological metaphor is a good one: the ecosystem's not an inanimate construct but needs to be sustained and grown.

The key players include enterprise, venture capital, government bodies, regulatory authorities, and universities.

So far, so good in terms of aspiration and prioritising: But what does the picture on the ground look like?

   STATE OF INNOVATION 2: ACTIONS AFFECTING THE ECOSYSTEM

As in any situation, there are gaps between aspiration and reality. If the ecosystem depends on all the players flourishing and interacting, we could point out that, for instance, the regulatory environment is currently sub-optimal.

I'm happy to say that certain problems are being dealt with: One example - a bill to change the bankruptcy laws is currently going through the Dail, as is legislation for debt forgiveness. So when it comes to specific barriers, the political will to remove them exists, which is encouraging.

When it comes to less easily targeted barriers, the desire for action may be strong but it's more difficult to achieve.
For instance, according to a recent government analysis, Ireland's innovation performance looks encouraging relative to international levels, with a high proportion of firms engaged in innovation expenditure. However, on closer analysis, it's the large, mainly multinational firms that are innovating through investment in R&D. Larger firms are almost twice as likely to innovate than smaller ones and foreign-owned firms are more likely to be innovators than indigenous ones. How do we improve this situation?

It’s not my place to comment on all the players in the ecosystem. I can only comment on the role of universities; or rather the role of our university, Trinity.

But because the key word with the ecosystem is interaction, it's right to touch briefly on some of the overall problems facing innovation in Ireland.

There’s a section in the Innovation Taskforce which I think very telling. It reads:

*Increasing our competitiveness by reducing costs, stabilising the public finances and preparing for a global recovery, while essential, will not be enough to ensure we return to sustainable economic growth.*

*Increasing productivity - that is developing new ways to get a higher quality and quantity of output of goods and services - is the key driver of economic performance.*

That was published in 2010. Unfortunately, because of events, the focus is now very much on 'reducing costs and stabilising the public finances'. We're in a climate of austerity and this affects all players in the ecosystem.

From my position as a university president, I would say that I now operate in an environment where the government's priority is on 'cost reduction' above all else whereas our focus is on quality, on excellence, on investing in the future of our young people though education.

Of course I understand that Ireland is carrying a huge burden of banking debt. But understanding the reason doesn’t change the negative effect.

Ireland needs investment, and investing in education of our young people has the potential for a great return. Let’s keep that in mind as we take a closer look at how universities contribute to the knowledge economy.

**KNOWLEDGE FOR THE ECOSYSTEM: THE UNIVERSITY’S CONTRIBUTION**

What do we understand by knowledge in this context?
I know here in the Valley, knowledge that creates innovation is strongly science and technology based; this region has the greatest number of Nobel prizewinners in the sciences in the world - but what is it in Dublin? 'A standing army of poets', as Patrick Kavanagh used to say!

I don’t have the answer to that question yet. I’m not sure anyone does. But I stick to what I said about the knowledge economy in my inauguration speech five months ago:

'As long as you're creating knowledge at a faster rate and to a higher level than your competitors, then you're opening up opportunities for innovation; ultimately with the potential of creating jobs and wealth and improving society'.

I don’t think we've had enough of a debate on what innovation-creating knowledge might mean in the Irish context.

For instance you’ll recall that among the advantages the Innovation Taskforce listed for Ireland was a 'reputation for cultural innovation'.

I agree that's an advantage, but I’d like to see more debate on how to use our cultural capability within the innovation ecosystem. Just as I’d like to see more debate on how to leverage another stated advantage: our large and talented diaspora; that's you. Potentially, you are a key asset in growing the Innovation Ecosystem in Ireland. That’s been recognised. But are you being given opportunities to contribute strategically? I’d like to hear your views on how Trinity could provide such opportunities.

EDUCATION AND THE ECOSYSTEM

How do universities rise to the challenges presented by the knowledge economy? It's not simply about producing graduates to fill the government’s pre-identified skills gaps. It’s about educating young people who want to be entrepreneurial, who will themselves identify where the gaps are and leap into them, who will create their own jobs - and maybe jobs for others.

Graduates help shape the knowledge economy. The form any 'Valley' eventually takes will be greatly influenced by graduates of Trinity. So it’s pertinent to ask 'What are Trinity’s strengths as an educational institution?'

I could talk about Trinity's specific achievements in, say, engineering, or computer science. I could talk about Trinity's contribution to the strength of the ICT and Biosciences sectors in Ireland, and I could mention our successful spin-outs, such as Havok, founded in 1998 to commercialise research into physics simulation software for computer games and films, and a decade later sold to Intel for 110 million dollars. Or Green Parrott Pictures founded by Anil Kokaram and recently sold to Google.
There is certainly inspiration to be gained from these successes but I want to take a more macro approach. If asked to define knowledge in Trinity, I would say that it is multi-disciplinary, inter-disciplinary, and founded on critical inquiry and original research that’s globally competitive.

And an example is, a decade ago the Music department collaborated with Electronic and Electrical Engineering to establish the MPhil in Music and Media Technologies. This course combines high-tech sound engineering with classical music composition, and has already produced highly talented composers and performers.

**TRINITY'S KNOWLEDGE AND THE ECOSYSTEM**

Trinity's tradition of multi-disciplinary, research-based education is not something we should compromise on, because it works; It benefits the whole country and makes an impact on the world stage.

Some people argue for rationalisation; focussing teaching and research around a few core areas that have proven economic impact. For some institutions in certain circumstances this might work. But I’m against it for Trinity because rationalisation that limits interdisciplinarity works against our strengths and threatens to destroy what makes us one of the leading universities of the world.

Innovation comprises the word 'new'. But good innovation is seldom about creating from scratch. This gives me an opportunity to quote one of Trinity’s foremost alumni: Edmund Burke.

But before I do, I should mention a recent book with the title *The Reactionary Mind: conservatism from Edmund Burke to Sarah Palin*; well Burke’s statue in front of the College must be turning on its pedestal!

Anyway this quote of Burke’s reads: 'People will not look forward to posterity, who never look backward to their ancestors'.

Trinity's traditions shouldn’t bind us, but I think it’s always true that we build on what we have. The high tech revolution didn’t come out of nowhere in Silicon Valley. It came out of this area’s long 20th century focus on electronics and radio transmissions.

It would be unwise and short-sighted of Trinity to move away from its traditional strengths, and dilute or compress the type of education it offers.

Now, I am going to say something which may strike you as old-fashioned: I believe the role of universities like Trinity is to cultivate knowledge for its own sake. The primary function of a university is not to turn knowledge into financial wealth. Yes, universities should work to strengthen the innovation
ecosystem. But commercialization of research is primarily a private sector activity, where rewards proportionate to risk can be reaped.

But you know the ancient Aikido saying: 'When one eye is fixed upon the destination, there is only one eye left with which to find the way!'

First and foremost, universities need to create a fertile environment where ideas grow and are explored in many directions, not only in the direction of immediate wealth creation.

There’s a beautiful line from the poet Michael Hartnett: one of Ireland’s greatest ever poets in my opinion. About his fellow poet, Paul Durcan, he writes: 'This head is a poet's head / This head holds a galaxy'. That’s what I found myself thinking once when conferring graduates: This head holds a galaxy.

The head that holds a galaxy holds a myriad of ideas, some of which the world may one day hear about. I’m reminded of Thomas Edison’s advice to would-be innovators: 'To have a great idea, have a lot of them'.

Universities which encourage students to undertake research in a spirit of open-ended critical inquiry will produce students with more ideas than institutions that force them down an exclusively market-driven route.

This is worth emphasizing because not only are universities under pressure to rationalise around a few core strengths, they’re also under pressure to find the commercial potential of research early-on.

As an engineer, I think one of Trinity’s greatest innovators was the mathematician, William Rowan Hamilton.

Hamilton spent his entire career in Trinity; and it was a career of astounding discoveries. One day in 1843 while walking to College by the Royal Canal, he felt what he called:

'the galvanic circuit of thought close. . . I felt a problem to have been at that moment solved ; an intellectual want relieved; which had haunted me for at least fifteen years before'.

Using his penknife he carved the equation that had just come to him on the side of a nearby bridge; Broom Bridge for fear he would forget it. This was his discovery of quaternions, which he described as ‘an ordered four-element multiple of real numbers’. \( i^2 + j^2 + k^2 = -1 \)

Hamilton wasn't thinking of a practical application for quaternions, and there was none for over hundred years. Today quaternions are used in many applications such as the control of spacecraft and 3-D computer modeling.
Had Hamilton lived in our time he could have been, I don’t know, Bill Gates? Unfortunately I don’t believe that Hamilton’s descendants have copyright on the algorithms or they’d be billionaires!

The history of thought shows us that the 'Eureka!' moments take time. Of course the world today is more fast-paced than ever before. But ideas still take time to grow, they need places for that.

And those places are universities.

TRINITY NOW

To recap: as a key player in the innovation ecosystem, Trinity creates an environment that favours the growth of ideas.

Those handful of Fellows who came outside the walls of the medieval city and founded Trinity 420 years ago created an 'ideas space'; we might now call it 'an incubator'.

We count as our strengths our research-based education and our interdisciplinary environment, where people freely collaborate and exchange ideas and research. We don’t narrow our definition of useful knowledge; and we allow it to grow at its own pace.

We are uncompromising about quality. It may not matter what sector knowledge is in. It certainly matters that it’s globally competitive. The best universities build on the latest international research in order to innovate further.

So the best way for Ireland to look to the future and remain globally competitive is to invest in universities. Investing in universities is investing in the potential of our young people.

FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF TRINITY

I don’t want to give the impression that we’ve got everything right in Trinity and are a perfect incubation ground for new ideas. I can think of areas where we could improve.

For instance you’ll remember that the Innovation Taskforce identified an international mindset as one of Ireland’s strengths. Well frankly I have my doubts about that. Certainly our links to the diaspora help keep us international, but we need to do more.

From Trinity’s viewpoint, our students could have a much more international experience in terms of spending semesters abroad. And we could develop much better research links with universities outside Ireland. Recently we
have launched a Global Relations Strategy in Trinity and this will take us to a
new level as regards international linkages.

So yes, there are areas to improve.

But I think we’re right to have confidence in the type of education we offer
and the direction we’re taking.

I’d like to end by touching briefly on two recent developments, which show us
leading from our traditional strengths in order to go forward.

I recently launched Trinity’s new Centre for Music Composition and the Lir
Academy of Dramatic Art, which offers courses for actors, playwrights and
directors. These initiatives show that fostering artistic creativity is more than
just a College aspiration, it’s a commitment. We are helping build on Ireland’s
reputation for cultural innovation.

And two years ago we established the Innovation Academy as a joint venture
with UCD. This educates PhD students from both institutions to develop
opportunities for innovation arising from their research. And most
importantly it gets students to work in groups to solve real-world problems
identified by a myriad of partner organisations in industry and the arts.
The fact that two universities who are, if not ancient rivals, than certainly old
competitors, are pooling expertise and sharing ideas shows, I think, a
commitment to the greater good of the country, and a willingness to cooperate
to grow the innovation ecosystem.

So if I may end by returning to my original question; what would a ‘Dublin
Valley’ look like? I think it will be a broad-based mix of high-tech, cultural,
and other types of innovation. I think science, arts, and the humanities will
interact, whether in performing arts, or gaming technologies and
visualization. And I think it will all be driven by graduates in a regulatory
environment that allows risk-taking, where failure is an opportunity to try
again. One of the great internationalists of our time was a Trinity graduate
and he said:

‘Fail again. Fail better’.

So as a country we must lift ourselves up again and Trinity has a central role
in that. And for Trinity to succeed we need the help of our alumni, your
support is very important to us.

But I’ve spoken for long enough - so over to you now.

Thank you.
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'Universities in the public service'. Provost’s Address to the Symposium on The Idea of a University in the 21st Century

Trinity Long Room Hub

Ladies and Gentlemen, esteemed colleagues

The title of my talk today is 'Universities in the public service' which means my intention is twofold: I'm going to talk about universities' commitment to serving the public good; and I'm going to question what role universities have within the Public Service - that is, as institutions working within a regulatory and funding framework created by governments.

So, yes, I'm permitting myself this pun on 'public service'. But it's not an idle pun. The question I'm posing - and which I hope we can start answering, among other important questions during this symposium - is: 'To what extent does a university serving the public good need to operate within the Public Service?'

This question touches of course on the way universities are funded, but it's not only a matter of money, and funding is not my priority here. I'm interested in how universities operate, and how they are perceived by the public to operate, and what this means in terms of academic freedom and delivering on our core academic mission of education and research. Is it always the job of government to define the public good, or should a democratic society have other actors in this task?

Many of us believe in the provision of public services by government. And in particular that services such as education and health should be provided to all. We expect governments to be guarantors of this. But do governments still have the power to guarantee this? And if they don’t, or won’t, then what happens?

At this critical juncture in Ireland’s economic history, we need to have this conversation about how universities operate. And about how universities, as Public Sector bodies, serve the public good.

The absolute importance of this issue was brought home to me just last week when I read the Sunday Independent newspaper on the Minister for Education’s remarks to University of Limerick students. He said, as you may recall, that his department and the Higher Education Authority hadn’t a clue if lecturers and tutors were doing their jobs or not.
I'm delighted that he came out so strongly to say that it wasn't government's business to evaluate the performance of academics. But I think the fact that this issue of ministerial accountability for lecturers was even raised suggests that there's confusion surrounding the public understanding of the way that universities operate, or should operate. It suggests that people are unclear about the role of universities within the public sphere, and unclear about who universities are accountable to, and what they're accountable for.

The discourse around the role of higher education has become murky. And because of this, people aren't asking the right questions. And we all know that you only get the right answers by asking the right questions. So this speech is my attempt to clarify the public discourse. I'm most grateful to Professor Darryl Jones for giving me the opportunity to do so at this important symposium.

UNIVERSITIES AND THE PUBLIC GOOD

In order to get clarity, the first question to ask is probably the old legal one: cui bono est? To whom is it an advantage? Higher education is clearly an advantage to the graduate, who leaves college furnished with the skills to pursue an interesting career and lead a fulfilling life. A university degree is in the individual's self-interest.

But higher education also benefits society at large in terms of educating doctors, teachers, lawyers, writers, scientists, engineers, historians, entrepreneurs and others who provide essential services and drive the economy.

This has always been the case, since long before the phrase 'knowledge economy' was ever invented, but the value of higher education to society at large has now intensified. A society that lives by its wits, so to speak, and not through low labour rates or the exploitation of natural resources, needs to have people educated to the highest international levels if it is to create employment in a global economy.

I believe working towards such a society is the right aspiration for this country, although I know certain economists disagree and believe that we should be taking another route towards a low labour rate economy for instance. Well I hope they are here for the rest of my talk.

There's another less obvious, but equally important way, in which universities serve the public good and that is by educating citizens to participate in democracy. Our President, Michael D. Higgins, centralised universities' crucial role in safeguarding democracy and reforming society in his recent address to the National University of Ireland. He asked:
‘Are the universities to be allowed, and will they seek the space, the capacity, the community of scholarship, and the quiet moments of reflection necessary to challenge paradigms of the connection between economy and society, ethics and morality, democratic discourse and authoritarian impositions that have failed?’

Higher education is both a private and a public good. This duality is important. It helps us understand our role as educators and informs our view of how higher education should be funded.

Because universities provide an excellent economic and social return to society at large, there is general consensus that they are an investment in the future, and a good use of public funds. But unfortunately the consensus ends there. There isn’t consensus about how universities should be using these funds. There isn’t consensus about what kind of education universities should be delivering. There isn’t consensus about who universities should be accountable to. And there isn’t consensus on who defines the public good in terms of higher education.

Let’s follow one possible answer to this question of who defines the public good: universities are publicly funded and under the remit of a government department. Therefore one school of thought might be that it’s up to the government, which is after all democratically elected, to define the public good in terms of education, and to tell universities how to deliver.

This could include government identifying skills gaps in the market and directing universities to concentrate resources on those disciplines currently in demand, while cutting off resources to disciplines where there is less immediate need. It could include telling universities when to step up investment into certain research and when to abandon other research that, in its view, is not sufficiently beneficial to the economy.

That’s an extreme statement of dirigisme. It’s not the way education is run in this country and I don’t think it’s something most people would favour.

But - and this is my point - until we decide who does define the public good in higher education, then dirigisme will remain a position and a possibility to be invoked. And there are, let’s be honest, some worrying signs of dirigisme in Ireland. I’m thinking of the Employment Control Framework for example.

I think raising the issue of ministerial accountability for lecturers was invoking dirigisme. The Minister dismissed it, I’m happy to say. But I submit that if the parameters of our discourse were clearer, it wouldn’t even have been invoked.
So back to this question of who defines the public good in terms of education. Let’s look at another possible answer - the answer which the Minister for Education did in fact give when he rejected dirigisme: he said (and I paraphrase) that we operate within a market economy where universities are service-providers and students are end-users. As consumers, it’s up to students to decide what’s working and what isn’t. To quote the Minister, 'The only people who can tell us that the contract between the lecturer and the institution, the department and the university is being delivered on the ground, is the student body'.

This is to state the student-driven model of education, which was first promulgated in the University of Bologna in the 11th century, when law students began hiring and firing professors. It was revived in universities in Europe in 1968 as a corrective to an education model which had become overly professoriate-driven. I know that when the Minister tells today’s students that it’s up to them to decide what's working and what isn’t, he’s seeking to empower students - which I think it’s important to do.

However - the fact is that generally in Ireland, and in Europe, we do not follow a purely student-driven model of education. I don’t know of any university that operates as the universities of Bologna and Salamanca did in the Middle Ages, ceding power to the students over their professors. It seems that Thomas Jefferson attempted a student-driven model for the University of Virginia but soon abandoned it. Around the world today, most universities strive for a balance between the professoriate-driven and the student-driven models.

Speaking for this university, we don’t see students as consumers and we don’t cede them sole control over what’s working and what isn’t. These reasons have to do with our perception of the role of universities in serving the whole public good and not just the private interest of the student. And with the kind of research-based education which we offer, which doesn't talk in terms of providers and consumers but of teamwork, and students and staff engaged in a common mission in the pursuit of knowledge.

I will return to these reasons shortly because they’re important. For now, I just want to reiterate, at the risk of hammering my point home, that to invoke the student-driven model when that is not generally the model of education we follow in Ireland is, again, to confuse the discourse.

THE FIVE DICHOTOMIES

If not the government or solely students, who does define the public good in education? Who are universities accountable to? How should they be using their resources? What kind of education should they be offering?
To answer these questions, I’ve set out five frontiers for universities in the public service. Well I’ve been calling them frontiers, but when I worked them out I realised that they’re dichotomies. That wasn’t deliberate, but I think it works quite well.

Now because I’m an engineer and I like diagrams, I couldn’t resist drawing this pentagram, and I’m going to label the five frontiers - these dichotomies - as I see them, each as an edge on this pentagram.

All universities position themselves around these dichotomies. When you know how a university positions itself you understand more about how it works, what its guiding principles are, and how it differentiates itself from other universities.

I’ll briefly run through these dichotomies before focussing on Trinity. I don’t, by the way, think that there is only ever one right position to take. Universities will be different. That’s to be welcomed. The positioning will depend on the institution and on the circumstances.

- My first dichotomy, I call The Education of Citizens vs the Education of Workers. Universities can take it as their first and foremost purpose to train people to become proficient employees and fill skills gaps in the market, or they can educate people to become active citizens within society.
- My second dichotomy concerns Students as Consumers vs A Community of Scholars. Do universities regard students as
consumers of educational products? Or do they regard students as partners in scholarship, engaged with their professors in a common pursuit of knowledge?

- My third dichotomy is **Discipline-based study vs Inter-disciplinarity**. Universities can produce students highly proficient in their own discipline and well capable of applying the specialised tools that have been passed on to them; or universities can emphasise educating students with little loyalty to a discipline, and ready to move outside it.

- My fourth dichotomy is **Corporate Governance vs Collegiate Governance**. In corporate governance the governing board is directly appointed and has mostly external members. In collegiate governance the board is mainly elected from staff and students and decision-making is predominantly by consensus.

- The fifth and final dichotomy concerns **Exchequer public funding vs Non-Exchequer private funding**. Most higher education institutions in Ireland are publicly funded, whereas in the US, for example, the private universities are common with income derived mainly from tuition fees and philanthropy. The questions to ask here are: Is the degree to which a university is publicly accountable related to the degree of exchequer funding? Can a university that is privately funded operate fully in the public good?

**TRINITY AND THE FIVE DICHOTOMIES**

So these are my five dichotomies. You may be able to think of more - you may think in terms of an octagon!

Universities position themselves differently around these dichotomies - and so they should. Strength lies in diversity. I can only speak for this university so I want to look now, briefly, at how Trinity positions itself.

First, the Education of Citizens vs the Education of Workers. Some universities, in Ireland and elsewhere, see their primary purpose as the training of graduates to find immediate employment. By providing a valuable service to specific graduates and employers, such universities certainly serve the public good.

But as I’ve said, another important way to serve the public good is in the education of citizens. If you want to do this, you must prioritize critical and independent thinking. Trinity aims to serve this good. Society always needs creators, reformers, and even radicals; our society and economy requires innovators and entrepreneurs who will ultimately create their own opportunities.

Second, Students as Consumers vs a Community of Scholars. By their final years our undergraduates undertake research alongside their professors - whether it be in laboratories, or in the library. This is a core College principle
and what it says, I think, is that our first commitment is not to the professors nor to the students per se, but to the pursuit of knowledge and, yes, the love of learning.

Knowledge does drive the economy and improve society. And encouraging students and professors to concentrate on knowledge rather than on their position in a hierarchy or their demands as consumers sends out a powerful message about collective enterprise and shows that we value our role as a university that serves all society, and not just current staff and students.

Third, Discipline-Based vs Inter-Disciplinarity. There is much to be said for a deep knowledge of the discipline, but equally it’s dangerous to be constrained by discipline. Trinity has always valued inter-disciplinarity and in today’s climate the argument for this is compelling.

Part of the reason why the world is in a mess is because rigid people stuck to the doctrines of their own disciplines, closing off other modes of thought. Garnering the strength and flexibility to move beyond the discipline is another way of saying that the pupil should outgrow the teacher.

Today, important social and economic development is occurring at the interfaces of disciplines - I’m thinking of Trinity’s multi-disciplinary research projects into ageing, neuroscience, computational linguistics, or my own area, bioengineering and the medical devices industry.

And if I may refer back to our aspiration to educate inquiring citizens, I would see inter-disciplinarity as important in the formation of citizens who can contribute to debate in a broad sense, and not only through one mindset.

The fourth dichotomy, Corporate Governance vs Collegiate Governance, is an area subject to great global diversity, though perhaps less national diversity. Ivy League universities tend towards corporate governance while Oxbridge has collegiate governance. Both are top-ranking so it shouldn’t be a question of preferring one mode over the other. It’s important to recognise excellence in diversity.

Trinity, like most Irish universities, is collegiate. Our elected board includes elected student members and an elected chair - me. The collegiate model is sometimes denounced as slow and unwieldy, but the benefit is that it fosters independence, responsibility, and a collective purpose. Who of us here can say it is not right? I think only someone already committed to a doctrine.

Fifth dichotomy, Exchequer Funds vs non-Exchequer. Public funding for universities is an important principle for many European countries, including Ireland. But there is increasing recognition that exchequers are not in a position to fund universities to the extent needed to deliver globally
competitive high-quality higher education. Irish universities fall in the global rankings reflects the current funding crisis.

To continue delivering quality education, universities in Europe generally will need to increase the proportion of non-exchequer funds. I’m not going to go into the ways this might be done. The important question, in the context of this speech, is: will accessing non-exchequer private funds impact on a core commitment to the public good?

I do not believe, nor do I think there is evidence to show, that public-funded universities invariably serve the public good better than private ones.

Speaking for Trinity, I can say that even if public funding were reduced to zero, we would still aim to operate in the public good in the ways I’ve already outlined. A university’s core mission should not be fundamentally altered by the way it is funded.

Much more significant in terms of serving the public good is the quality of the education being delivered. If public funds can’t cover the cost of the kind of education we deliver, then our contribution to the public good will begin to suffer. That’s why this issue of funding is so crucial.

I’m in favour of a balanced mix of exchequer and non-exchequer funds because, as I’ve outlined, higher education is both a private and a public good. Once we accept this, then it makes sense to say that universities should be both privately and publicly funded.

A QUESTION OF TRUST

To recap: universities make choices across at least five frontiers, and probably more. How do they make these choices? How do they decide whether to be collegiate or interdisciplinary or whatever? If they are strong and well-functioning, they will display consistency and cohesion in their decision-making, and will be guided by core values.

In the case of Trinity, which of course is the only university I can speak for, the core value which underpins our choices and which keeps us consistent, is our commitment to the public good. If we were solely interested in keeping our students happy, or feathering our staff’s nests, or meeting government agendas, then we would operate along different lines.

I say ‘solely’ - of course we need to provide good working conditions for staff and to look after students and consult with government. But we understand that our primary role is the pursuit of knowledge through our core mission in education and research. We’re secure in this role. Ultimately, it serves the public good.
So to return to our perennial questions of who defines the public good in terms of higher education, and who should universities be accountable to?

This is exactly the question the Minister for Education asked in his speech last week, when he said: ‘Who’s going to tell us if lecturers are doing their job?’

His answer was the students. My answer is yes, the students, but not solely the students. The whole university is collectively responsible for such an evaluation. That means students, professors, heads of department, and all the way up to the board - ultimately I’m responsible as Provost.

Think about it: is it desirable to have a situation where the president of the university and the heads of department are told that they are not in a position to evaluate their staff’s performance? Surely in strong democracies, accountability is built into public institutions as into private enterprises?

Institutions are deemed accountable when the public trusts that they understand their role and are capable of acting in the public good. Who should define the public good in terms of higher education? Universities should - the whole collective body of Board, professors, and students.

Universities will differ from each other about what they believe constitutes the public good. That’s fine and it’s healthy. There should be an on-going debate about this within the sector. But government and society at large should trust the sector to hold this debate in the public interest.

To come back to the pun in my title, operating in the public service (small p, small s) does not necessarily imply being under the control of the Public Service (large P, large S).

Strong, functioning democracies rejoice in publicly-funded bodies that are trusted to define the public good in their sector, and are encouraged to maintain autonomy, take responsibility for their actions, and be held accountable for their decisions. I’m thinking in particular of the judiciary and the media.

Higher education is such a sector. There should I think be no issue between granting universities public funds, and trusting universities to use those funds to do what they’re best qualified to do: pursuit of knowledge through education and research.

I don’t actually believe that anyone thinks universities are irresponsible or untrustworthy. No-one is talking in terms of ‘toxic universities’. As I’ve said the Minister went out of his way to reject the dirigiste model for higher education. But I think it’s fair to say that the current climate of austerity has bred an atmosphere of control and over-direction.
In this atypical situation, when government is being forced to take over banks and property portfolios, it has perhaps become second nature to seek to gather all public institutions under a government remit.

I believe this kind of thinking has crept up, rather than been actively encouraged.

Which is why I wanted to start asking what I believe are the right questions, and thinking about the right answers, in order to start strategizing from a place of clarity.

In this speech I've focused on universities acting in the public service and what this might mean. I'm aware that when it comes to thinking about the university in the 21st century there are other highly important issues which I have addressed. They include:

- improved access to higher education;
- the use of technology in education as an enabler for greater participation;
- globalisation of education, which will affect the role of the state;
- and the importance of lifelong learning.

I wouldn't want you to think I don't prioritise these issues. I do. But in the space allowed to me I've chosen to concentrate on this issue of who defines the public good in education. Because until we can establish that it's up to universities - to all institutions of higher education - to define this good, then we can't even begin to debate the issues of central importance to how universities will fulfil their missions in the 21st century.

Thank you very much.
Wednesday, 15\textsuperscript{th} of February 2012

\textbf{Official Opening of the New Home of the TCD School of Medicine}

\textit{Quek Lecture Theatre, Trinity Biomedical Sciences Institute}

Minister Sherlock, colleagues, students and friends.

It is my pleasure as Provost of Trinity to welcome you all here this afternoon to the Trinity Biomedical Sciences Institute and the new home of Trinity's School of Medicine.

Those of you who have taken the tour of the building will have seen firsthand that this is a state of the art education and research facility.

For the first time ever, cutting edge research is undertaken under the one roof in the areas of immunology, cancer and medical devices.

All are linked directly to both medical education and industrial collaboration.

It is appropriate that the tercentenary of Medicine at Trinity should be marked by the School's move to this wonderful new building. It befits the achievements of Trinity's doctors and biomedical science researchers over many generations. Names like Graves, Stokes and Burkitt and others are acknowledged internationally. Burkitt I'm particularly impressed by for saying he was Irish by birth - but Trinity by the grace of God.

Research has always been strong: in recent years our researchers have delivered the technologies that underpinned the nicotine patch; they've identified new genes for major diseases such as childhood eczema; they've discovered why some people are more prone to malaria and lung cancer.

Our international rankings - and we in Trinity aren't afraid of rankings - show that our research outputs in this area are amongst the best in the world.

For the first time in its history, the School of Medicine now has all preclinical education in one facility. It is unique to have medical students in a high-level multidisciplinary research environment where they can learn firsthand the bench-to-bedside approach to research and how it translates to the patient.

This has been a hallmark of TCD medical education and it's an aspect that can be seriously enhanced in this new building. Medical students will now study alongside researchers focused on a common goal of addressing major challenges in health and disease through leading edge scientific research.
It is important to acknowledge the pivotal contribution of government investment to the overall delivery of this facility, particularly in a time of great financial retrenchment. Moreover, the Department of Education and Skills and Higher Education Authority provided over 21 million euro in funding specifically for medical education and enabled the School of Medicine to achieve excellence. This investment will have great payback for Ireland in the future.

With the help of the funding that the Government provided, we have outfitted the medical teaching space with world-standard equipment. Lecture halls, seminar rooms and labs incorporate the latest technologies to maximise learning and research. The medical AV system in the Anatomy Department is complete with a wide range of medical-grade components to facilitate the transfer of audio and video information to and from the workstations.

What does this mean for the student experience? If we take the undergraduate students who met with the Minister today - Stephen Hatton and Meagan Wiebe, and Masters in Global Health student Deen Adebisi, who is already a qualified doctor in his native Nigeria - this new home, I hope, will not only provide better facilities for their education but also a stronger sense of belonging given that all preclinical medical training is based here and that they have a much better chance to interact with the faculty and each other.

This environment where future doctors are educated alongside researchers will definitely encourage the transition from undergraduate student to postgraduate researcher and ensure that patients will benefit from clinical research.

It is also important to mention that researchers based in other countries but are part of Trinity family will also benefit. For instance, Mohammed Lamorde, a medical doctor, is from Nigeria. He completed a PhD in Pharmacology last month thanks to the Marjorie and Norah Fenton Scholarship. Mohammed is based in Makarere University. He is a Research Associate at the Department of Pharmacology and Therapeutics and is working to avail of his research findings to improve the quality of life for people in Uganda and his native Nigeria.

And of course the outstanding faculty of the School will also benefit from the new facilities. For instance, Professor Padraic Fallon, Director of Research at the School of Medicine, specialises in the study of inflammatory diseases. People in Ireland have some of the highest incidence of a number of inflammatory diseases, for example eczema and asthma. He and his colleagues have identified new cells or processes that can cause or prevent inflammation that can lead to such diseases. They are hoping to contribute to the study of those diseases and the new building is based on the concept of multidisciplinary research.
Talking about multidisciplinary multi-institutional research, I would like to mention the biggest research project that is led by Professor Rose Anne Kenny of the School of Medicine. It is TILDA (The Irish Longitudinal Study on Ageing), which is generously funded by the Atlantic Philanthropies, Irish Life and the Department of Health (total funding of 29 mln euro).

To sum it up, the School has first-class facilities for medical education and research and will contribute, together with our hospital campuses, further to translation of research outputs into new clinical initiatives and therapeutic approaches for the ultimate benefit of patients.

I would like to thank sincerely the government and especially the Higher Education Authority and the Department of Education & Skills for the vision to support quality education and research in this difficult environment.

It is now my great pleasure to introduce the Minister for Research & Innovation, Sean Sherlock.

* * *
Launch of www.gothicpast.com

Trinity Long Room Hub

I am delighted to be here this evening to mark the launch of the gothicpast.com website. It is, I’m happy to say, the first website I have launched.

The last few years have seen many exciting developments in the area of Digital Humanities, which have come to occupy a central place in Trinity’s research strategy. The 1641 depositions project and the establishment of a postgraduate degree in Digital Humanities and Culture in 2010 are just some recent examples.

And with www.gothicpast.com - we have another major initiative - underlining yet again the fundamental role of digital technology within the humanities.

As its domain name clearly indicates - it is devoted to Gothic architecture and sculpture - largely in Ireland, but not exclusively so.

It is built around several thousand photographs - collected by the History of Art department over four decades. Some were taken quite recently - others go back 50 or 60 years.

Most of the photographs are illustrations of cathedrals, churches, abbeys and friaries, as well as stone carvings.

In many cases showing monuments in a very different condition from the way we see them today.
I was looking at the site earlier today, and you can see it includes some wonderfully historic views - of places like Ardfert Cathedral - covered in ivy and encumbered with broken tombs - long before modern restorers took over.

But the key thing to note is that gothicpast.com is far more than a passive photo archive. It is a great visual resource that can be explored in many different ways.

Firstly, it is fully searchable - not just under place - but also under terms and techniques. For instance, if you want to know about Irish sculptured capitals - a quick search takes you to a panorama of different carvings. And you never quite know what searches might reveal - for instance I was advised to try the word ‘effigy’, and I did: it brings up some fairly grisly carvings of cadavers, some in a state of decay. Truly gothic.
Secondly, it is a highly interactive site - designed to engage and involve the user - whether they are architectural experts, undergraduates, or members of the general public. Users can in fact upload their own observations and images of Gothic buildings - not directly - but via a well-constructed moderating process.

Thirdly, it contains an exhibition space - allowing users to mount their own virtual exhibitions within the site - with studies of particular monuments or the investigation of particular themes.

So this site has tremendous potential for both education and research - the core missions of this university.

The information I have been sent on the site also says that texts and research papers can be added - along with bibliographies - so it has the potential to become the first port of call for scholars in a range of different disciplines.

The site has been live for two months on a trial basis - and Prof Stalley tells me that a significant proportion of the registered users have been tourists planning visits to Ireland. Although not the original intention - it is clear the site will have a useful role in promoting heritage tourism.

The site is built around two major collections - both held in TRIARC:

- The so-called Rae collection: Edwin Rae was a Professor of the History of Art at Champaign-Urbana. He came to Ireland in the 1930s to do his PhD and worked on Irish topics until shortly before his death in 2002. He had a close relationship with Trinity and bequeathed his entire photo archive to the College. A great act of generosity, which we need to acknowledge here this evening.
- Then there is Roger Stalley's collection. He tells me he has been taking photos of Irish monuments ever since he persuaded the Trinity Trust to buy him a camera in 1970 and now has in excess of 20,000 photographs - with a huge surge on Irish Gothic in the last three years.
- In addition there is also an important collection of drawings of moulding profiles - recorded and drawn by Dr Danielle O’Donovan, now a research associate of the School.

The creation of the gothic.com site would not have been possible without the award of a major grant from the Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences in 2008. This provided the funding for a broad study of Irish Gothic (entitled ‘Reconstructions of the Gothic Past’) - which has involved conferences, symposia - and the preparation of a major book - to be published by Wordwell Press later this year.

This web site was just one small output – but a vital one - in that it will encourage and promote research far into the future.
The creation of gothicpast.com was a far more complex exercise than it might appear and it involved some ingenious technical work by the Library. With regard to which, I understand, Niamh Brennan and her colleagues came to the rescue.

It was they who recommended the use of Omeka, an open source platform which was ideal for displaying images - and crucially could accept all the existing material - including the metadata - from TARA. This is one of the first applications of Omeka in Ireland.

It was developed by George Mason University in Virginia - and is used by a host of American institutions, including the Smithsonian - so Trinity is in good company. Prof Stalley tells me it is also free - which is a definite advantage. We can note just how the university serves the public good; George Mason University by making Omeka open access and Trinity by using Omeka to make our future archive free open access.

In conclusion I would like to congratulate the project team from the Department of Art History and the Library on collaborating to deliver a remarkable and very valuable website that provides a window to the gothic past - it will establish Trinity even further as a university with truly global reach.

I would like to thank the Irish Research Council for Humanities and Social Sciences for their support for the Project.

Finally, I would like to encourage everyone to explore the site - and to seize the chance of learning more about Ireland’s Gothic past!!!

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Monday, 20th of February 2012

**Signing of the Collaboration between TCD's Bridge 21 Programme and Suas Educational Development**

*Saloon in the Provost's House*

Minister Quinn, Ladies and Gentlemen

Good afternoon and welcome to the Saloon of the Provost's House for this special occasion. It's a particular pleasure to welcome Minister for Education & Skills, Ruairi Quinn, but also to welcome our partners in SUAS Educational Development, represented by Colman Farrell, from Bridge 21, represented by Claire Conneely, and to the teachers and students here from our partnering schools.

Last week we held a fascinating symposium in Trinity College. The theme was 'The Idea of the University in the 21st Century'. Over two days, speakers debated what qualities a university should have in this new century. Naturally debate grew quite heated on some subjects.

But when debate turned to admissions, access and the need to diversify the student body, there was consensus. All these educationalists, from different universities and many different disciplines, agreed that favouring the entry of one particular type of student with one particular type of background and skills set is undesirable.

It's not just undesirable for those students who miss out on a university education; it's undesirable for universities to have conformity in the student body, when what they want - and what Ireland needs - is creativity and innovation.

As one of my British colleagues put it at the symposium: 'What Oxbridge needs is students who don't know how to do it the Oxbridge way'.

Bridge21, like the Trinity Access Programme, grew from Trinity's commitment to improve - and indeed radicalise - access to universities. This is a core commitment, and Bridge21 was identified in the Trinity College Strategic Plan as one of our key 'Engagement with Society' initiatives.

Bridge21 partners Trinity College with Suas Educational Development. We're very proud of our partnership with this distinguished NGO, which has done so much to address educational disadvantage in Ireland and the developing world.
Today, by jointly signing the Memorandum of Understanding, we celebrate our innovative partnership and we formally mark our commitment to educational reform.

While we battle as a people to restore our country, Bridge21 marks a practical fight back that will better equip our students for College and for life by releasing their ability to collaborate, to learn from each other and to problem solve. Students with these skills will lead a successful Ireland in the future.

Professor Brendan Tangney, who is here today as one of the most inspiring educationalists in the College, recently gave me a book of the speeches of Bobby Kennedy. Among these very inspiring speeches, I was struck by Kennedy’s stump speech on his presidential campaign. He would say something like, ‘It’s not the government’s society, it’s our society’. This is true - it’s not necessarily up to the state to be radical but to us, the independent institutions.

Bridge21 is a pragmatic and genuinely ground-breaking programme which aims for systemic change in the Irish education system.

The programme seeks:

- to address those weaknesses in second level education which are causes for concern within the sector and in broader society;
- to incorporate new, internationally-approved techniques in models of learning;
- and to raise educational horizons and ambitions, particularly for schools in disadvantaged areas.

Since it opened its doors at Oriel House in 2008, Bridge21 has hosted over 3,500 second level students in workshops. It has developed a learning model that is team-based, project-based, technology-mediated, and cross-curricular.

The programme has now moved to work in schools with teachers and students. I’m delighted to welcome the principals and students of the participating schools here today, and I look forward to seeing Bridge21 extend its network to other schools over the next few years.

The list of Bridge21’s sponsors speaks for itself: the NCCA, Social Entrepreneurs Ireland, SAS, Haughton Mifflin Harcourt, Google, Dell, Western Union, Folens, and Microsoft.

Those are public bodies and private enterprises that demand the very best from Irish students. They want graduates that have the critical thinking skills and motivation to be globally competitive. Their support shows their belief that Bridge21 can help deliver such students.
May I take this opportunity to thank all our sponsors - philanthropic, corporate and social entrepreneurial. Your investment and partnering with us has helped make this programme a success.

I look forward to another symposium - long before the end of my provostship in ten years’ time - in which we can talk about improved access not as an aspiration but as a reality.

Isaac Newton said 'We build too many walls and not enough bridges'. We don’t want walls between second and third level, and we don’t want walls in students’ minds. I hope to see more national programmes, like the aptly-named one we are celebrating today, which build bridges and break down educational walls.

Thank you for your attention. It’s now my pleasure to hand the floor to Colman Farrell, CEO of Suas.

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Tuesday, 21st of February 2012

**Inauguration of Dr Mary Henry as Pro-Chancellor**

*Saloon in the Provost’s House*

Pro-Chancellors, distinguished guests and colleagues:

It is my great pleasure to welcome you here this evening to install Dr Mary Henry as a new Pro-Chancellor of the University of Dublin.

I would like to extend a special welcome to Mary, her husband John, and her son John, and to acknowledge her children who are not here, Meriel and Ralph.

I’m just going to say a few brief words about the Pro-Chancellorship, before asking Dr Henry to make the statutory declaration, and to give her address to you.

Pro-Chancellors are *ex officio* members of the Senate of the University of Dublin, and hold office in their own right. They deputize for the Chancellor in accordance with the Statutes.

For the Chancellor and Pro-Chancellors, the conferring of degrees at commencements is the primary commitment. The Chancellor is also one of the two Visitors to the College; this entails hearing cases from staff and students on all sorts of issues. In these matters the Pro-Chancellors are called on to deputise for the Chancellor as needed.

The University of Dublin is very fortunate to have in these offices very eminent individuals; our Chancellor - Dr Mary Robinson, and our Pro-Chancellors here this evening: Dr Patrick Molloy, Dr John Scattergood, Dr David Spearman and Dr Petros Florides.

And this evening is about adding a new name to this distinguished list.

Dr Mary Henry is no stranger to this University. A native of Cork, she is true blue Trinity! She first entered College as an undergraduate in the early 1960s.

A Scholar in Medicine in 1963 and graduating first in her year in Medicine in 1965, she won numerous undergraduate distinctions. For instance - these included:

- the Arthur Ball Prize in Surgery;
- the Sir James Craig Memorial Prize in Medicine;
• the De Renzy Centenary Prize in Social and Preventive Medicine;
• the Dr Henry Hutchinson Stewart Scholarship;
• the Walter G Smyth Prize in Pharmacology;
• the National Children’s Hospital Prize in Paediatrics;
• the Haughton Prize at Sir Patrick Dun’s Hospital;
• and the Fitzpatrick Scholarship Final Medical Examination
to name but a few.

She was awarded her MD by thesis in 1968.

What makes these achievements even more remarkable is that Dr Henry had been quite sick as a child missing out on a lot of her primary education. She was hospitalised 16 times before her 16th birthday, suffering from repeat infections due to a measles mastoid. But it was these very experiences that made her determined to study medicine. This determination was further shaped by her experience as a young doctor in 1960s Ireland, and made her devote a lifetime to improving healthcare, especially for women, both by the practice of medicine itself - and at a political level.

For the next forty years, until 2000, Dr Henry went on to work as a consultant vascular physician at the Rotunda, Adelaide and Sir Patrick Dun’s Hospitals in Dublin, as well as in private practice, and published many papers in scientific journals. During this time she launched many initiatives to promote women’s careers in the health services.

Mary’s formal political career began in the 1990s, when she was elected as an independent member of Seanad Eireann in 1993 for Dublin University, but really Mary had been politically-engaged throughout her career.

She was a founder member of the Women’s Progressive, now Political, Association in the 1970s. The Association had been set up to encourage the participation of women in public life.

Mary was a popular and respected Senator during her political career, going on to be re-elected twice until she decided not to stand for re-election in 2007.

Among her many achievements was the campaign to introduce dental and optical benefits for the wives of insured workers. She was also instrumental in the development of new medical legislation, including the Medical Practitioners Act 2007 and the Mental Health Act 2001. Her Private Member’s Bill on Child Sex Tourism was incorporated into a Government Bill aimed at stopping this practice.
With a long-term interest in justice issues, Mary served as the first Chairperson of the Irish Penal Reform Trust and serves on the Commission for Restorative Justice.

Mary has also been a long-time and continuing supporter of the United Nations Population Fund, an international development agency that promotes the right of every woman, man and child to enjoy a life of health and equal opportunity. She has travelled widely in the developing world on behalf of the UN Population Fund.

Although Mary stepped down from politics in 2007, she is far from retired. A quick scan of her CV indicates that right now she has commitments to nearly a dozen bodies in various senior and honorary capacities. I will not list them all - but she sits on several prestigious Boards in the healthcare sector, including the Board of the Rotunda Hospital. She is on the Board of St Patrick’s Cathedral. She is President of the One Family, the organisation for lone parents and their families.

She remains deeply committed to Trinity College and just recently stepped down as Chair of the TCD Association and Trust.

In recognition of her work in encouraging women to become involved in public and political life, Mary was conferred with an Honorary Doctorate of Science by the University of Ulster in 1999.

In 2008, Trinity recognised Mary's achievements with a distinguished alumni award.

It is with the greatest pleasure that I welcome an individual with such an impeccable record of scholarship and public service, and an esteemed graduate of this University, to the Pro-Chancellorship of the University of Dublin, the 53rd Pro Chancellor to be appointed to this role since the foundation of the College in 1592.

* * *
Reception for Harry Clifton, Ireland Professor of Poetry

Saloon in the Provost's House

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Good evening and welcome to the Saloon in the Provost's House for this very special occasion. We're shortly to have the great pleasure of hearing Harry Clifton deliver his public lecture in the Swift Theatre, as the current holder of the Ireland Chair of Poetry.

We take this opportunity to formally welcome Harry Clifton to Trinity College. Let me say what a great honour it is to have you among us, and how much we're looking forward to you being part of the College this term, contributing to our intellectual and creative life.

The Ireland Chair of Poetry was among the most inspiring inter-institutional initiatives of the last century. Established in 1998, it's a means both of recognising an individual poet and also of acknowledging the importance of poetry to our culture as a whole.

The partners involved are three Irish universities: Queen's University Belfast, University College Dublin, and Trinity, and both Arts Councils. I am delighted that we have here this evening Pat Moylan, Chair of the Arts Council of Ireland, and Bob Collins, Chair of the Arts Council of Northern Ireland.

You are all most welcome here tonight.

Over the three year term of the Chair, the poet spends one term each year in residence in each of the universities. Last year Harry Clifton was in Queen's, next year he will be in UCD, and this term is Trinity’s turn. Residency allows the Ireland Chair of Poetry to do some teaching as well as give poetry readings.

I'm sure our students are excited at the prospect of attending your poetry workshops and creative writing classes. Well, I guess they’re excited but also nervous - or they should be if they've read your lines on:

'..the bar-room sophistry
Of student poets, their theories
Clouded by cigarettes and beer
Reducing you to tears
And laughter'.

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I’m sure our students are up for having their theories unclouded, and the sophistry laughed out of them. I look forward to the results, which will no doubt appear in *Icarus*, or another one of the College’s literary magazines.

The centrepiece of the residency is tonight’s public lecture. This is an opportunity for members of the College, staff and students, and also for the much wider community of those who care about literature, to hear a master practitioner explore the craft of poetry.

In Trinity we’re very proud of our great tradition of literary alumni from Swift to Sebastian Barry, and including our most recent graduates now setting out on writing careers. Over the past decade or so we’ve taken our support of literature and the arts to a new level by embarking on a series of initiatives directly aimed at fostering creativity.

This sponsorship of the Ireland Chair of Poetry is just one such initiative. I would also mention the Oscar Wilde Centre for Irish Writing, also established in 1998 as a base for Ireland’s first full-time Masters in creative writing. (The centre is in Westland Row and, as the actual birthplace of Wilde, it figured in Al Pacino’s new film *Wilde Salome* which premiered at the Film Festival in the Savoy Cinema two nights ago).

And over the past few months, I’ve had the pleasure of opening both the Lir - the National Academy for Dramatic Art - and the Centre for Music Composition. All these recent initiatives show Trinity’s commitment to the Arts, and that the Arts are central to any strategy for the social and economic renewal of this country. We need in Trinity as elsewhere to become more innovative, or better, more creative, or better again, more radical, and ‘the act of poetry (as we all know) is a rebel act’, so we need more of it.

Harry Clifton is the fifth holder of the Ireland Chair of Poetry. The previous holders are John Montague, Nuala Ni Dhomhnaill, Paul Durcan, and Michael Longley. That’s quite a line-up! In the first fourteen years of its existence, the Chair has only ever been occupied by great names. Long may this continue.

Harry Clifton is an Irish poet with an exceptionally international dimension. He has spent decades outside Ireland, living in Africa, East Asia, the United States, and all round Europe. The only book of his poems I own is *The Desert Route* (I will buy more now I promise) and in these poems, as I assume in others, he moves from Eccles Street, to Brooklyn Heights, to Old Calcutta. He has titled his lecture tonight, *The Unforged Conscience: Europe in Irish Poetry*.

I’m glad he has because maybe it’s time to take the discourse of Europe away from the politicians, from the economists, and from the bureaucrats; recently they have been making a bit of a hash of it.
We need a poet to remind us that the taps of our European culture are not exhausted, that they flow on all day and all night regardless.

This lecture by the Ireland Professor of Poetry is now established as a seminal event in our calendar, and it’s Trinity's great privilege to host it.

It's now my pleasure to hand over to Pat Moylan, Chair of the Ireland Chair of Poetry Trust, who will say a few words on behalf of the Trustees.

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John Hegarty, on behalf of Trinity College, I’d like to pay tribute to you and thank you for your service to this university. We’re here to recognise your outstanding academic career, and in particular the last ten years when you served with such distinction as Provost. You have left an important legacy, which it’s my pleasure to talk about this evening.

But allow me first to welcome everyone here tonight and in particular Neasa, Ciaran, Cillian, and your friends and relatives, some of whom, I believe, have travelled from Kerry and Mayo.

When we speak of your legacy, we acknowledge Neasa’s part in it. Whenever I’d meet both of you together, or when I’d visit the Provost’s House, I always came away struck by what a wonderful team you made. I know how important her support was for the success of the provostship.

I’ve begun on a personal note - and I hope this audience won’t mind me speaking personally, taking into consideration how long you and I have known each other - so before I proceed may I just say what a pleasure it was to serve as your Vice-Provost. Thanks for the confidence you placed in me. I still remember your phone call offering me the position. I was in Toronto and it was 3am in the morning - but I’m very glad I took the call!

Serving as Vice-Provost prepared me for the even greater honour of succeeding you as Provost. It also gave me valuable insight into your priorities and your way of doing things.

So when I speak today of your legacy and achievement, I’m not merely tabulating successes from your CV. I speak as one who had the privilege of working closely with you and one who was fortunate enough to participate in some of the great initiatives you brought about for this college.

Looking around us today, we can all see the architectural legacy of your provostship: the Lloyd Institute, the Naughton Institute, the Sports Centre, the Long Room Hub, the Trinity Biomedical Sciences Institute, the Science Gallery, and not forgetting TRIARC, which was, of course, imaginatively converted from the old stables of the Provost’s House.

I must also add that my family and I very much appreciate the work which you and Neasa did in the Provost’s House. Much time and thought was put
into it - the work was sensitively carried out, as it had to be in such a historic house. From me, and my children, a very big thanks.

Collectively, your building projects represent a truly optimistic start for the 21st century! These buildings serve science, the arts, humanities, and sport, and have increased the accessibility of the College to the general public. You continued the great work - going back to Provosts Mitchell, Watts, Lyons, and McConnell, and beyond - of creating an infrastructure for the College to meet the challenges faced by each succeeding generation.

You listened to those critics who complained that Trinity had locked up its frontage on Pearse Street and turned it away from public access. The new gateway under the Naughton Institute, and especially the wonderful Science Gallery, have totally regenerated this corner of the city.

I know that you, like me, believe in continuity with our great past and traditions, and in constantly enhancing Trinity's legacy. I sincerely congratulate you on your success here.

A university is, of course, more than the sum of its buildings. It is the sum of its research, the sum of its people, the sum of its importance to, and connectivity with, wider world.

As Provost, you concentrated on research and interdisciplinarity, on forging partnerships with industry and creative leaders, and on creating alliances with other third level institutions. You focused on new hires and on organizing people so that they could work to the best of their ability. Your impetus has always been to make this university a top ranking one, and you have been consistent in your advocacy of the scholar-teacher approach as the model for third level education.

You came to the position of Provost from a most distinguished background of research and teaching. Your undergraduate and doctoral success brought you from Maynooth and Galway to the University of Wisconsin and from there to Bell Labs in New Jersey where you worked six years as a research scientist. Your work in fibre-optic communications, while at Bell Labs, set a world record in transmission speed over a single fibre. It was called one of the most innovative developments for that year, 1984, and it was cited by Time Magazine in 1995 as a milestone in the development of the information age.

In 1986 you returned to Ireland to take up your first post in Trinity - as Professor of Laser Physics. Two years later you founded Optronics Ireland, a ground-breaking research partnership between Irish universities and industry, which led to many patents and spin-out companies. A Trinity spin-out in 2001 was Eblana Photonics Ltd, which you co-founded.
You have thus been at the forefront of the drive to commercialise cutting-edge research. But you did not fall into the trap of believing that economic success is the only valid goal and direction for all research.

If I may quote from an address you gave to the Irish University Association Conference on the Humanities and Social Sciences in 2006, you said: “We must not forget that the sciences are as equally part of our culture as arts and the humanities, and should not be viewed in terms of their practical applications only, even if those applications are of central importance”.

Indeed, at a crucial time when over-emphasis on commercial viability was threatening certain disciplines, you were a champion for Trinity multidisciplinarity. You memorably listed the demands on universities as (I quote): “To help sustain a vibrant economy, find answers to pressing social questions, and develop a civil and wise society”.

“All disciplines are needed in this endeavour,” you went on to say, “Arts, humanities and social sciences are the heart and soul of any civilisation. They enable us to make connections to the past and to other cultures, to appreciate the development of human thought and ideas, to cultivate creativity and the imagination, and to promote inclusion and justice”.

This had great impact, especially coming from a well-known scientist.

As an engineer, who, like you, is certain about the value of all disciplines, may I assure you that I will continue to uphold this core principle.

As Dean of Research from 1995 to 2000, you brought in more than IR£50 million in research funding from the Higher Education Authority. Emphasis on research was a hallmark of your provostship - and forms an important part of your legacy.

I know that you consider one of your major achievements to be our greatly increased citation rates for published research. Your pride in this shows the priorities of making Trinity a top-ranking university, and about our core commitment to cutting-edge, globally competitive research. Trinity is now in the top 1% in fifteen areas and in the top ten universities worldwide for Molecular Biology and Genetics, Materials Science, and Immunology.

Your prioritising and vision for Trinity also led you to take on the responsibility, not always easy, of restructuring and re-organising the College in order to make it run more smoothly and efficiently. You created two new important posts - the Dean of Students and the Community Liaison Officer. They are doing vital work, both extending the College’s reach and deepening our focus.
Your own research drew on, and benefitted from, interdisciplinarity and connectivity generally, so it was no surprise to see you emphasising the importance of this as Provost. Your inclusive approach helped bring about the TCD-UCD Innovation Alliance and Academy, and Trinity Health Ireland with Tallaght and St James Hospitals. Such important inter-institutional collaboration, focussing on the greater good, is something that I - and I hope future incumbents of this office - will want to build upon.

And in my first six months as Provost two events have stood out: the launches of The Lir National Academy of Dramatic Art and of the Centre for Music Composition. These were occasions of optimism and dynamism, not only for the university but for the whole city and for Irish society generally. These centres will turn Trinity's stated aim of “fostering artistic creativity” into a reality - to the great benefit of all. These initiatives will begin to bear fruit, in terms of creative projects and people, in a few years. But let no-one forget that the groundwork was laid during your time.

Something I am beginning to understand is that taking on the responsibility of the Provostship means a shift, not necessarily in the amount of work one does - although it does increase, don't get me wrong! - but in the nature of the work. A Provost must live in the public eye, speak for the College as an institution, and representing it with confidence never accepting complacency - as one of Ireland's great institutions. That's a significant responsibility and of course, like all public offices, it becomes more difficult when the country is in crisis.

You enjoyed a fascinating provostship - you came to office during the boom years, and had the pleasure of seeing the work and vision of this great university rewarded as Trinity shot up the ranks, but towards the end of your tenure you had the sorrow of seeing us slip down the rankings - as indeed has unfortunately happened to most institutions and enterprises in this country during the current climate of austerity and insecurity. This has been a great shock, especially, coming as it did, after a period of growth and optimism. But in your public pronouncements and actions, both during boom and crisis, you remained calm - steely calm even - consistent, and unvarying in your message of what a university's role should be.

You remembered always the pleasure and honour of the Office of Provost, and bore it with dignity. You provided strength and leadership for the whole College, and indeed for the whole sector. In Trinity we are strong, we are the country's leading university, and we remain confident in our ability to play for Ireland on the world stage.

‘In dreams’, as the poet said, ‘begin responsibilities’. I think what this means - or what it might mean - is that once you have a great dream or vision, then you have the responsibility to see it through, even when the burden - the bitterness even - of that responsibility becomes all too evident during one’s
waking hours. And we're certainly in those hours now! In Ireland our eyes have been opened wide.

And we can see the precariousness of our current world position. All the more important then, that we don't lose sight of those things about which it is still possible - or rather about which it is still essential - to dream. True Leadership involves both dreaming the dream and shouldering the responsibility.

Or, if I may quote Michael Hartnett - because he's a particular favourite of mine and because I know that you and Neasa had a warm personal connection to him: “Though many live by logic, no man dies for it... what we die for are our dreams”. A testament of your true leadership John is maybe that you made visionary dreams seem perfectly logical.

So I thank you, John, on behalf of our College community, for growing and expanding this university, and for articulating a strong, visionary message which is helping steer us through the difficult times. And I thank you, personally, for the faith you placed in me and for providing an example of leadership to emulate.

Now as a tribute to John Hegarty's time as 43rd Provost I have two paintings to present.

The first is the formal College portrait of John which was painted by Conor Walton, a renowned Irish artist. I'm delighted to see Conor here tonight. Trinity has an incredible collection of portraits of College personae through the centuries, painted by artists from Thomas Gainsborough to James Barry. I would like to congratulate Conor on capturing John's stature as both the 43rd Provost of Trinity as well as an esteemed scientist.

The second painting is for John, Neasa, Ciaran and Cillian to take home with them. This painting is by Irish artist, Laura Fitzgerald. It's what's known as a memory landscape. After Laura spent time with each member of the family, she created a collection of vignettes reflecting their collective memories of life in the 18th century Provost’s House which was their much loved home for over a decade. The concept of this painting was presented to the Hegartys in virtual format by Dr Claire Laudet last summer on behalf of all the academic and administrative officers who worked with John. It is my pleasure now to present the completed work to the Hegartys.

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A few months ago I was reading in the Irish Times a typically witty article by the writer Roddy Doyle. He was writing about adapting Gogol’s *Government Inspector* for the Irish stage. Two things stood out for me in Doyle’s article:

First, he was gobsmacked, in the course of his research, to come across this endorsement - from Nabokov:

“None but an Irishman should ever try tackling Gogol”.

Second, he found himself living the proof of this. While he was adapting the play in autumn 2010, he was following, like the rest of us, the news, which was proving as absurdist as anything in Gogol. One day the Taoiseach was telling the nation that he “wasn’t aware” of any inspectors from the IMF or ECB coming to our shores. The next week, of course, the inspectors had landed - and were very publicly going about the business of inspecting our books.

Doyle concluded: “Gogol would love Ireland. I know I do”.

It’s just one of the more recent examples of the remarkable literary links between Ireland and Russia.

There’s no doubt that I could probably launch a Journal of Irish Studies anywhere in the world and make wonderful cultural connections between that country and Ireland. But in most countries I’d have to work a lot harder to do this than in Russia.

Ireland and Russia are famously alike in their appreciation for literature, and in their sheer number of world-class writers. Patrick Kavanagh said: “The standing army of Irish poets never falls below 10,000”. I imagine a Russian poet has said something similar - and maybe with the same military language since writing in both countries is linked to struggle.

There are in fact so many literary connections between our two countries that they amount to an embarrassment of riches. Robert Tracy in his excellent introduction to this “Irlandskya Literatura” picks out some of the most compelling connections.
I didn’t know that Thomas Moore is so popular in Russia that a statue of him was unveiled in St Petersburg last year. That really connects Trinity to the city on the Neva - Moore was a Trinity graduate and there’s a statue to him on College Green nearby Front Gate.

I had no idea - but I was fascinated to learn - that Turgenev read Maria Edgeworth and was inspired by her depiction of the poor in Co. Longford to write about Russian peasantry. And then - in what Joyce would call the “commodius vicus of recirculation” - Turgenev, in his turn, inspired Irish novelists, including Sean O’Faolain and Padraic O’Conaire.

I did know, of course, that literary censorship ruled in the Soviet Union as in Ireland in the early and mid-20th Century - if for very different reasons. But I’m delighted to learn that Ulysses was still translated and circulated in samizdat and that Anna Akhmatova managed to read it six times. Which is a few times more than many Irish people...including I think William Butler Yeats who said he never read it all through.

These links are fascinating to us all - we could explore them all evening - and maybe we will, and create a few more links here this evening in the process.

And of course I look forward to the ‘commodious vicus of recirculation’ bringing contemporary Russian writers, in turn, to Ireland. Because it has to be said that for all the Irish admiration for Russian literature - and it is intense - there seems to be a new Chekhov play on the Irish stage every season - people are much less aware of new Russian writing.

That’s a gap that must be filled.

Irlandskya Literatura brings Irish literature to Russia - mainly contemporary Irish writers. In these pages you will find established, award-winning names such as Thomas Kilroy, Paul Durcan, Anne Enright and Hugo Hamilton. And also younger, cutting-edge names like Kevin Barry and Clare Keegan. The view they give of contemporary Ireland isn’t always comfortable. Marina Carr’s piece I find particularly tough. It’s great also that Eilean Ni Chuilleannain is here for this event, and that her work is translated in the journal.

This Irlandskya Literatura is a wonderful achievement. I congratulate all involved in its production in Trinity College and in the Gorky Literary Institute here in Moscow. I particularly congratulate Dr John Murray, the editor-in-chief.

I would congratulate the Russian translators but I’d be out of my depth! But I know that working on these writers must have been rewarding and challenging. What a privilege, for instance, to translate the famous opening lines of Kavanagh’s ‘Great Hunger’: ‘Clay is the word and clay is the flesh...’
Ekaterina Genieva, it is a pleasure also to thank you and the Foreign Language Library here in Moscow for agreeing to distribute *Irlandskya Literatura* through the library network.

I’m absolutely delighted that this Irish-Russian literary connectivity was forged in Trinity. It’s a pleasure to thank the Department of Russian and Slavonic Studies. I’m extremely proud of the Russian department in Trinity – it’s the only Russian department in any Irish university and it’s long-established. I also wish to thank the Ireland Literature Exchange, principal sponsors of the journal and represented here this evening by Sinead Mac Aodha; and finally one of Trinity’s graduates, Siobhan MacNamara, the production manager of the journal who has just told me of how much work was needed to complete the journal in time for tonight’s launch.

I had the pleasure of visiting Moscow two years ago – when I was Vice-Provost - in company with Dr Sarah Smyth, who is Head of the School of Languages, Literature & Cultural Studies. She’s also the first Irish winner of the Pushkin medal, which makes her among the most internationally renowned scholars in Trinity in any discipline. She is here with me again on this trip, and I want to take this opportunity to thank her for all she has done to promote Russian culture in Ireland.

Sarah won the Pushkin medal in 2010. Today we are launching this journal. And we are marking the opening, at the State Library for Foreign Literature, of an exhibition on Yeats’ life and work. I would like to see Ireland, and Trinity’s, presence in Russia continue to resonate in new, exciting ways.

We hope, for example, that the Science Gallery - a Trinity College initiative, which is enjoying tremendous international success - will soon have a sister gallery in Moscow.

Then I can come back and talk about the wonderful science links between Ireland and Russia……..

Because of course I want to come back! I’m having a wonderful time. I thank Ambassador McDonagh for hosting this evening’s reception, for giving me the opportunity of speaking about Irish-Russian links, and of meeting Trinity graduates living here in Moscow - whose ability to read Pushkin in the original I am most envious of!

Thank you for your attention.

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Reference: ‘How to bring a giant of Russian Literature to the Irish stage’ (Irish Times, 26 November 2011)
Thursday, 22nd of March 2012

Speech for the Trinity Business Alumni/Bank of Ireland Business Student of the Year Award 2012

House of Lords, Bank of Ireland

Good evening.

I've just arrived back, this morning, from the US where we were part of the delegation in the White House celebrating St Patrick’s Day. There we heard President Obama and the Taoiseach Enda Kenny give upbeat assessments of where Ireland is at, in terms of its recovery. ‘Taoiseach Kenny’ as they call him, Enda to us of course, was clear that his aim for Ireland is - if I quote him correctly - ‘to be the best small country in the world in which to do Business by 2016’. All of us here, students, faculty members, alumni, parents, and friends, share in this ambition - it’s a good mission for Ireland.

But we can only do it if many things come together: government, finance, regulation, and most important for us here: in education.

Today we are honouring six undergraduates who have, variously:

- Published articles in recognised business journals
- Organised job fairs and Awareness Weeks
- Founded new College societies
- Been finalists in the Trinity Entrepreneurial Society’s Dragon’s Den
- Managed student investment funds
- Initiated a real-time student trading platform, and
- Volunteered and fund-raised in Ireland and abroad

All this on top of demanding academic work! And we know that these six students have been short-listed from a much larger pool, whose talent is such that it has been difficult to select.

It's quite a week for young business talent. Because this day next week the TCD-UCD Innovation Academy will host the first ever Irish University Entrepreneurship Forum. At this event - which is the brainchild of business students and entirely run by students - eight student entrepreneurs will pitch ideas to investors and business leaders.

Generally, when I'm talking about innovation, I stress that flashes of brilliance can take time and that it's the job of universities to provide time and space for innovation. I stand by that.
But there’s no doubt that when ideas and entrepreneurship are allied to youth and energy, the result can be inspirational. In this current climate of austerity and recession, it’s the potential and energy of our young people that makes the future look bright and brimming with possibility.

Among the whole EU27, Ireland has the youngest demographic, and therefore, potentially, the brightest future. We need to invest in our young people, which means investing in universities, not selling students short with an underfunded higher education system. By offering the best educational opportunities to our young people we create opportunity for the country as a whole.

As an example of what Trinity Business students can achieve we have only to look at Alan Foy, who stood here just eight years ago to accept the 2004 Business Student of the Year Award.

Before even graduating, he had established his own company and is currently CEO at Blueface Telecoms, which last year was named one of the Top 20 fastest growing businesses at the Deloitte Fast 50 awards. I congratulate him on his appointment as president of the Trinity Business Alumni. I know he provides an inspirational example.

Let me also take this moment to thank the Trinity Business Alumni for their commitment to this award and to Trinity on so many levels. You demonstrate how alumni can develop a mutually-beneficial, lifelong relationship with their alma mater.

In Trinity we recognise the transformative power of higher education in its broadest sense – not just what happens in the classroom, but what students learn through interacting peer-to-peer within College clubs and societies. As Jim Quinn, Head of the Business School, has said, in Trinity we look to transcend the vocational; to educate for a career and not just a job. We want our graduates to be critical thinkers and creative citizens, at home in a complex world; we want to form their global minds.

In that objective I thank the staff involved in managing and organising this award - Jim Quinn, Gerard McHugh, and Elaine Moore.

I would like to pay a particular tribute to Gerard McHugh, the outgoing Head of School, for his past and continuing success in leading the School’s fundraising campaign, which aims to raise €35 million between 2010 and 2015. This will help build a state-of-the-art building in a prominent position in College, allowing the School to significantly expand faculty, programmes, and student numbers - thereby fulfilling Trinity’s mission to offer opportunity to as many as possible, at as high an educational level as possible.
Trinity is conscious of its duty, as Ireland’s leading university, to produce the people with the knowledge, skills, and creativity to create the kind of smart society the country aspires to.

Last month I gave a speech on Innovation in Silicon Valley, asking the question: what might it look like in a Dublin/Irish context. I left the answer open-ended, but my hunch is that it will be less exclusively focussed on technology than Silicon Valley. I feel it will be a broad-based mix of high-tech, cultural, and other types of innovation; a place where science, the arts, business, and the humanities collide to make new businesses that don’t exist anywhere else in the world.

I feel this because Ireland’s, and Trinity’s, strengths are multi- and inter-disciplinary. For instance, Trinity hosts a foremost academy for the performing arts, but also a leading institute for nanoscience research.

In Trinity we encourage cross-disciplinarity, and seek to integrate our innovation strategy across schools and departments.

I know that these students being honoured today have a broad range of interests, including music, sport, art, travel, languages, volunteering, and politics. They embody, in their range of extracurricular achievements, Trinity’s values of interdisciplinarity, deep learning, and independent, critical thinking. At least one of these students is looking to use her interest in sewing to set up an online fashion e-tailor. I expect that others will also draw on their interests to launch exciting new projects, which will drive that versatile innovation ecosystem which we all look forward to.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the Bank of Ireland wholeheartedly for their continued sponsorship of this important award and for hosting this very special ceremony here in the old House of Lords.

One of my predecessors as Provost, John Kearney - who was also, incidentally, President Obama’s great-great-great grand uncle on the Moneygall side - actually tried to buy this building after the Act of Union to use as lecture theatres. The government refused because students then had a reputation for rowdiness and allegedly risked getting into fights with traders while crossing the street! So Provost Kearney suggested building tunnels to connect Trinity with the old parliament, but that was also refused. He obviously didn’t have the same powers of persuasion as his great-great-great grand nephew.

Instead the Bank of Ireland was allowed to buy the building on condition that the Lords and Commons were gutted so they could never again be used as a parliament. Thankfully the Bank didn’t gut the Lords but preserved it as a museum, and today Trinity students are able to use it for class debates, thanks to the generosity of the Bank.
My predecessor, Obama's uncle, would, I'm sure, be delighted to know that tunnels aren't after all required to connect these two great buildings, Trinity College and the Bank of Ireland. Instead we connect through heritage, good will, and the proud sponsorship of this wonderful event.

Let me congratulate again these students on their considerable achievements, and I wish everyone an enjoyable evening.
Thank you for inviting me to be here with you this evening for the 3rd Annual Trinity Student to Student (S2S) Awards.

As many of you know, the S2S Programme was successfully piloted in 2007/8 to a small number of first year Science and International Erasmus students.

Over the last few years it has been gradually extended to include more and more undergraduate disciplines.

And I’m delighted to hear from Danny Greening, Chair of the S2S Society, that the S2S Programme will encompass all first year undergraduate students from September of this year. This is a tremendous achievement and directly attributable to you and your fellow student volunteers.

As volunteers you will know that there are two dimensions to the S2S programme. The Peer Mentoring Progamme and the Peer Support Programme.

The Peer Mentoring Programme is designed to help incoming first years adjust and enjoy the academic and social life of Trinity. I can still recall my first year as an undergraduate here and how overwhelming those first few weeks can be in trying to get settled in a new life. It’s fun but you can do with all the help you can get. In 2011/12 some 149 Peer Mentors provided assistance and support to an estimated 1,867 students.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the Peer Mentors for looking after the newest members of the College, as only you can, and for helping this year’s freshers begin their new journey on the right path.

I would like to acknowledge the role of the 26 Peer Mentors trained to assist international students because life for new students in a different country brings with it its own set of difficulties. You have pre-empted and superseded these difficulties, ensuring that students that come for a semester to study here in Trinity get a true taste of what it is like to be a Trinity student.

The Peer Support Programme is the second component of the S2S Programme and provides a one to one confidential support service by students for students.
In 2011/12 13 active Peer Supporters were given special training by the Student Counselling Service. Peer Supporters also help manage the discussion boards on the student mental health community website.

I would like to especially thank the Peer Supporters for dedicating many hours to training so that you can provide the one-to-one emotional support that students need in order to manage the varying difficulties that they may encounter throughout their time here at Trinity. You may never know the critical difference that your support has given those students you have engaged with as they struggle to cope and feel in control.

As volunteers, you have all acquired skills during this past year that will stand to you no matter what path your careers should take - as leaders and supporters, as helpers and organisers, as colleagues, classmates, and most of all as peers.

I would like to congratulate you as volunteers for your direct contribution to the success of the S2S Programme which is completely student led.

I wish in particular to acknowledge the role of the S2S Society which is really the nucleus for the S2S Programme and has a committee of 10 dedicated S2S volunteers who run events and activities throughout the year.

Its many initiatives include:

- The Head Mentor scheme to provide additional communication and support within each School/Area with 16 volunteers signing up to take responsibility for assisting their fellow mentors with the programme.
- Collaborative training with Student Learning and Development, who trained S2S volunteers to deliver workshops in time management, and with the HSE, who trained volunteers to lead relaxation sessions for their fellow students.

I would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the support of the Senior Tutors Office and the Student Counselling Service in providing the support framework to facilitate this programme and to enable students to take the lead in supporting their peers.

Finally, to acknowledge the effort and time devoted by each of you as individual volunteers to helping the students around you, I would like to present each of you with a certificate of achievement.

*     *     *
Wednesday, 4th of April 2012

Launch of the Centre for Longitudinal Studies in Ireland

Science Gallery

Thank you Professor Ruane.

It is, I think, particularly apt that we’re in the Science Gallery launching this new Centre. The Science Gallery, a Trinity College initiative, came about through collaboration with Science Foundation Ireland, various government departments, and key private donors, including Google and the Wellcome Trust.

The Centre for Longitudinal Studies is also collaborative - it’s one of the key initiatives set up under the strategic partnership between Trinity College Dublin and the ESRI.

If ‘no man is an island’, then no institution is either. I believe firmly that global excellence depends on sharing expertise and taking a generous approach to the growth of knowledge; Thus the Science Gallery invites curators from independent institutions to devise exhibitions, while Trinity and the ESRI are building collaborative and complementary strengths in the social sciences.

Two years ago, on 14th July 2010, Professor Ruane and my predecessor as Provost, Dr John Hegarty, signed the memorandum of understanding which cemented the on-going relationship between our two institutions. Indeed I met Frances when I was still Provost-elect back in July.

Since 2007 our two institutions have been collaborating on two landmark longitudinal studies:

- **Growing Up in Ireland** (GUI) is following 20,000 children over seven years, and
- **The Irish Longitudinal Study of Ageing** (TILDA) is following over 8,400 individuals aged 50+, charting their health, social and economic circumstances over a 10-year period.

These studies encapsulate core values in academic research, so let me take a moment to underline some of these:

- They exemplify our commitment to be engaged, locally and nationally, with key policy issues. TILDA has already contributed to improving ways of preventing heart disease, stroke, falls, and dementia; while
GUI has been instrumental in understanding the role of early nutrition in child obesity risk.

- GUI and TILDA make Trinity, and Ireland, a first port of call for researchers all over the world seeking information on childhood and ageing. Taking a leading international role in advanced social sciences research increases our country’s potential for creating highly skilled jobs and valuable technologies, thus contributing to Ireland’s development as an innovation hub.

- Researchers hail from a wide range of disciplines including: epidemiology, health, demography, social policy, education, psychology, economics, statistics, and nursing. This shows our commitment to multidisciplinary learning. As we seek to ensure sustainable funding for higher education, we must recognise the value of multidisciplinary studies.

- As I’ve said, both studies depend on inter-institutional collaboration. Such collaboration - often HEA-led - has been embraced with gusto by our educational institutions to the benefit of the country as a whole.

I hope in future to see national priorities relating to global networks - so that we can build links beyond Ireland, reflecting how much we as a people have to offer through the work of our universities on the world stage.

When I learned that the President was to honour us with his presence at this launch, I was of course delighted at the recognition he was bestowing on our new Centre.

I also felt how particularly apt your attendance here today is - not only as our President, but as a social theorist who has thought deeply on the crucial research areas of these longitudinal studies.

In your inaugural address you referred, I think, three times to “all citizens, of all ages” whom you invited wholeheartedly to participate in “shaping our shared future”. You also referred to the “Presidency Seminars” which you intend to hold to “reflect and explore themes important to our shared life”.

The first of these seminars will, you said, “focus on being young in Ireland. It will address issues of participation, education, employment, emigration and mental health”.

I know that as a social theorist you will appreciate the rigorous methodology of these studies, and the importance of basing opinions on independent, verifiable data rather than on anecdote or hearsay.

It is my great honour now to introduce the President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins.
I am delighted to be here this evening; Trinity is 420 years old and we can still do things for the first time! This is the first ever Trinity Societies Yearbook, and I am very proud to see it.

As most of you are involved in societies you will know firsthand the pivotal role societies play in contributing to the overall quality and richness of the Trinity experience as well as contributing to the wider educational goals of the university.

Trinity has more than 110 student societies - but sometimes we can take for granted what that means in its totality.

The Freshers Week tradition of all societies gathering en masse in Front Square to canvas for new members gives us a view of the sheer scale, dynamism and potency of the student societies in Trinity. And the efforts students put into running our societies from year to year.

But apart from Freshers Week, it’s actually quite difficult to get a true sense of the diverse range of activities and interests of the multitude of societies flourishing in College throughout the year. This Yearbook addresses that gap very simply and very effectively. It has articles and photos about every single society in Trinity and their activities over the last academic year. It enables all societies regardless of size, history, or headlines, to profile themselves and their achievements in a very accessible way. I particularly like:

- The Yearbook’s cover with the society logos fashioned into the shape of the Campanile - great graphics and I congratulate the artist.
- The Knitting Society image on page 38 based around the sculpture of my illustrious predecessor Dr Salmon - who probably never had any interest in knitting.
- And the Indian Society does seem to be having the most fun......

I can see the Yearbook being an invaluable guide for new and existing students as well as for College as it seeks to promote Trinity far and wide.

This Yearbook provides a colourful snapshot of the quality and ingenuity of your interests and initiatives. We are not the only people to think this. Over the last three years Trinity Societies have won a total of eight awards at the Board of Irish College Societies National Awards, more than any other university. This is a reflection of how much time and effort you, the students,
put into running them. Your enthusiasm, initiative and drive epitomise what Trinity is about.

I would like to commend all those involved in producing this publication. A special thanks to Rob Farhat as outgoing Chair of the Central Societies Committee and editor of the Yearbook. And a special welcome to incoming chair Cian McCarthy.

I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate the outgoing committees of all our student societies for what was clearly an outstanding year and wish the incoming committees all the best for 2012-13. And finally I would like to acknowledge the sterling work of the Central Societies Committee in facilitating the development of new societies and enabling existing societies to have the support they need to thrive.
Trinity College Dublin Innovation Award 2011

Science Gallery

It's my brief here this afternoon to talk about the award which we're presenting today, and about the importance of innovation and entrepreneurship in Trinity College.

The Trinity Innovation Award is given each year to an individual or company who has made an outstanding contribution to the promotion of an entrepreneurial culture within the university.

The Award is now in its seventh year and is part of a wider emphasis on encouraging innovation and entrepreneurship at all levels of university life. Other initiatives include:

- The Entrepreneurship Programme run by Trinity Research & Innovation;
- The TCD-UCD Innovation Academy;
- And the Business Student of the Year award, which I presented a fortnight ago.

If I had to identify the single biggest difference, or greatest advance, in university life since I started here as an undergraduate in 1983 or as a lecturer in 1995, I would say it's the emphasis on innovation and entrepreneurship. Fifteen years ago these words were rarely used but since becoming Provost seven months ago, I think I've hardly given a speech without talking about innovation - and rightly so. Innovation is integral to both aspects of our core mission in education and research.

Innovation is about doing new things – and making space for new things often means displacing the status quo. It’s about taking disruptive action in the real world. Universities are now 'spaces' for such action; in that respect we are now in an 'age of innovation'.

In this ‘Age of Innovation’, the need to nurture creativity, entrepreneurship and an innovative spirit in students is recognised as a key educational goal.

Though I must stress, in this context, that our commitment has always been to producing graduates who are flexible, creative, and capable of challenging the status quo and moving beyond their disciplines. Encouraging a mindset of innovation and entrepreneurship is not a radical departure for Trinity. It’s the natural development of our core commitment to scholarship and sound education.
For instance, when I speak of Trinity's greatest innovators, I often mention William Rowan Hamilton, the 19th century mathematician who discovered quaternions, and Samuel Beckett, who wrote arguably the most innovative play of the 20th century. Both were astonishingly original and ground-breaking and they changed their disciplines – disrupted them.

The difference between Trinity now and Trinity in Hamilton or Beckett's time lies I think in the way that knowledge is used and applied. But previously universities could seem remote from the practical applications of knowledge – they were ivory towers, as the parlance had it. That is not the case today.

Today, the priority for universities is to know that some ideas need time and space to develop, and we have to build that understanding into how the university contributes valuably and sustainably to the innovation ecosystem.

The wealth and diversity of ideas coming out of Trinity is shown by the quality and range of winners of this Innovation Award.

Distinguished past winners include Chris Horn, who co-founded Iona Technologies, the fifth largest IPO in Nasdaq history. Twenty different companies have been spun out of Iona, creating hundreds of high tech jobs in Ireland and overseas.

Other winners were Steve Collins and Hugh Reynolds, founders of Havok which developed real-time physics simulation software for use in computer games, and was acquired by Intel for $110m in 2007.

And campus companies who have won this prestigious award include:

- Identigen Ltd, which arose from research in the Genetics Department and now services international markets, ensuring safety and quality in the food chain;
- also Creme Software Ltd, which was spun-out from research in mathematical physics and medicine at the Trinity Centre for High Performance Computing.

What I like about the different winners of this award, and about Trinity campus spin-outs generally, is the sheer diversity. Medicine, Physics, Biochemistry, Engineering, Biology, History, Languages, Nanotechnology, Computer Science – all these schools have been involved in campus spin-outs, often in collaboration with each other.

Trinity's strength as a university lies in its long-standing emphasis on multi- and inter-disciplinary research-based education. I am not in favour of any university just focusing research and teaching around a few core areas – because it goes against our strengths. So I'm delighted to see that our campus spin-outs range from air filtration to cancer immunotherapy to global
business intelligence.

Dr Gerard Lacey, this year’s winner, is an outstanding recipient of the award, and someone who embodies all those virtues of entrepreneurship and innovation which we strive to inculcate in our students.

A graduate of computer engineering, Gerry founded his first company, Haptica, based on his PhD research on mobile robotic aids for the elderly visually impaired. He led the team that developed the ProMIS surgical simulator which has won several awards, including a European IST prize and the Irish Software Association Technology Innovation Prize. Haptica was acquired by CAE Healthcare in 2011.

Gerry returned to Trinity College in 2005 to resume research and lecturing. Since then he has founded a second company, Glanta Ltd, to commercialise the SureWash hand hygiene training system, while a third element of his research, the Wingwatch aircraft warning system, has been licensed to CMC Electronics.

Gerry remains CTO of Glanta, but happily for us, continues to benefit campus life through his inspiration, insight and expertise. I commend in particular his work with the Entrepreneurship Programme and the TCD-UCD Innovation Academy.

This award recognises Gerry’s courage and excellence – his achievement in successfully exploiting the results of his academic research in a highly competitive marketplace, and his generosity in assisting others to venture down similar paths.

The development of entrepreneurial students is vital if students are to maximise their potential in an increasingly challenging economic environment, nationally and internationally. Giving opportunities to students and staff is what Trinity is about – and in these challenging times we need the opportunities that disruptive innovation creates.

With this handsome award – it was crafted in the Trinity Technology and Enterprise Campus by Seamus Gill – we recognise Gerard Lacey as a role model and we look forward to seeing his example inspire all of us. Thank you, Gerry.

* * *
Distinguished guests, colleagues and friends, it is my great pleasure to welcome you to Trinity College Dublin for this conference – this Witness Seminar on ‘Ireland and the Falklands War’ organised by the Centre for Contemporary Irish History.

For the past decade, this Centre has been providing a focal point for interdisciplinary research into Ireland’s contested recent past. An invaluable dimension of its activities has been to engage researchers directly with people who have actual experience and recollections of the historical processes and events under investigation – people like politicians, civil servants, diplomats, administrators, soldiers, who were there at the time.

The Centre is remarkably active and engaged. In this current academic year alone, it has held 25 weekly public seminars, ranging from subjects as diverse as the Battle of the Bogside, the External Relations Act, and the Industrial Development Authority.

The subject of today’s conference is particularly arresting. I am not surprised to see such a turn out. I well recall Haughey’s move of May 1982. I was then in boarding school – St Peter’s College, Wexford - a year away from sitting my Leaving Cert. I found Haughey’s use of Ireland’s seat on the UN Security Council riveting. Aside from the rights and wrongs of his decision, Ireland was suddenly acting on the world stage on a highly contentious issue.

Ireland’s engagement with the Falklands War really caught the country’s imagination. The Centre has, I think, surpassed itself in the calibre of its guests today. I would like to extend a very special welcome to Lord Robert Armstrong, Sir David Goodall, and Brian Stewart as well as Noel Dorr, Dr Martin Mansergh, and Jeremy Craig. Your experience, your unique insights will be crucial to the matters under discussion. You have personal knowledge of the key individuals involved, and of the actual negotiations. It will be a fascinating day and I am very sorry that I cannot stay to participate; among other things we have several commencement ceremonies in College today as you may see from all the colourful gowns around Front Square.

My sincerest thanks to you, and indeed all our contributors, for going to such effort to be with us today.
On a final note, I would like to congratulate the Centre for Contemporary Irish History, its directors, Professor Eunan O’Halpin and Dr Anne Dolan, and its many associates for carrying out pioneering research on difficult and controversial topics in recent Irish history.

* * *

150
Sunday, 15th of April 2012

250th Anniversary of the Trinity College Chapel Choir

Public Theatre, Trinity College Dublin


It's a pleasure indeed for me to say a few words to you here in the Public Theatre at this reception to mark 250 years of the Trinity College Chapel Choir.

Living in the Provost's House, crossing the cobbles of Front Square on a Sunday morning to the Chapel to hear such wonderful music, much of it connected intimately with Trinity ...... well it's quite uplifting; there are few heads of universities anywhere in the world who have the privilege of such an experience.

This is an occasion that reminds me just how special – how unique – Trinity really is, and how we all share in the duty to celebrate that uniqueness, to stand up for it, and to cherish it for the future generations.

Music is one of Trinity's great sources of connectivity with its past, and it moves me – as I'm sure it does all here – to think that some of the music we have heard today has been played and sung, in one setting or another, in this College for hundreds of years.

The talent and ability of this Choir is admired wherever it is heard – which is far afield: it has been broadcast on RTE and BBC and it tours around the world, including, in recent years, Rome, New York, Berlin, Vienna, and Hong Kong. A global Choir, if I may say it, for a global university.

The Chapel Choir enables Trinity to mark important occasions with fitting solemnity and grace. Since I became Provost last year, it has paid tribute, in memorial services, to two of Trinity’s longest serving academics: Prof RB McDowell and Dr John Kirker.

RB McDowell was a particular fan of College choral services. In his history of Trinity he noted that “musical torpor” beset all Dublin after the Act of Union, but that the revival of the Chair of Music in Trinity in 1847 helped “awaken” the city. That's how important Trinity is to the musical life of our capital.

This choir also paid tribute, in a very special way, to another Trinity staff member, Laura Sadlier, who passed away last year. She worked at the Centre for Deaf Studies and the Chapel Choir sang a Service of Evensong in her
memory, which was simultaneously interpreted into Irish Sign Language. As far as we know this was the first time this has been done in Ireland. I welcome such innovation at the heart of our most traditional of activities: Trinity at its best.

While proud of its traditions and respectful of its past, the Chapel Choir like the university itself is constantly evolving. It is dynamic and contemporary – as we have heard this morning in the fresh settings to many classic pieces from the repertoire.

For instance I was fascinated to learn, from the excellent programme, that the setting of the *Kyrie* was by a recent conductor of the choir, George Jackson, who only graduated in 2009.

In keeping with Trinity College Chapel's unique sharing of the ecclesiastical space with the four main Christian churches in Ireland, the Choir's repertoire is ecumenical, drawing on music from many Christian traditions.

And membership of the Choir reflects this ecumenical spirit with singers hailing from a rich variety of backgrounds and academic disciplines; the same goes for the university as a whole – this is important, and central to Trinity's values.

I note Bishop Burrows words to us in his sermon just now, of the value of Trinity's education – and if I recall correctly he said “ours is not a functional curriculum” and he is right in this; we offer an education sound in its principles that the development of the whole student is what is important, integral to that is what goes on in the classroom but also the activities of the clubs and societies.

In conclusion, I would like to thank:

- the Reverend Darren McCallig (Dean of Residence and Chaplain);
- the Director of Chapel Music, Dr Kerry Houston;
- the Conductor of the Chapel Choir, Ms Margaret Bridge;
- and the Organ Scholar, Mr Kevin O'Sullivan.

I thank them for organising this truly wonderful event, and for the great care of the Choir generally. I congratulate and thank the Choir for this beautiful start to the morning.

It was a Trinity graduate, William Congreve, who wrote the famous words:

“Musick has charms to sooth a savage breast,
To soften rocks, or bend a knotted oak”.
I thank the Choir for much soothing, and softening, and bending, over the two and a half centuries of its existence.

* * *
Trinity Week is traditionally the most enjoyable week of Trinity’s academic year – a week of events beginning with the announcement of the new Fellows and Scholars from the steps of the Public Theatre, and finishing with the ever-eventful Trinity Ball.

At this evening’s dinner we formally welcome Trinity’s new scholars. In the rich history of this event, tonight is exceptional because we have a record number of new scholars, 103, the largest number in the College’s history.

It is, I need hardly tell this audience, extremely difficult to become a scholar. I don’t know why the ‘Class of 2012’ – if I may so term it – is so diligent and talented, but of course I’m delighted that such a record has been set on my first Trinity Monday as Provost.

Tonight is also exceptional because we have the privilege of awarding an Honorary Fellowship to our new President, Michael D. Higgins. Unfortunately he cannot be with us this evening, but we recognise him as an academic, a social theorist, and a poet. In his inaugural address, President Higgins called movingly for ‘an active inclusive citizenship, based on participation, equality, respect for all and the flowering of creativity in all its forms’. These are also the values we seek for our students.

Tonight we honour one other Honorary Fellow, Clive Lee, Professor of Anatomy in the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland - and indeed at the Royal Hibernian Academy. He is a graduate of Trinity and has maintained a strong connection with this university as a researcher and lecturer – and I have seen with my own eyes that he is also a cricketer!

We also recognise 13 new Fellows and 3 new Professorial Fellows. Fellowship of Trinity College is a singular distinction that can only be achieved for serious scholarly work of international standing.

And Fellows have a central role in the governance of the College, moulding the College’s distinctive traditions in each new generation.
I’m delighted that so many Scholars and Honorary Fellows from previous years have been able to join us this evening. Later we will hear from one Scholar from 1952 who has the distinction, though I believe it is not unique, of being both the son of a Fellow and the father of a Fellow. I would also like to extend a welcome to Fellows from our sister Colleges: Dr Maire Ni Mhaonaigh and Professor Malcolm Schofield from St. John’s College Cambridge, and Dr Elinor Payne and Dr Kevin Maloy from Oriel College, Oxford. And a particular welcome to Professor Cathleen Synge Morawetz, who is in Ireland to attend Thursday’s symposium on her uncle, Edward Hutchinson Synge. Cathleen’s father was the great mathematician and physicist, John Lighton Synge - and Cathleen is herself an eminent mathematician. A few years ago she presented to Trinity a first edition of Newton’s Principia Mathematica which belonged to her ancestor, Hugh Hamilton, himself a most distinguished Trinity Scholar.

Trinity Week is a time to take stock, to celebrate the achievements of staff and students and to celebrate the distinctiveness of the education we offer here. So tonight I’m going to make a few brief remarks on one aspect of that education - about Innovation.

The reason I want to talk about innovation is because it has so rapidly become central to education policy, not only in Trinity of course, but globally. Fifteen years ago the term was hardly used. But four days ago, when I presented the Trinity Innovation Award to Dr Gerard Lacey, I realised that since becoming Provost I’ve barely given a speech without referencing innovation. So I think it useful to take this opportunity to define what we mean and understand by innovation in a university context.

Innovation is often referred to as the third pillar of university activity. There is teaching, research and innovation. Well I know that the human mind is instinctively tripartite – but I believe we should move on from the analogy of three pillars. I prefer to think of innovation not as separate from but as permeating both education and research. In Trinity education, research and innovation are welded together into a common academic enterprise.

Insofar as innovation means independent, original, critical thinking, it is not new to Trinity. Throughout our long history, we have always encouraged such thinking. Two of our greatest ever innovators in the world of mathematics and literature respectively were William Rowan Hamilton and Samuel Beckett.

I would like to remind the new Scholars that both Hamilton and Beckett were Scholars, so you have some ways to go... but no pressure!

What is new in Trinity today is the emphasis on using research to directly serve society, and the economy. Last year alone, there were seven new campus spin-outs.
But innovation is permeating teaching and research at earlier stages. I recently gave out the Business Student of the Year Award, which is for undergraduates. The six nominees had, between them, managed a student investment fund, organised job fairs, and initiated a real-time student trading platform.

This level of engagement was not happening when I was student here in the Eighties. Michael O’Leary, who graduated BES in the early Eighties, has spoken out in his typically forthright way about how he didn’t feel incentivised as an entrepreneur at university. I believe he would have a different experience in Trinity today.

This focus on applying knowledge promotes a wonderful sense of engagement and excitement and indeed of responsibility towards research – for staff and for students at all levels.

But there are dangers to encouraging an innovative mindset. In certain circumstances it could conceivably lead to an overly utilitarian approach to knowledge.

As one former Trinity Scholar famously put it ‘All art is quite useless’ – which was his witty and combative way of rejecting the view that art and knowledge must be functional, applied, useful.

Archbishop Jackson in his sermon today used a wonderful phrase: ‘The wolves of economic viability and of educational policy [...] force an engagement with many things which might make us wince...’

And indeed if universities go too far down the route of economic viability, we stop exploring knowledge for its own sake, and in the worst case scenario we abandon avenues of research that don’t seem profitable. We create stress around research and scholarship, rather than the space and freedom needed for true innovation.

Fortunately, I think that Trinity is protected against this worst-case scenario by the strength of our traditions.

I want to conclude by saying something about tradition and innovation.

Innovation implies radical departures, disruption, and iconoclasm. It’s true that all great and original ideas are disruptive of what went before them. And when we say that we seek to encourage an innovative mindset in students, we mean that we want to teach them not to be afraid of risks or of subverting tradition.

However if you’re going to be disruptive, you have to have something to disrupt from. Nothing will come of nothing which is why the great innovation
centres of the world tend to be places of established traditions. Silicon Valley for instance established an electronics industry back in the early twentieth century.

Trinity’s historical greatness – its line of Scholars from Edmund Burke to Mary Robinson – engenders a natural respect for knowledge. At the same time it provides a base of strength and solidity from which to do new things, from which to innovate. This is why we may speak of innovation within tradition.

If I might quote again from Archbishop Jackson’s excellent sermon of this morning: ‘Tradition is the rich cavern which connects wisdom and creation’.

I know that tonight’s new Fellows and Scholars will use the Trinity tradition to shape the future for the benefit of us all.

Though speaking of Trinity tradition and the ‘line of Scholars’, there are some scholarly traditions which are, admittedly, problematic. For example, Samuel Beckett apparently spent his fourth year driving a motor car fast and dangerously around College.

Conor Cruise O’Brien became notorious for scaling the Abbey roof to declare that there was no God ……

Well, no-one ever said Trinity Scholars were conformist! Perhaps there is some message about disruption to take from these tales, though I suspect like all good stories, they have grown in the telling.

We are currently, as a country, in a difficult period, but we are also on the threshold of something great in universities, which makes it an exciting time for me as Provost – and for you as Fellows and Scholars.

In his ‘Prayer for his daughter’, Yeats began in deep unrest - ‘once more the storm is howling’ - but he ended with the calm, fertile image of ‘the spreading laurel tree’. That image always reminds me of Trinity – although I know our most famous spreading tree is an Oregon Maple, not a laurel. I look forward to the current economic storm abating and to Trinity’s knowledge and innovation spreading and taking root around this country, and the world.

I congratulate all our new Fellows, Scholars and Honorary Fellows and I wish everyone a great Trinity Week.

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Distinguished guests, colleagues, alumni and friends, welcome to the Trinity Wednesday Academic Symposium.

The theme of Trinity Week this year is ‘Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) in Society’. I am delighted that today's symposium explores the role of ‘Geology in modern Society’. Also known as the science of the earth, geology is science at its broadest and at its most relevant for the future of humankind. Modern society relies on a spectrum of information gathered by geologists. This includes climate forecast, earthquake prediction, supply of clean water and energy, as well as the search for rare metals to support smart technology.

Today's symposium is urging a new look at geology and a greater appreciation of its role in supporting our society.

Trinity has long recognised the importance of geology. In 1777 the Board of the College established the forerunner of the current geological museum— the Dublin University Geological Museum – to house a large collection of Polynesian artifacts collected during Captain Cook's last two voyages. In 1843 it established the Chair of Geology and Mineralogy. This was soon followed by the construction of the splendid Museum Building by Deane and Woodward which has been the home for geological research and teaching ever since. It also houses Trinity's modern Geological Museum which has now has over 80,000 specimens dating back generations and forms a major part of Trinity’s research collection as well as an invaluable educational tool for school children. The study of geology has become very popular over the last 15 years with the Department graduating about 20 geologists per year. I would like to take this opportunity to welcome the recently appointed chair of Geology & Mineralogy, Prof Balz Kamber, whom I know put a lot of work into organising today's symposium.

The symposium will open with the keynote lecture by Prof. Murray Hitzman, Professor of Economic Geology at the Colorado School of Mines. A world authority on critical elements, he will be explaining how High-Tech and Clean Energy engineering is depending on geology and how the drive towards cleaner technologies provides opportunities and challenges for educating and employing the next generation of geologists.
The second presentation is by David Hall, a TCD Geology alumnus who is an active exploration geologist with 30 years of experience gained in more than 60 countries world-wide. His talk is titled "Life after Trinity, A career in mineral exploration" and by following his professional pathway, you should learn the lessons needed to succeed in mineral exploration.

The third presentation is by Prof. Balz Kamber. He will take you on a journey of geological detective work using geochemical analytical data. You will be surprised to learn how the Apollo lunar missions propelled geochemical analysis and how tricks to assay rocks have found their ways into many seemingly unrelated fields, such as archaeology.

The symposium will be concluded by a presentation by Dr. Timothy Brennand, a distinguished TCD alumnus who obtained his PhD here exactly 50 years ago. Equipped with his degrees from Oxford and Trinity, he spent his professional life in petroleum geology with Shell. His pathway illustrates how geological training assists in a career that moves towards a widening set of responsibilities and which require a strategic mind-set. In a nutshell: to work comfortably with uncertainty and the long term.

Today’s symposium will be rounded off with a reception in the Museum Building where new display cabinets will be unveiled between 5:30 and 6:30pm. I would urge you to go along and see the Museum Building if you have not yet had a chance to do so. I hope you enjoy the symposium and the other events planned to celebrate geology at Trinity.

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The Dean of Students’ Roll of Honour Ceremony in Recognition of Student Learning through Voluntary Activity

The Dining Hall, Trinity College Dublin

Minister Fitzgerald, Distinguished Guests, Students, Colleagues and Friends.

It’s a pleasure for me to formally welcome the Minister here to Trinity this evening for the 2nd Dean of Students' Roll of Honour Presentation Ceremony - her first visit to Trinity as Minister for Children and Youth Affairs.

The College has long recognized that extra-curricular volunteering by students contributes to their education and personal development, as well as the quality of the overall student experience.

We have a number of initiatives to promote, encourage, and incentivize civic engagement and volunteering by our students. From the very moment they enter through Front Arch during Fresher's week students are invited to join volunteering programmes and take active roles in the running of sports clubs and societies.

We have a dedicated Civic Engagement Officer, Ms Roisin McGrogan, who coordinates outreach events, volunteer training, community opportunities and fairs; she also liaises with some two hundred community organisations to facilitate meaningful engagement of students in their work.

Not that our students need incentives to volunteer. I have been at many events this year to mark the contributions of our students to their fellow students and to the wider community, both within College and externally. Hearing about the altruism and passion of our students for improving the community around them has been one of the highlights of my first year in office.

The Dean of Students’ Roll of Honour serves to celebrate and highlight the wide array of volunteering efforts of our students. Inaugurated last year, it is fast becoming a new tradition of Trinity Week when we celebrate the contribution and achievements of students and staff.

This evening is about recognising the depth and breadth of learning which Trinity students derive from their extra-curricular voluntary activities – both within the College and in the local community; in their home communities as well as part of international volunteering experiences. Their myriad of civic
roles include areas such as teaching lifesaving skills, reinstating parish newsletters, running student clubs and societies, visiting the elderly, editing publications, mentoring peers, organising intervarsity sporting events, campaigning for justice, organising European meetings, and much, much, more.

Trinity has over 16,000 students, and today we are honouring the exceptional contribution of four hundred and sixty eight of them, the extent and diversity of whose civic engagement is inspiring. For instance, among us we have:

- a Senior Sophister dentistry student who serves in the Garda Reserve in Westmeath;
- a Junior Freshman Law student who spent several weeks organising activities at a daycare centre for people with Disabilities in Malaysia;
- an MSc student of Bioengineering involved in the editing and production team of the Trinity Student Medical Journal (TSMJ).

We have peer mentors, volunteer tutors, scout leaders, choir conductors, faculty convenors, first aiders, debate coaches, pilgrimage assistants and more. There are also committee members from many of our sports clubs and student societies.

The experience of students honoured here today demonstrates that very significant learning and personal development occurs outside the formal setting of the classroom. Your stories also speak of service, service to your fellow students and service to the wider community, and it is very heartening to see this spirit of generosity alive and well in this rising generation.

This spirit was fittingly touched upon at the Trinity Monday Service of Commemoration and Thanksgiving by the Archbishop of Dublin, Michael Jackson, who commented in remembering generations past:

‘throughout history, members of this University of Dublin.... have not always come from ‘strategically clustered resources’ and self-trumpeting ‘centres of excellence’. Somewhere, somebody encouraged everyone whom we honour today; somewhere, somebody believed that they could do great things because they had the ability, the application, the flair and the nerve. Such people may be long gone or even long forgotten but they just did this as part of their duty, seeking no limelight for themselves’.

So I would like to congratulate all 468 of you included on the Roll of Honour for your outstanding efforts and commitment; I look forward to hearing about your future endeavours.

I would also like to acknowledge the volunteerism of the wider study body who contribute so much to their own and to the broader Trinity Student Experience.
My thanks to the Dean of Students, Dr Amanda Piesse, and the panel of staff and students who selected the students on this year's Roll of Honour. Thanks also to Ms Roisin McGrogan, the Civic Engagement Officer, for organizing today's ceremony.

We are honoured to have Ms. Frances Fitzgerald T.D., Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, with us this evening. The Minister’s department works to encourage the participation of young people in civic society and takes a lead role in ensuring that young people have a voice in the design, delivery, and monitoring of services and policies that affect their lives. She has been actively involved in a number of community organisations and activities including Arthritis Ireland, The O'Reilly Theatre and Europa Donna and in her role as Minister continues to engage with and support the work of civic society organisations in the Youth Work sector in particular. It is with this in mind that it is especially appropriate to welcome her to address us on this occasion.

Please join me in welcoming Minister Frances Fitzgerald.

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Thursday, 19th of April 2012

Launch of Symposium on Edward Hutchinson Synge (1890 - 1957). “From Peering at Atoms to Gazing at the Stars”

Schrödinger Lecture Theatre, Trinity College Dublin

Distinguished guests, colleagues and friends. Two days ago I received the book ‘Hutchie – The Life and Works of Edward Hutchinson Synge (1890-1957).’ I learned a lot very quickly, and I’m delighted that we are having this symposium today devoted to the genius of Edward Hutchinson Synge, and to launch a book in his memory.

As most of you here will know, ‘Hutchie’ was the nephew of playwright John Millington Synge, and was the older brother of John Lighton Synge, the outstanding mathematician and theoretical physicist. It is my great privilege to welcome the members of the Synge family here today. I would like to extend a special welcome on behalf of the College to Professor Cathleen Synge Morawetz, niece of Edward Hutchinson, who is herself an eminent mathematician.

You will hear today of the life of this remarkable man, and I won’t even attempt to sketch it here, except to say that EH Synge was a Foundation Scholar in mathematics at Trinity in 1910. However, he didn’t graduate and he did his work as a recluse at his home in Dundrum.

Today’s symposium, almost a century after Edward Hutchinson Synge left Trinity, will shed some light on his remarkable scientific achievements and relatively unknown life in all its tragic complexity. I would like to welcome the guest speakers who are with us today to contribute to this process, particularly those who have travelled from the UK.

I would like to thank the School of Physics for organising today’s symposium. A huge thanks to Professors John Donegan, Denis Weaire and Petros Florides for organising the special commemorative publication. This book republishes the papers of EH Synge together with a short biographical memoir which for the first time provides some insight into his life. It is my pleasure to officially launch this book this morning.

During a week when we remember those from past generations whose legacies have advanced Trinity’s reputation in the world, it is very appropriate that we pay tribute to this unique person – this man whose headstone reads ‘Scientist-Inventor’. Indeed I think it says something about the immutability of Trinity’s values that we still do things like this, and I feel everyone here is
proud that we can raise EH Synge there alongside his brother, John Lighton Synge, and his hero William Rowan Hamilton whose life work he had been instrumental in having published.

I now declare the symposium open and hope that you all enjoy this special programme of events to commemorate Edward Hutchinson Synge.

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Launch of the Irish Science Teachers Association 50th Annual Conference

Science Gallery

Lord Mayor, Distinguished Guests, Ladies & Gentlemen - Welcome to the Science Gallery and to Trinity College for ISTA’s 50th Annual Conference.

This week is a special week in the College – we call it “Trinity Week”, and it begins on Trinity Monday with the announcement of the new Fellows and Scholars, and with the traditional Trinity Monday discourse. This year the discourse was on Ernest Walton because, I don’t need to tell you, this is the 80th anniversary of the splitting of the atom by Walton and his Cambridge colleagues in 1932, for which they won the Nobel Prize in Physics.

Ernest Walton was a Trinity scholar – which means he excelled in a very rigorous undergraduate exam and was, as a result, given rooms in College and a grant. This year we had 103 scholars, which was a record number.

It is a wonderful coincidence of dates that ISTA’s 50th anniversary should coincide with Walton’s anniversary and with Dublin being designated European City of Science. I don’t know if you realised that this very special anniversary conference was also going to coincide with the Trinity Ball, but I hope you will take as a good omen the euphoria and positivity which will very shortly be emanating from campus – hopefully not so loud that it will disrupt these proceedings!

ISTA, as much as any other organisation in this country, has done so much to promote the importance of science. I know how much you must all welcome this flagship gallery, which allows children of all ages, and indeed adults, to experience, tangibly, not only the magic of science itself, but art and science – where “art and science collide”, as we often say.

I know how truly delighted Walton would have been. He was fortunate to encounter excellent science teaching in his school, the Methodist College, Belfast, and was all his life a strong advocate of science education. Indeed he was actively involved with ISTA.

The Science Gallery is just one of the recent beacons proclaiming Trinity’s commitment to science. Others include CRANN (the Centre for Research on Adaptive Nanostructures and Nanodevices), TCIN (the Trinity College Institute of Neuroscience), CTVR – Trinity’s Telecommunications Institute, and our
new Trinity Biomedical Sciences Institute, recently opened close by here on Pearse St.

Trinity is proud of all its research, but there's no doubt that some of our strongest research - and certainly that which makes global headlines – is in science, in areas like nanoscience, neuroscience, molecular medicine, bioengineering, immunology, and telecommunications.

Recent exciting developments include for instance CRANN researchers working on technology that could create the flattest screen ever, using a new material, a transparent conducting oxide, that will allow the creation of completely see-through screens. There's also CRANN’s recent investment from a British firm for the industrial production of graphene, which is 200 times stronger than steel but 100,000 thinner than human hair. Then there's our immunologists’ discoveries into cellular changes linked to allergies, and our ocular geneticists’ research into ways of preventing macular degeneration.

These are just a few of the exciting advances being worked on here – and in other institutions, because of course we very much favour research collaborations with other universities and with industry. You will have an opportunity to hear about some of this research during the conference from the experts in their fields.

I know how hard you've worked to instill a real interest in science into your students – and with some success. The latest CAO figures reveal an 18 percent increase in applications for higher degree courses in science. In some Trinity courses, such as chemistry and earth science, the increase is over 40 percent. We are pleased to see this of course, but we do recognize the need to meet increased demand for our courses with more places and opportunities funded to ensure quality of provision.

You have laid such a strong foundation for science in your students, I want you to feel the utmost confidence that if – or when – they come to Trinity, they will be nurtured and developed to their fullest potential, and not only in the lecture room and laboratory, but outside the classroom in volunteering activities and in clubs and societies, which are more than just leisure activities but learning activities. Among the extracurricular societies of interest to science students are: the Biochemical Society, the Botany Society, the Biological Society, the Genetical Society, the Science Management Society, the Microbiological Society, the Neuroscience Society, the Zoological Society... Or students may simply prefer to join the Science Fiction society. You will have been given an interesting Yearbook at registration which has just been published by the students to showcase the scale of their societies’ activities.

I know that we both want the same things for our students – that they have an intellectually stimulating and personally rewarding university experience,
and that they then contribute to society. So I hope we can continue to work together fruitfully – for the good of individual students and of society as a whole. The economy can only benefit from an influx of highly educated scientists, taking leading roles in global research.

ISTA is fifty years old and can be very proud of its success. I wish you every continued success for the future and I thank you for all you have done and continue to do for science in Ireland.

I know you will enjoy the conference because I’ve seen the programme. I hope, if you’re not too put off by the inevitable post-Trinity Ball debris, that you’ll take time to visit the campus tomorrow. I recommend particularly the Old Library, which celebrates its tercentenary this year. Thank you very much.

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Welcome everybody to this launch and to the first leg of Gerald Dawe’s ‘world tour’ of Ireland.

I’m delighted that Gerry has chosen to launch his book and start his tour in Trinity, and that this evening is to feature readings from six Trinity poets and critics - six wonderfully diverse poets and critics, ranging from:

- Brendan Kennelly, our now retired Professor of Modern Literature and author of thirty books;
- to Eadaoin Lynch, who is in her final year here studying English;
- from Eilean Ni Chuilleanain who I last heard read in Moscow at the Ambassador’s Residence, a poem to her son’s marriage;
- to Iggy McGovern whose poem ‘Grania’ I had the pleasure to read for Lady Normanby.

This range shows the strength of poetry writing and teaching in Trinity. This is appropriate given how much Gerry has done for poetry and creative writing in this university.

Gerry has been on the staff here since 1988. And in 1998 he co-founded, with Brendan Kennelly, the Oscar Wilde Centre of Irish Writing, which is located in 21 Westland Row, Oscar Wilde’s birthplace.

The Masters in Creative Writing, run from the Centre, is the first such programme ever offered in an Irish university. Its establishment was ground-breaking.

Trinity excels at interdisciplinary collaboration, fostered in centres of innovation and creativity - the Oscar Wilde Centre, the Lir Academy of Dramatic Art, the Centre for Music Composition, the Long Room Hub; recently we have complemented these with the TCD-UCD Innovation Academy run from Foster Place.

None of these existed when I was an undergraduate here in the early Eighties. There were, of course, wonderfully creative individuals in College, but there was little emphasis on encouraging creativity as part of teaching.

Scholarly learning, on the one hand, and the kind of creativity these centres embody on the other, were seen somewhat apart from each other. To
paraphrase Yeats, universities were 'monuments of unageing intellect' and not to be 'caught' as a matter of their nature 'in that sensual music' that goes on in the world outside them.

This new emphasis on fostering creativity and innovation is something we are tremendously excited by, and that we expect great things of – as a force for good, as a force for social and economic regeneration in this country.

Gerry is at the forefront of this change. The Oscar Wilde Centre has led the way in sending out the message that universities are not just about critiquing great works of art - but about creating them too. I congratulate Gerry, and Brendan, for this, and I thank you. You have combatted the facile and pernicious Shavian notion that 'those who can't, teach.'

Gerry, in interviews, you have spoken out against [I quote] 'the arrogant assumption that because someone is a teacher, or a doctor, or a bus driver, or whatever, that they are somehow less a writer'.

You have pointed out that - yes, 'there is always going to be a tension between a teacher’s life and a writer’s life, but it can be a fruitful tension'.

Since embarking on your career as lecturer and teacher, you have published eight books of poetry and four books of essays, and have been a source of inspiration for students – so you’ve obviously discovered how to make that tension fruitful.

Today we launch your Selected Poems – your greatest hits, as it were. As a noted lover of, and writer on, music – as indeed, I understand also a former rock musician - you are, I suspect, wary of Greatest Hits. The purist music lover doesn’t have the Greatest Hits, or the Best Of, he has Astral Weeks and Avalon Sunset. But after an artist had produced a significant body of work, such as you have done, it is time to take stock and assess. From that point of view Greatest Hits or Selected Poems are indispensable.

So it is with this book, which starts with poems about Belfast, where you grew up – including, I note, a very fine poem on the signing of the Ulster Covenant in September 1912, which is of course particularly pertinent this centenary, and which will feature in the commemorations.

From Belfast, we move to rural Galway, to other European countries, which you travel across on boats and in trains.

Very naturally, if sadly, the images of Europe's tragic history take possession of you. Well – Europe's sombre images but its joyful images too. In so many of these poems ‘the brazen light of day’ is contrasted with ‘the shapes of installations in the darkness’.
It seems no accident that the book ends with the lines:

'cries of laughter, shouts of grief /
 mingle and merge in the noonday sun'.

That ‘mingling and merging’ is part of the pleasure of reading these poems.

You may also be the first poet to ever write a poem to his inhaler! Anyone who has ever struggled for breath – will appreciate how the congestion of the opening of the poem clears as the narrator ‘plays upon this alto of metered air’.

I congratulate you, Gerry, on the achievement that this book represents and I congratulate Gallery Press on the handsome production. Colm Toibin has called the Gallery Press ‘probably one of the two or three best poetry presses in the world’. We in Trinity like that best-in-the-world feeling. The Gallery Press bears witness to the extraordinary strength of poetry on this island – a strength which, with the example and the teaching of Gerald Dawe, is set to continue.

But now I’ll stop so we can get on with hearing these poems read by people who know how to read them.

Thank you very much.

* * *

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Thursday, 26th of April 2012

Address to the Institute of Directors: 'The Future of Third Level Education in Ireland and the Skills required by the Irish economy'

St Stephen’s Green Hotel, Dublin

Good morning, and thank you for inviting me here today. I’m most grateful for the opportunity you have given me to speak on this crucial issue.

The title of this morning’s talk is not my own, though I am of course happy to speak on it. Nonetheless I want to start by unpacking some of the assumptions in this title – ‘The Future of Third Level Education in Ireland, and the Skills required by the Irish Economy’.

I must stress that I think this an excellent title – if I didn’t I wouldn’t have agreed to speak to it – and when I say I want to unpack some of the assumptions, it’s because I think it’s useful for all of us – certainly for me – to take a step back and debate the ideas implied by the title.

So: ‘The Future of Third Level Education in Ireland and the Skills required by the Irish Economy’.

As I see it, four assumptions have gone into creating this title:

- First, there’s the assumption that all of a student’s education, at third level, will actually be in Ireland;
- Second, there may be the assumption that the goal of third level education generally is to fill the skills gaps that arise in the economy;
- Third, the specific assumption that the main purpose of third level education in Ireland is to produce graduates to grow the Irish economy;
- And fourth, there’s the assumption that ‘the Irish economy’ is synonymous with Ireland; that when we talk about what’s good for the economy, we mean what’s good for the country.

I’d like to address each of these assumptions in turn. I will then turn to the future of third level education and the type of education Trinity seeks to deliver.

SO THE FIRST ASSUMPTION - THAT A STUDENT’S EDUCATION, AT THIRD LEVEL, WILL ALL BE IN IRELAND.

When we talk about ‘third level education in Ireland’, we create the impression of students spending all their college years in Ireland, perhaps in
one institution. This is not how I think of it. In Trinity – and I should say now that I can only speak for Trinity, not for the sector – well, in Trinity we seek to deliver education that makes our students global in their perspective.

This means that, ideally, they will not spend all their college years on our Dublin campus. At the moment 1 in 20 students do a semester abroad, most of them language students on Erasmus. One of the goals of my Provostship is to improve that figure. I'd like to see at least half of our undergraduate students spend time abroad.

Trinity already thinks globally in terms of staff recruitment - half of Trinity's academic staff are born outside of Ireland. Setting up more student exchange programmes with our peer-institutions abroad creates a dynamic flow with our students going abroad and foreign students coming here.

But if the campus is to become more cosmopolitan and reflective of diverse experience, we also want more international students enrolling for the full Trinity education.

We recently created an entirely new post, the Vice-Provost for Global Relations, with the express aim of improving our messaging abroad and focussing global interest on Trinity. By creating such a post we are seeking to coordinate our activities towards the core aim of asserting Trinity's presence on the world stage – playing for Ireland on the world stage, if you like.

So rather than talking about ‘third level education in Ireland’, let’s talk about ‘global third level education’ provided by Irish universities.

THE NEXT ASSUMPTION IS THAT THE GOAL OF THIRD LEVEL EDUCATION GENERALLY IS TO FILL THE SKILLS GAPS IN AN ECONOMY.

I am wary of any talk of ‘skills gaps’ because by the time skills gaps appear, causing problems within the economy, it’s already too late. As educators – and probably for economists too though it’s not my place to say - we need to be thinking about tomorrow, not reacting to today. Or put it another way, we should be offering an education flexible enough to adapt to skills gaps of the future.

And the key question we need to ask for this and for the next assumption is: where do my responsibilities lie as the head of a university? My answer is that my primary responsibility is to my students, not to the economy. Yes, I want Trinity students to drive the economy and innovate but my first responsibility is to ensure that our students - many of them of course not Irish - get a great education that allows them to lead a rewarding life and fulfil their potential.
Leading a fulfilling life involves, of course, finding fulfilling work. But does finding jobs equate to filling the skills gap? It can do, for a while, but as we all know, many skills gaps are temporary. Today, technology moves fast and almost no-one has the same job for life. It would be irresponsible of me if I were to focus students on acquiring skills that may become redundant after a few years.

Rather than specific skills sets to meet specific gaps, we want to train students in critical thinking, flexibility, and creativity to ready them for the volatile nature of the contemporary job market.

That is what’s most beneficial for them - and incidentally for the economy. A ‘knowledge economy’, a society that lives by its wits, so to speak, and not through low labour rates or the exploitation of natural resources, needs such flexible, decisive, and entrepreneurial people.

I’LL TURN NOW TO THE NEXT ASSUMPTION - THAT THIRD LEVEL EDUCATION IN IRELAND SHOULD PRODUCE STUDENTS TO GROW THE IRISH ECONOMY.

Well, my position vis-à-vis the last assumption also holds here – my responsibility is to my students, not to the Irish economy. Most often these interests are aligned but sometimes they are not and that creates tension – often, I would submit, a useful tension.

First – and this may be the elephant in the room - many of our graduates are not going to be working in Ireland, because there are no jobs for them here. I recently attended a graduation ceremony for nurses. The HSE isn’t hiring so many are going to the UK, where they have jobs waiting for them. It takes several hundred thousands of euro to educate someone to third level and some see that as money walking out of our economy.

To this I would say:

- First, they're our citizens, and they deserve this education. As a true republic, affording our citizens educational opportunity can't be left to others;
- Second, they're going to emigrate anyway. The alternative to sending out well-educated graduates is to send low-skilled people as in the past cycles of emigration. Is this what we want for our young people? Is it what many of you, who are parents, would want?

Any talk about students required to ‘service’ the Irish economy is dubious. Irish people have a mobile mentality – they move around, and students will stay in Ireland if there are opportunities for them here. It’s about opportunities: they will stay for opportunities. They will return for
opportunities, as they did during the boom, because the pull to home is always strong.

An ideal situation is one where Irish graduates go abroad for a time and then return – and perhaps go abroad again. Meanwhile, international graduates come to Ireland to work. Ireland is part of the world economy where the free flow of people is a positive thing. Maybe we should acknowledge the reality. We should rephrase the question and talk about the global economy and educate to give our young people opportunities to succeed in that.

I know that emigration stirs emotions in this country, for understandable, historic reasons, but emigration has changed. It is not only that travel and communications have been revolutionised, so that someone living in Boston is no longer as distant as they were fifty years ago; it is also that companies and corporations now think globally. They uproot to the places that suit them. The international young around Grand Canal Dock probably had no specific desire, most of them, to come to Dublin. They came because Google is here.

Our students are not being educated for the Irish economy specifically, just as Oxford students are not being educated for the UK economy, or Harvard students for the Massachusetts economy. Instead of thinking in terms of this island, we should think globally.

I WILL TURN NOW TO THE FINAL ASSUMPTION: THAT THE IRISH ECONOMY IS SYNONYMOUS WITH IRELAND – THAT WHAT’S GOOD FOR THE ECONOMY IS GOOD FOR THE COUNTRY.

I am not here to downplay the importance of a flourishing economy. It is central to any country. Citizens cannot lead fulfilling lives nor can countries develop without a strong economy.

The role of universities in growing the economy has always been crucial, but as we develop into a knowledge economy, it has become even more so. The connection between high-tech companies, university research, and excellent graduates becomes more important with every passing year. Our graduates play a direct role in making this succeed, and must continue to do so.

But more is required. Does a social worker grow the economy? No. Is he or she necessary? Certainly. What about a historian, or a linguist? Or an actor, or a translator?

In Trinity, our primary purpose is to grow knowledge and to educate, to contribute to the public good in the broadest sense, accepting that not all knowledge is lucrative, nor in the strictly commercial sense, economically viable.
We want our students to feel something of the intellectual hunger which so animated the great scholars of the past – to feel it however briefly - not to be constantly thinking in terms of commercialisation. And in terms of servicing a knowledge economy, we know which should always be ahead of demand – creating demand, not just meeting it.

So that’s my unpacking of the assumptions in this title. Allow me to recap so far:

- third level education should be international and not confined to one institution, one campus, and one nationality. We seek a dynamic global exchange of people and ideas;
- the goal of a Trinity education is not to fill particular skills gaps but to produce graduates who can adapt to the volatile nature of the contemporary job market, and are able to ultimately create their own employment;
- instead of educating students for the Irish market, we think globally – to form global minds;
- and finally we see our mission as educating not workers for the economy, but citizens for society.

Having tested these assumptions, we can now ask: what is the future of third level education in this country, and how can we best educate students to fulfill their potential and to benefit society?

When we talk about ‘the future of third level education in Ireland’, the issue of rankings, and the related issue of funding, immediately arise. I wish they didn’t, but historically Ireland has rightly been proud of its educational standards, and the future of third level in Ireland depends on universities regaining their positions in the global rankings.

As you all know there are unfortunately no Irish universities in the top 100. It’s not that Trinity or UCD or UCC or whatever other Irish universities have suddenly started performing badly and have allowed their standards to slip. Far from it. It’s that other better-funded universities are going faster, particularly in Asia.

A word on the rankings. I know that some people think too much significance is placed on rankings and that we should have our own codes of excellence. All I can say is, first, that the rankings use many different metrics and if you check out the top twenty, you will probably agree that they are getting it about right.

Second, the rankings are what everyone goes on internationally. When students and staff on the other side of the world are trying to decide where to go, they don’t have time to ascertain the subtleties of our system; they just look at the rankings.
Improving our position in the rankings will require finance.

So how to increase funding to higher education? Well, my position on this has been reported fairly widely in the media so I won’t go into it at length this morning.

I would just say this: Ireland’s spend per student is below the OECD average. The proportion of funding from private sources is also below the OECD average. We do not now employ enough academic staff, by international standards, for the number of students we have. Global competition is not static. Investments made through private fees and public funds in many countries are greatly outpacing us.

For Ireland to succeed as an education hub, we have to bring more investment into the system – we need to think strategically about financing. We should look flexibly at all the options, including having a graded or ‘ramped’ system of grants available for those in need. This could be funded through fees. Another scheme used profitably in many countries is ‘Dual Track’ funding.

That’s all I’m going to say about funding here. But it’s important I say it because there is little future for third level education in Ireland unless there is some game-changing about how universities are financed.

Allow me now, in this final part of my talk, to look at the Trinity education.

You will have taken, from what I’ve said so far, the general idea that Trinity doesn’t favour an education that is too narrow or skills-based.

Of course our ideas of education have evolved over time. But just over a decade ago, the then Board of Trinity approved a policy which set out the nine agreed attributes of the TCD graduate. These attributes are:

- articulacy;
- literacy;
- numeracy;
- inquisitiveness;
- analytical ability;
- adaptability;
- breadth of reading;
- ethical responsibility;
- and international outlook.

These are general attributes designed to produce the mindset which can creatively respond to diverse situations.
How do we go about instilling these attributes in our students? Our tried and tested methods include:

- Students undertaking original research alongside professors;
- Benefitting from a broad-based interdisciplinary syllabus;
- Developing critical thinking;
- Honing excellent communication skills;
- and participating in extra-curricular activities.

This way of educating goes back a long way.

Equally the emphasis on good communication skills and on extra-curricular also goes back very far. The two College debating societies, the Phil and the Hist, were founded in 1683 and 1747 respectively and are often cited as ‘the oldest student undergraduate societies in the world’. The Cricket Club and the Boat Club were founded in 1835 and 1836; the Football Club – which actually plays rugby football – was founded in 1854 and again is cited as the world’s oldest documented football club.

In many countries around the world – in Asia in particular – they are investing now to create universities that deliver the kind of research-based education bolstered by extra-curricular activities that we have favoured for centuries.

And what is fascinating to me is that this time-honoured method of teaching remains one favoured by today’s employers.

Just a few months ago, David Broderick, who is in charge of graduate placement at IBEC noted that: ‘What employers are looking for is someone who stands out from the crowd – someone who demonstrates organisational ability through clubs and societies.’

We are secure in the kind of education we offer because we see the great results in our students, but it is of course most reassuring to find that employers are backing us up.

All of this gives us confidence to continue investing in and strengthening our educational model. But I don’t want to give the impression that we are stuck in our traditions, or that we support this type of education simply because it is time-honoured. Far from it. We are constantly evolving, and our capacity to evolve is I think built into at least three of our attributes – it is part of ‘adaptability’, of ‘inquisitiveness’, and of ‘international outlook’.

Since I was a Trinity undergraduate in the 1980s, there has been one great evolution – or revolution - and that’s the recent emphasis on creativity, entrepreneurship, and innovation.
Innovation is about encouraging staff and students to use their research to directly grow the economy and serve society. It began, of course, in the United States and it is part of ‘our international outlook’ that we sought to transplant it here.

Initiatives such as the TCD-UCD Innovation Academy and the Entrepreneurship Programme run by Trinity Research and Innovation have really helped develop innovation. Last year alone, there were seven new campus spin-outs. This is a crucial growth area for Trinity and for other Irish universities.

So Trinity is not standing still. We are constantly moving forward but we are evolving from a place of strength and tradition. This helps us to withstand adopting ephemeral solutions to passing problems.

Looking at these nine attributes, and at the five tried and tested education methods through which we seek to instil these attributes, I am confident that they will produce graduates who are up for anything and who will surmount future difficulties and seize future opportunities in ways that we cannot even begin to imagine.

And to return to the title - although I’ve been speaking against the assumption that third level should service the Irish economy, let me say that I believe sincerely that the best way Trinity can play its part in economic and social regeneration is to educate the bright and ambitious young people who come to us, as graduates with these attributes, educated through these methods - and I hope I have managed to convince you of this.

Perhaps then the title of my talk should be 'The future of university education for young Irish people and what they need to succeed'.

I’m now greatly looking forward to Marian Corcoran of Accenture’s talk and to the discussion that will follow.

Thank you very much for listening.
President Higgins, Distinguished Guests, Colleagues and Friends.

Exactly three hundred years ago, in May 1712, the foundation stone for this Library was laid. The College then owned some fifteen thousand books.

Today, Trinity has 4.25 million books, plus 350,000 electronic books and access to 30,000 electronic journals – and these figures just keep growing. As it says in Ecclesiastes: “Of making many books there is no end”! This Library has been an on-going project since that first foundation stone was laid, and indeed earlier, back to the thirty books and ten manuscripts recorded as belonging to the College in 1601.

If you walk round this College, or any of the world’s great university campuses, and you admire the fine buildings, but take away the libraries, they’re no longer universities. They’re deconsecrated.

Think of the great library of Leuven or Louvain University in Belgium. In its long history it was plundered and twice burnt down – in 1914 and 1940, and its collections were split, some sent to Paris, some to Brussels. Only when its collections were restored after the second world war, could Louvain be said to have a university again.

It is appropriate perhaps to recall that this Library was also so threatened during the Jacobite rebellion, and Micheal Moore, poet, philosopher and later Rector of the University of Paris, saved it from ruin; as sometime head of Trinity during the rebellion he prevented the soldiery from burning it.

Our Library is a “work in progress” - if that is not too makeshift a term for somewhere so magnificent and venerable. It began as a reading room for Fellows - undergraduates were not allowed in, except chaperoned by a Fellow. This sounds horribly exclusionary, and it was – but I guess we should recall that books in the 18th century were rare, costly items and Trinity’s collection, dating back to the 7th century, was priceless. Some of the gems of the collection are on display now as part of this Tercentenary exhibition.

The nature of this Library – and therefore of this university – changed in the 19th century. First came the 1801 Copyright Act which entitles Trinity, like the Bodleian in Oxford and the Cambridge University Library, to a free copy of every book, pamphlet, map and periodical published in Ireland and Great
Britain. We went from a scholars’ library to one of the great research libraries of the world.

It still took undergraduates another fifty years to be admitted. Not before time! When talking of Trinity I like to refer to students and professors being engaged on a “common enterprise of discovery”. Provost Mahaffy called the College “a small republic of letters” – to his mind like, perhaps, one of those Medieval Italian city republics – now of course we are a community of 16,740 students and 3,300 staff highly integrated into the national life and making the resources of the Library available to all.

I found a memorable description of the Long Room from a former undergraduate in the recently published *Trinity Tales*, a collection of essays from students of the Seventies. John Conyngham, now a South African novelist, described this room as a “cathedral of books”:

“Standing once more in the towering vault”, he wrote, “I gazed up at the curved wooden ceiling in its haze of golden light, and breathed in the dusty and resinous smell of centuries of learning.”

Today the Trinity Library is a central learning resource for all staff and students. It’s also a vital research centre for visiting scholars, and the Long Room is, of course, one of Dublin’s key attractions. It’s great that visitors to Ireland’s capital city come, in such numbers, to a library.

The Library has much unique and original material. I don’t have time now to go through all our collections but let me just mention two:

Trinity College was a training ground for civil servants in the 19th century and the Library’s material of Indian origin includes examples of Hindu manuscripts, records of the Raj, and sources pertaining to the role of Ireland in the evolution of the present Indian constitution. The recent exhibition ‘Ireland in India’ helped stimulate the South Asia Studies initiative to bring students and scholars to Trinity.

Another is The 1641 Depositions: they are the contemporary accounts of those affected by the 1641 Rising, and were donated to the Library by Bishop Stearne of Clogher in 1741. Bound in 33 volumes, they remained inaccessible to scholars for centuries. Variable spellings, difficulties of notation and the sheer volume of information made analysis beyond traditional scope - along with sensitivities over historical positions. But recently, through the application of new technologies, digitisation and transcription, these Depositions have become amenable to scholarship.

Staff in the Library continue to develop innovative techniques to facilitate access to our collections. Already 400,000 images from our collections are
available online, including diaries and photographs of Victorian explorers, Greek and Egyptian papyri, and records of 1916.

Using spectroscopic techniques and through collaboration with colleagues in the School of Physics, librarians are learning about medieval pigments and materials. We now know that the wonderful blue tones in the Book of Kells were derived from the woad plant, and not from lapis lazuli imported from Asia, as was once thought. That such an exotic ‘Arabian Nights’ story was even thought possible is testament, I think, to this great Library’s mystique.

The augmentation, preservation, conservation, curating, and on-going facilitating of our collections is made possible by the Librarian, Robin Adams, by the Director of Research and Keeper of Manuscripts, Dr Bernard Meehan, together with their distinguished colleagues. To all of these, as to their predecessors through the ages, we owe an enormous debt of thanks. I like that word ‘keeper’ – certainly I think of these individuals as the ‘keepers’ of this university and I thank them personally and on behalf of Trinity staff and students.

The Library, this “work in progress”, will of course change in response to developing scholarship, and as the migration from print to electronic continues.

But as long as this Library holds, in whatever form, then we still have a university, rather than a collection of buildings, and anyone accessing the thousands of years of knowledge held in manuscripts, pamphlets, books, microfilm, digital, and yet-to-be discovered formats, will still conclude, as I do now, that “All of human life is here”.

It is my great honour now to introduce the President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins.

* * *
Launch of CIRCLE: A Calendar of Irish Chancery Letters
1244-1509

Trinity Long Room Hub

Welcome to Trinity College Dublin for this most important launch. Since taking on the Provostship eight months ago, it has been my pleasure to launch many books and indeed online journals and websites, all testament to the great work being done at Trinity, but this launch is special for a number of reasons:

- This project has been nearly four decades in the making;
- It has involved generations of Trinity’s leading historians, some of whom sadly did not live to see its great success today;
- It brings together all known letters of the medieval Irish Chancery, amounting to over 20,000 letters, which can now be viewed online for free;
- And, of course, the raison d’etre of this project was one of the most cataclysmic events in our country’s history – the explosion at the Four Courts on 30 June 1922, which ripped through the record treasury of the Public Record Office, and destroyed much of Ireland’s documentary heritage dating back to the thirteenth century.

Not a single Chancery Roll survived that explosion. Let’s recall the lament in the Irish Times three days after the fire: ‘Those precious records, which would have been so useful to the future historian, have been devoured by the flames or scattered in fragments by the four winds of heaven’.

We are now in that future foretold by the Irish Times - in exactly ten years it will be the centenary of the Civil War. How are things looking for historians?

Well, thanks to the dedication of generations of Trinity scholars, and to the generosity of a number of trusts and research councils, and thanks indeed to the digital revolution, things are looking very much better for historians than even the most optimistic could have foretold that day ninety years ago when the records went up in ashes - along, I might add, with the idealistic hopes of those who fought for independence.

The first positive step in reconstituting the lost records came in 1928 with the foundation of the Irish Manuscripts Commission, a public body dedicated to preserving and disseminating original Irish source materials.

Trinity historians have played a leading role in the Manuscripts Commission since its inception. Our former Lecky Chair of History, the renowned
Professor Jocelyn Otway-Ruthven, was also a member of the Manuscripts Commission, and it was she who first had the idea of reconstructing the Chancery Rolls.

In the 1970s the Irish Chancery Project received grants from the British Academy and the Leverhulme Trust. It was to be the work of Otway-Ruthven’s retirement but sadly she was overtaken by illness in 1980, and the directorship of the project passed to her successor as Lecky Chair of History, James Lydon.

The ambition in the early phase of the project was to create a ‘paper database’ comprising all known references to Irish Chancery letters.

During the 1980s this database was transferred to a computer in an early experiment in ‘digital humanities’. It is therefore appropriate that we are launching this project in the Long Room Hub, which has been so instrumental in developing digital humanities in Trinity.

On Professor Lydon’s retirement in 1993 the custodianship of the project passed to Dr Katherine Simms. The late Dr Philomena Connolly, a former student of Otway-Ruthven’s and a senior archivist at the National Archives of Ireland, worked privately to greatly advance the project. Sadly she died in June 2002, her work incomplete.

Six years later – as a result of a proposal by Dr Simms and Dr Peter Crooks – the project received a major thematic research award from the Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences, to enable the creation of a comprehensive internet-based resource entitled CIRCLE: A Calendar of Irish Chancery Letters, c. 1244-1509.

CIRCLE is what we are celebrating here tonight.

Like all great research projects, the Irish Chancery Project has involved the time, effort, and expertise of many institutions, boards, and individuals.

The principal investigators of the project are Dr Simms and Dr David Ditchburn, and the principal editor of CIRCLE is Dr Peter Crooks.

The international editorial board was chaired by Professor Chris Given-Wilson from the University of St Andrews. Another distinguished member of the board is Professor Robin Frame, Trinity graduate and Emeritus Professor of Medieval History at the University of Durham. I’m meeting Professor Frame for the first time today but I’ve heard much about him, and we all look forward to his public lecture to be delivered after this launch.

The National Archives, the National Library, Dublin City Archives and Trinity College Library all collaborated as partners on this project. The CIRCLE
website contains an unparalleled database of digital images of manuscripts from their various collections. We are most grateful to the archivists and keepers of manuscripts at all of the institutions for allowing their precious documents to be photographed.

And of course the Project owes much to those experts who built the excellent website, including the companies Eneclann and Annertech and Trinity’s Research Computing Unit.

On behalf of Trinity College, I would like to sincerely thank all those involved in this project, including those who took the first precious steps decades ago, and who would, I know, be dazzled by the achievement we’re celebrating today.

The Irish Chancery Letters are a remarkable historical resource, extraordinarily rich in detail on medieval Ireland. I understand that this is currently one of the most neglected corners of Irish history as a whole, and that CIRCLE has the potential to revolutionize our understanding of late medieval Irish society, politics and economics. I think it’s wonderful that access is free, showing how universities like Trinity contribute to the public good through their research.

The world revealed by these letters is of great general interest. The Irish Times today has singled out a most timely letter on water charges in the 13th century. The cost for ‘conducting water to the King’s city of Dublin’ was to be borne by the citizens and anyone who opposed the scheme would be ‘suppressed by force’ and ‘arrested and held till further order’. Fortunately, whatever our complaints now, our rights as citizens have advanced a little since then!

And of course when I looked at the website I did what I expect everyone will do – I immediately put my surname into the search engine and was delighted to uncover seventeen different Prendergasts between 1279 and 1462. One of them, Walter Prendergast, Vicar of Skreen in 1450, was fined £20 for ‘an offence’. Another, James Prendergast, was appointed Keeper of the Hanaper of the Irish Chancery in 1450. Dr Crooks has explained to me that this ‘Keeper of the Hanaper’ was an important financial office within the Royal Chancery.

I’d have to do more research to find out if Walter or James Prendergast are part of my family tree, but the letters do show how vital this resource is, not only to our community of scholars, but to Irish families across the world interested in tracing their roots. It’s a global resource.

The former Keeper of the Public Records in Canada, Sir Arthur Doughty, said once that ‘Of all our national assets, archives are the most precious; they are
the gift of one generation to another and the extent of our care of them marks the extent of our civilization'.

I think this feeling, or something like this feeling, is what animated the *Irish Times* with its heartfelt editorial after the Four Courts blaze – not only our archives but our civilisation seemed to be in peril.

The Civil War was a tragic period, a dark stain on our history, but fortunately it was not allowed to be the whole story. Within five years of its ending, the Manuscripts Commission had started the slow work of reparation.

And now, ninety years on from the burning of the Four Courts, the Chancery Letters have arisen, Phoenix-like, from the ashes.

What makes this project so special for us in Trinity is that we have been able to put our research and scholarship at the service of the public and of the country - affirming our role as a university acting in the public good, and the role of humanities scholarship in upholding the civilisation we cherish.

Thank you.

* * *
Minister Varadkar, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen

For the last 18 months, we have been celebrating the Tercentenary of the School of Medicine at Trinity and its contribution to the advancement of Irish society, and of Irish medicine, a mission it has been fulfilling for over three centuries – since 1711.

It’s a very appropriate conclusion to our Tercentenary celebrations that we are here in the Gallery of Photography this evening for the launch of this fascinating exhibition ‘General Practice’ by Fionn McCann.

Now I’ve never been a GP, but I have been a patient, and I can see that the photographs in this exhibition bring us right back to the immediacy of that deeply private engagement between the individual GP and his/her patient. They capture the sacrosanctness of that GP/Patient relationship which is so fundamental to patient care.

It is also a powerful reminder of the vital role that the GP continues to play in our communities in rural and in urban Ireland – in all sorts of settings.

I would like to thank Tom O’Dowd, Professor of General Practice in Trinity’s Department of Public Health and Primary Care, for commissioning this special exhibition which I know he had been thinking about for some time.

Tom’s enthusiasm and professionalism is legendary, as I found out when, only a few weeks into my Provostship, he toured me around Tallaght in his car showing me the important work done by his department and his medical colleagues, and the potential of the new Trinity Institute of Population Health soon to be opened in Tallaght.

I would like to congratulate Fionn McCann for his outstanding work exhibited here. Thanks also to the Gallery of Photography, Ireland’s leading centre for contemporary photography, for partnering with Trinity’s School of Medicine to host this exhibition here in Temple Bar.

I’m delighted that Dr Leo Varadkar, Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport, is here to launch this exhibition.
Not only is the Minister a doctor but he is a graduate of Trinity medicine earning the BA, BAO, BCh and MB degrees in 2003. He was elected to full membership of the Irish College of General Practitioners in 2010.

Therefore, he understands only too well all the complexities connected with being a doctor; and is striving to put these skills to good use with his colleagues in fixing the country – we wish him well in that task.

Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in welcoming Minister Leo Varadkar.

* * *
Friday, 18th of May 2012

Conference on Undergraduate Admissions for the 21st Century

Trinity Long Room Hub

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, good morning. I particularly welcome Mr Seán Ó Foghlú back to Trinity for his first official visit since his appointment as Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills.

I’m delighted to see so many here this morning for what is one of the most important conferences of my Provostship to date.

Just over a year ago, when I was presenting myself as a candidate for the Provostship, I set out my priorities - the key things I felt Trinity should do in order to continue to excel. Among these priorities was an unambiguous pledge ‘to revisit the process of admitting students to the university.’ I promised – and I’m quoting now from my manifesto:

‘to explore admissions criteria beyond a purely points-based mechanism, and further develop Trinity’s pioneering work in non-traditional access routes.’

Why, among all the important tasks of a university, did I focus on admissions?

For three reasons:

- First obviously, because I’m not satisfied with the current admissions system - this ‘purely points-based mechanism’. I’ll look at the reasons for dissatisfaction in a moment but I’ll just stress now that I don’t regard the CAO points system as a bad system. Far from it. My problem with the points system is captured by that word ‘purely’. It’s not a bad system, but it’s bad that it’s the only gateway to college. We need to provide other access routes for students whose potential is not captured by the Leaving Certificate.
- The second reason I made admissions an ‘election issue’ if you like, was because I was aware, and am aware, that admissions is not something that will ever change or improve by itself. There’s a system in place, and no incremental change or improvement is built into that system. So unless we force change, nothing will happen. The 21st century is now well underway. And we’ve done nothing fundamental about university admissions for decades. So I knew that it was only by making it an issue and convening a conference such as this, that something could actually happen.
Third, I was also aware – when thinking of my priorities as Provost – that quite often times of crisis are times of change, for the reason that people are more inclined to take risks in crises because they’ve invested less in the status quo. Ireland is now in crisis, no question about that, so let’s do something positive with it.

So – why the dissatisfaction with a ‘purely points-based mechanism’ for undergraduate admissions? The system, to its great credit, is totally transparent, which is crucial in a small country where personal and family networks are so important. It was also technologically ground-breaking when it was introduced – pioneered in fact by one of my predecessors, Provost Watts; and the Central Applications Office is trusted and it’s efficient; And every year we enrol excellent students. So what’s the problem?

Well, as an educator, I’ve identified three problems which do impact seriously the type of education we seek to offer in Trinity.

First, the right student isn’t always matched to the right course. I know this is a problem for universities across the world, but the nature of the points system means that the problem is exacerbated in Ireland. Courses get identified with points – so for instance because medicine is 600 plus points, then students gaining high points may feel their ‘fit’ is medicine even though they have greater aptitude for, and love of, say, the classics. “Don’t waste your points”, is a phrase often heard. Students - only 17 to 18 year olds remember – are subject to many pressures, including societal pressures valuing some kinds of knowledge over others.

A ten-year analysis of Trinity engineering students reveals that high overall points don’t measure aptitude for the subject. Students with low overall CAO points but good achievement in certain subjects do better than those with high points but poor achievement in certain subjects. We should take these findings very seriously – they point to the need for a much more nuanced entry system.

Our studies have also shown that inadequate course information is the single biggest reason why students drop out of college1.

This brings into play the whole issue of retention, which is, of course, aligned to admissions. There’s little point enrolling great students and then have them drop out because they’re in the wrong course.

In a time of limited resources we need to ensure that we match up students, courses, and colleges as accurately as possible across the sector.

Furthermore, if students stay to the bitter end of a course they’re not suited to, that cannot count as success either.
A university acting in the public good will find a way to deal with these retention issues as effectively as possible.

In this regard, the points system is a bit of a blunt instrument. It doesn't take into account significant individuality, nor does it allow for the fact that different universities seek different attributes from students. In Ireland we have a dynamic third-level sector with numerous institutions of higher education, each with its own mission, each offering its own distinctive type of education.

In Trinity, for instance, we offer a research-based education focused towards a deep knowledge of the discipline, often interdisciplinary education, which prioritises critical thinking, inquisitiveness, and independence of mind – it's not primarily job oriented, whereas other institutions pride themselves on offering an education oriented to qualifying students for the immediate requirements of their first job.

Now this diversity is good; it is to be applauded, because different students have different needs.

One size certainly doesn't fit all; society needs diversity in its universities, and we would welcome admission paths that recognise this.

This is a big issue for the conference and before lunch we will examine the challenge of measuring potential, motivation, and suitability for a course. One of our speakers, Georgina Smithwick, is just back from an Erasmus year in Strasbourg, and next year will be entering her final year in Trinity. Starting out, Georgina picked the wrong course in the wrong college. Fortunately she was able to change, and is now thriving in Trinity. Inadequate course information was the key problem in her case, and her story is typical of many.

Georgina decided to help other students avoid her mistake. She set up CourseHub, an online resource where students from round the country discuss their courses and their colleges on a completely independent site.

We're proud of this initiative – not just because it was founded by a Trinity student – but because it serves a dual purpose: it helps prospective students make the decision that is right for them, and it helps us get a range of critical feedback – sometimes positive, sometimes negative - which we can listen to and learn from.

The second major problem I've identified with our admissions system is that when there's only one gateway, then one type of learning is unavoidably prioritised, the type of learning favoured by the system - in this case it's memory-based learning, or rote-learning. Now I don't want to be pejorative here: memory, of course, is crucial to intellect. But in university students
need other skills. So a lot of time is spent in the first year inspiring students with the new approach to learning.

So I’m not against rote-learning per se; Even in the internet age, there is still no substitute for carrying knowledge in your head. But it’s only one aspect of learning, so it shouldn’t be given so much emphasis.

Across Trinity, over the past month, we’ve been looking at how we assess our students. The Schools have shared ideas and best practice and what has emerged are new ideas about matching assessment methods to learning outcomes. Through diversifying our assessment methods, we will meet our obligation to educate inquiring minds and active citizens.

In Trinity we have always prized extra-curricular activities – we do not see these as simply leisure activities. We encourage our students to get involved in clubs and societies, in volunteering and in charity work, event organisation, debating and student politics. There is a whole range of ways students can develop outside the library, the laboratory, or the lecture theatre. While we don’t allow such activity to substitute for academic course work, we do show our commitment to such development by organising College life to give time for the extra-curricular, and we also reward students for such activities through scholarships and awards – recently we recognised 450 students on the Dean of Students’ Roll of Honour.

As an aside: a little bit of history: Trinity is proud to have the oldest student undergraduate society in the world – the Philosophical Society (or ‘the Phil’), founded in 1683 – and the ‘oldest documented football club’, founded in 1854.

What’s fascinating to me is that these time-honoured methods of educating are also favoured by today’s employers.

A few months ago, David Broderick, who is in charge of graduate placement at IBEC noted: “What employers are looking for is someone who stands out from the crowd – someone who demonstrates organisational ability through clubs and societies.” And in last weekend’s Sunday Business Post, Eamonn Sinnott, General Manager of Intel Ireland was quoted as saying: “We need people with a capacity for critical thinking, problem-solving, innovation and communication.”

What we have here is coalescence between the type of education we want to offer and the type of education employers want. Which is great. But if we want students gifted in critical thinking, problem-solving, innovation and organisational ability, shouldn’t we be casting the net wide, while they’re still in school? Yes, we can train them in such skills when they come here, but it’s best – for us and for them – if they have the natural aptitude and wish to develop that way from the start.
So when I say that I want other gateways to college than the points system, I mean gateways that test those kinds of intelligences and aptitudes.

This brings me to my third and most fundamental problem with our purely points-based system: we are not only matching students to the wrong courses, we are not only having to inspire students away from rote-learning and towards critical-thinking, but we are missing out on students who would have the ability to thrive here – academically and socially – but whose abilities are not being properly captured in a crude points total.

These students are being failed by the system – in some cases they’re not finding their place on any third-level course. This is a shocking waste of potential, and it’s deeply unfair to the individual.

My position here is based on firm evidence.

We know that the points system is failing students of potential and aptitude because in Trinity we do have a number of non-traditional access routes. For the past two decades, the Trinity Access Programmes, or TAP, has been bringing students from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds to College through alternate means. Students, identified in their schools as having potential, are interviewed and assessed for suitability by TAP. I know that other universities, such as UCD, DCU, and UCC, now have related programmes.

I know how passionate and motivated these students are, and how much potential they have. This year I taught a guest class on TAP, and we debated how Ireland in general and Trinity in particular should commemorate the 1916 Rising. Their enthusiasm, energy, and original thinking reaffirmed my belief that the points system fails some of our best students, and that higher education can and should be transformative for the life of each individual student.

Recently studies were carried out in Trinity, DCU, UCC, and UCD to assess the performance of non-traditional students. In all three universities the results of these students mirrored those attained by other graduates, with a majority attaining second class honours or better.

When you consider that these students began with socio-economic disadvantage, such results are truly telling, and we can say, with confidence, that academic ability as measured in Leaving Cert. ‘points’ doesn’t tell the whole story.

Since the publication of my article in the Irish Times on Tuesday I have been struck by the incredible level of interest from teachers, parents, and especially students – who have got in touch with me by email or in person. One student’s story in particular stood out. On Wednesday I met a
young man who would love to come to Trinity to study physics. He's the winner of prestigious national awards for his science projects. As well as this, he has overcome incredible difficulties in his life. He has lost two brothers to drugs - one, the eldest, committed suicide, the second has just been sentenced to a term in prison. For this student, going to Trinity is not about pleasing his parents, it's about getting an education that will change his life and that of his family. He doesn't know if he will get the 500 points to study Science, or Theoretical Physics, this year, and given all that has gone on this year, it's a real tribute to his character that he is still determined to sit his Leaving Certificate in less than three weeks’ time. We want students like that in Trinity. The fact that he has already been recognised nationally for his scientific achievements should surely count for something when we are admitting students, except the current system doesn't allow it.

If we were able to take contextual information into account, and assess students on more than just their exam results, but what they achieved in life, what they have overcome, and why 450 points for some is more of an achievement than 600 points for others, then we would have a lot more students like him getting the educational opportunity they can benefit from, and our society would be a better place because of it.

So those are my three impacts of the current system. To recap:

1) Mismatches of students to courses and colleges;
2) The need to inspire students from rote learning to critical thinking;
3) Missing out on students who could thrive but whose abilities are not captured by a points-total.

Today we want to continue the debate which the Minister for Education began when he took up office, to see if we can take some practical steps to resolve the identified problems.

I have been talking about admissions in this country, but I should stress that this is a global problem. We are honoured to be joined today by some leading international experts on admission.

Professor Steven Schwartz, who will deliver the key-note address after me, is Vice-Chancellor of Macquarie University. His groundbreaking report for the UK government on fair admissions provides a roadmap for how we might proceed in Ireland. We share his belief that a fair admissions system is ‘one that provides equal opportunity for all individuals - regardless of background - to gain admission to a course suited to their ability and aspirations.’

And we strongly endorse his view that ‘preserving academic freedom requires that academic institutions retain three basic rights in relation to teaching: the right to choose who will teach, what will be taught, and to whom.’
Dr. Anna Zimdars of King’s College, London, is on this morning’s panel. She has done extensive work on undergraduate and graduate admission to the University of Oxford, and we look forward to hearing how her research on higher education and social stratification and education in the UK might help us in Ireland.

We are delighted to be joined by the Provost of Oklahoma State University, Dr. Robert Sternberg. His ground-breaking book, College Admissions for the 21st Century, provides a radical way of thinking about how we admit our students and how we teach them.

Sternberg’s life-work has been to show the problems in relying on any single-scale to admit students. He believes that ‘we can do a much better job of college admissions, as well as instruction and assessment, if we think about student abilities in a broader way than we have. In particular, by valuing, assessing, and teaching for analytical, creative, practical, and wisdom-based skills as well as for memory-related ones’.

We in Trinity support this view, and believe there is much to learn from Professor Sternberg on how to identify those students with what he calls ‘potential for future leadership and active citizenship’.

There is, of course, no ‘one right answer’ to this admissions challenge. At different times, different people have offered different solutions, ranging from interviews, to aptitude tests, personal statements, and student profiling. I am currently interested in exploring the use of digital technologies to record students’ progress through second-level, taking account of their learning outside the classroom, including volunteering, sporting, and artistic and creative endeavours. This information could be maintained online and consulted by universities and institutes of higher education.

The main thing is that we support the need to diversify enrolment. After lunch one of our leading broadcasters and, I’m happy to say, an Honorary Fellow of this College, Dr. John Bowman, will help us explore different admissions options.

In the two afternoon panels we will look at the theory of how we might admit students in an ideal world, and then the practicalities of how this might work using existing resources. We are delighted to welcome panellists from the CAO, the IUA, the IOTI, USI, the HEA, and the NCCA, as well as members of our own internal working group on admissions on the curriculum, including Stephen McIntyre, formerly a senior director at Google and now the head of Twitter’s Europe Middle-East and Asia operations in Dublin. It is important to have an external perspective and one representing the needs of employers.

Finally, we are honored to be joined by Professor Áine Hyland, one of the country’s leading educationalists, and someone whose pioneering report, nine
months ago, providing fresh impetus to this debate, by offering new ways of thinking about an old problem.

This conference forms only part of that debate, and I hope there will be other opportunities in other venues to continue to look for solutions.

But it's no good spending our time talking about the issues year on year unless we are prepared to act.

How can we expect a new generation of students to be radical about facing the challenges of the world, unless we are prepared to show them that we can be radical too?

How can we demand a spirit of innovation at third-level and beyond, if we are not prepared to be innovative in how we assess and measure potential and a range of skills when we admit our students?

Today we have set a challenge: to admit ten students on a hypothetical course, if all the other students are admitted in the usual way.

If a good idea emerges from this challenge then we should be prepared to test it in real life – by setting aside ten places on a course, such as Law, that normally demands very high points – and seeing how it works in practice.

A new generation demands that we do everything we can to rebuild our economy and our society. Reforming university admissions is a great place to start. This new generation must be more globally competitive than ever – they deserve an education system that is prepared to recognise and reward creativity, leadership, and independent-thinking.

I have never forgotten my own entrance to this great College. Coming up from Wexford and entering through Front Arch in 1983, I felt that rush, which every first-time Trinity student must feel, as I went through the dark arch and into the wide expanse of Front Square. This has always been for me a metaphor for what happens to the mind in Trinity – it opens out.

Front Arch is our gateway. So let's get different minds, and critical minds, and innovative minds, through this gateway, and watch how they expand.

Thank you.


* * *
Thursday, 24th of May 2012

Address to the TCD London Dining Club 'Trinity College in the Second Decade of the 21st Century'

The Savile Club, London

Good evening.

Looking back on the history of the TCD London Dining Club, I see that many remarkable people have addressed it over the years, and on colourful themes.

- Conor Cruise O’Brien, when editor of the Observer in 1981, gave a talk on “the three great men that Trinity contributed to London life – Jonathan Swift, Oliver Goldsmith, and Edmund Burke” – (one rather suspects that the Cruiser was inviting suggestions that he was the fourth such man, and why not?);
- In 1992 Brendan Kennelly gave a talk entitled ‘Trinity – an Occasion of Sin’;
- And Professor John Kelly spoke about W.B. Yeats’ fraught relationship with Trinity. You do know he applied for a chair of English Literature, but his letter of application had so many spelling mistakes, his application was rejected!
- What the late great R.B. McDowell spoke of, on the many occasions he addressed the Club, history does not record because he always spoke without notes, but we have it on authority that “he never failed to have the audience hanging on every word, rather like waiting for a Nicklaus putt to drop to win the Open.”

Faced with these colourful figures and their colourful speeches, I rather feel I should be talking tonight about, say, the Trinity computer science student, and hacker, who the FBI has claimed is one of the five most wanted hackers in the world. That would certainly be colourful!

But I note one difference between me and the speakers I’ve just mentioned – they were not the newly elected Provost. In my current capacity I think there’s really only one thing you want to hear from me, and only one thing that I want to talk about, and that’s Trinity College and the direction it’s taking in the second decade of the 21st Century.

It’s an absolute pleasure to be addressing people who I know feel the same as I do about Trinity. You have proved, by your involvement in this Club and indeed through your fund-raising, the place that your alma mater holds in your lives and in your affections.
We are all, in this room, proud of what Trinity College has done over the generations and we want to see it excel further. How can we achieve this?

***PERSONAL CONTEXT***

Before I look at our ‘grand designs’ for the future, I should start, I guess, by introducing myself.

I’m an engineer - BAI 1987 - from Wexford, from a small place called Oulart, known mainly to historians of the 1798 rebellion. My father was a haulage contractor and my mother a nurse at St Loman’s Hospital Dublin until she married my father in 1965.

I’ve spent most of my career at Trinity, except for two periods working abroad, doing post-doctoral work in Bologna and the University of Nijmegan in the Netherlands. I’ve also held visiting professorships in Warsaw, Delft, and Barcelona.

My own research, since the late 1980s, has been in the area of medical devices. This has been most rewarding, not only because Trinity is at the forefront of next generation medical device research and such industries are the key to the economic recovery of Ireland, but also because this research is interdisciplinary, combining the strengths of engineering and medicine.

Interdisciplinarity is one of the key strengths and characteristics of the unique education which Trinity offers. I know there are those here who graduated decades ago and I think you would agree that your education was broad and wide-ranging, but in recent years the emphasis on interdisciplinarity has been deepened and formalised across all Schools. To give you three concrete examples:

- Neuroscience, bringing together medicine and psychology, physics and engineering, to better understand the brain, how it works and how to fix it when it doesn’t;
- Digital Humanities, a new and dynamic interdisciplinary field of study at the intersections of the humanities and computer science opening up possibilities for research and collaboration that could only have been dreamed about a generation ago, and opening up the treasures of Trinity’s Library to the world;
- Nanotechnology, groundbreaking research on the scale of the atom which has the potential of enabling revolutionary development in both the information and communication technology and health care sectors.

These are three very exciting recent developments. Just over a year ago I put myself forward as Provost – having served as Vice-Provost & Chief Academic Officer. I put myself forward because I was excited about some of the great
changes I saw in the College which pointed to what Trinity could achieve. I was also apprehensive about potentially less desirable outcomes.

These are difficult times in Ireland - but also times of potential radical change. People are often more inclined to take risks during crises because they've invested less in the status quo.

I don't have time tonight to look at all the challenges, dangers, and opportunities facing us, but let's look at a few.

**FINANCING UNIVERSITIES**

The main challenge, it will come as no surprise for you to hear, is the financing issue.

Funding from the state is reducing year on year and Ireland's spend per student is now below the OECD average – as is our proportion of funding from private sources given that the government pays the undergraduate tuition fee – for everyone regardless of parental income.

The situation is, of course, related to the economic downturn, and to the current emphasis on austerity. Monsieur Hollande's election last month may change this thinking but for the moment it really is like ‘death by a thousand cuts’.

But, in Ireland, resistance to the idea of spending money on universities goes deeper than the immediate crisis.

Even at the height of the boom, the total spend on a student in an Irish university was below the EU average. The ratio of expenditure from private means declined from 30 percent in 1995 to just 15 percent in 2007. I think we are the only OECD country to decrease private contributions during the years of global expansion.

Investments made through private fees and public funds in many countries are currently greatly outpacing us, with, I'm afraid, predictable results: all Irish universities are falling down in the rankings. As a country we need to rethink the way we fund third level as a matter of urgency. In Trinity we need to switch back to what was perhaps an older mentality of relying on our own resources primarily to provide the distinctive Trinity education and research environment.

**INNOVATION**

This funding crisis is particularly frustrating because we are in what I genuinely believe is a golden age of opportunity for universities.
The biggest change in university life since I was an undergraduate in the 1980s - and probably since many of you were students, is this emphasis on Innovation. Even fifteen years ago the term was hardly used.

This focus on entrepreneurship, and exploiting the economic and societal uses for research, promotes a wonderful sense of engagement, excitement, and responsibility - for staff and for students at all levels.

Our campus spin-outs range from Trimod Therapeutics, which is based on ground-breaking cancer immunology technology, to Havok which develops physics simulation software for computer games and films, and was sold to Intel for 110 million dollars in 2007. There are many more – 10 in the last calendar year.

But innovation goes beyond campus companies to education itself: our emphasis on critical-thinking, problem-solving, deep immersion in the subject, and learning leadership skills through the activities of our clubs and societies. This is what creates innovators.

We seek to educate for a life of active citizenship, rather than for the ‘first job’ necessarily, and innovation – finding solutions that society needs – is essential.

So on one hand we have this Golden Age of universities globally, with the world’s leading universities literally being household names – and on the other hand, in Ireland, we have universities in this funding crisis.

There are all kinds of analogies I could make for this situation, and I could get very colourful. I could say that money is the oxygen or the rain without which we cannot breathe or grow, no matter how remarkable we are in all other aspects.

But I'll just say that we have to do something, and rapidly, especially because the competition is global; many Asian countries are now pouring money into their universities with electrifying results.

***PHILANTHROPY***

There are different ways to raise new revenue. Successful commercial activities using the College’s assets of course provide a potentially great return.

Philanthropy is also an important arm – and I want to take this opportunity to thank this Dining Club on behalf of Trinity College. We do not forget – indeed, as you know, we have memorialised on a College plaque – your wonderful fund-raising drives, which saw substantial funds raised for Trinity’s quattrecentenary in 1992, and an equally impressive amount
contributed to the Trinity Access Programmes for disadvantaged students in 2000.

It is nothing short of remarkable that one Dining Club – even in such a flourishing city as London – can rise to such levels. I would say that we’re in your debt but I don’t think ‘debt’ is a suitable word between family members and certainly you, our active alumni, are part of the Trinity family.

Alumni networks are key to the success of the contemporary university.

American Ivy League colleges have led the way in this regard, and I am delighted to see Trinity alumni rise so enthusiastically to the challenge. I am also happy that the perception that one can only help one’s alma mater by, say, endowing a building, is being temporised into something more realistic and sustainable – the ‘Obama model’ of fund-raising where giving is on the basis that every little helps; in fact, future generations are relying on it. Bequests are also a great means of helping Trinity.

These are great developments. However alumni philanthropy is of course only one part of raising revenue, and it should certainly not be required to carry the burden. Ultimately, we need to rebalance the mix of public and private funding to maintain and strengthen the quality of a Trinity education, and to fully establish its global reputation.

***PHYSICAL EXPANSION***

The way we have used our resources is, I think, exemplary, and is demonstrable in the very appearance of the College. The provostship of my predecessor, Dr John Hegarty, was notable for its building. Among the fine recent additions to the College are the Biomedical Sciences Institute, the Long Room Hub, the Sports Centre and the Naughton Institute.

This building programme is continuing – despite much reduced resources compared to five years ago. A most exciting development is the expansion of Trinity beyond its “island site”.

The walls around Pearse St, Nassau St and College Green are no longer constraining.

In December I opened the Lir Academy of Dramatic Art, which is, as many of you know, affiliated to RADA here in London. It’s a purpose-built state of the art building located on Grand Canal Dock, at the start of what will be Trinity’s “creative corridor” sweeping down Pearse Street from the Science Gallery.

Other buildings planned are the new Trinity Business School, the Central Services building, and the Loyola Institute. You may be aware that Google
and Facebook both have their headquarters near Grand Canal Dock and that the whole area is gaining a reputation as the home of new technologies - the term ‘Silicon Dock’ has been coined!

Trinity is at the heart of this area’s development. Indeed Google is an important donor to the Science Gallery giving a 1m euro gift to establish Science Gallery International. We are now looking forward to extending the Science Gallery network to cities such as Moscow, London, and Singapore.

Outside the city centre, we are developing an Institute of Population Health in Tallaght, and the Wellcome Trust Clinical Research Facility at St James’s Hospital.

And just to prove we aren’t forgetting the “island site”, a major new development in the south east corner of the College is planned. The old chemistry extension is to be replaced by a new engineering and natural sciences development. We will take the opportunity to develop this space into something as inspiring as Front Square. There is also a need for increased residences on campus and students in rooms.

* * *GLOBAL REACH***

As well as this important physical expansion, we are also looking to expand the College in terms of global reach. Developing global relations is another key aspiration, and indeed a promise, of my provostship.

Higher education is emerging as a globally traded and borderless activity. Trinity will not prosper unless we grasp this reality.

I want Trinity to be at the heart of this movement, not only because otherwise we get left behind, but because I believe in internationalisation. A quote I’ve always liked is Erasmus’: “Ego mundi civis esse cupio.” I long to be a citizen of the world.

At the same time I’m also very amused by that famous saying of Denis Burkitt’s, the great Trinity medical alumnus. He’s renowned for proclaiming that he was “Irish by birth, Trinity by the grace of God”. That gets across the local and the particular. If I can extend Burkitt to Erasmus… well, I’d like our students to be proud Trinity alumni and citizens of the world. Erasmus has given his name to student exchange programmes. I’d also like to see ‘Trinity’ become a byword for internationalisation.

In terms of internationalising staff, students, and research, we do already think strategically beyond our island site, and beyond the island of Ireland, but we must go much further.
Our research is global in its scope and impact, but we want to increase inter-institutional collaboration - to collaborate on more research projects with peer institutions round the world. We do have experience of such collaboration within Ireland but we want to move beyond national networks to global networks.

The various initiatives we're planning, though different, are related and require a coordinated response, involving the precise and targeted articulation of our core message.

What is our core message? Simply that our education and research are world-class and we want to share them.

I'm in no doubt about the high quality of what we have to offer in education and research. But I think we could be demonstrating that superiority in a more coordinated and strategic way that would bring students and research collaborators more directly to our door.

I think we've been relying too much on our 400 year old reputation, our beautiful campus, and our distinguished alumni. We've got a bit complacent about our message. Competition in the third level sector has become much more fierce and we must rise to it if we are to be one of the great universities on the world stage.

Aware of the need to coordinate and strategize, I've created an entirely new post: the Vice-Provost for Global Relations, to which I've appointed the Historian Professor Jane Ohlmeyer. Her goal is to improve our messaging abroad and build global relationships for Trinity. By creating such a post we are seeking to coordinate our activities towards the core aim of opening Trinity to the wider world.

One of the key ways in which I think we can help “sell” Trinity - and which I'm sure Professor Ohlmeyer is currently working on - is to enlist the support of our alumni.

We have close to 92,000 alumni living in 130 different countries. Most of them, like you, have a deep attachment to their alma mater and would be delighted to spread the message about their great education. It’s a question of creating a platform which people can build on.

The reason why so many students from Asia come to Ireland to study medicine is because when the newly qualified doctors go back to their own countries, they spread the word. This happened organically and naturally over many decades. We want to replicate, but speed up and formalise, this process for other disciplines.
When it comes to articulating our core message, we need to realise just how extraordinary our education is and how much the world needs it. When I say with Erasmus, “I long to be a citizen of the world” I’m aware that so many Trinity thinkers already have claims in that direction. Our graduates are notable for the universalism of their thought. I’m thinking of people like Edmund Burke and Samuel Beckett in the arts and humanities, and Ernest Walton and William Rowan Hamilton in science and mathematics, and Mary Robinson in human rights law.

Articulating our mission will involve telling the story of Trinity’s excellence in a vivid and accessible way, and telling it strategically in places where we most want to be heard, and where we can have most effect.

There’s no question but that Trinity can be a force in the world, one of that small number of universities that are of global consequence.

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Reading the history of your Club, I’m struck by many things – the wonderful dedication of a number of individuals, like Eric Lowry who acted as club secretary and chairman over two decades, and the Kurkjian brothers whose generosity seems to have been truly remarkable. I’m also struck by the quality and high-profile of your speakers, including Taoisigh, prime ministers, high court judges, ambassadors, Nobel Peace prize winners… A collection of the texts of speeches from this club would be quite something! Or maybe podcasts….

But what I really take away from the history of the Club is the sense of evolution, of growth within tradition, of change and expansion while remaining loyal to core principles, of determination held through times of difficulty. This Club has changed much from the one where male grandees dined in the 1890s. For a start the menu is much reduced! I guess Edward Carson, John Redmond, and W.E. Lecky would think our menu very paltry compared to their nine courses and eight different wines including champagne!

More fundamentally, women are now included as full members. This happened late – in 1993 – but it happened and without breaking the Club up. Today the chairman is Carol Leighton. The 1970s was a difficult period with declining membership, poor finances and on one occasion a bomb scare from the IRA, which meant everyone fled leaving unpaid dinner charges… But the Club survived.

On the last page of his history, Christopher Finlay writes of the “dynamic by which the Club continues to sustain itself through time” and then describes that dynamic as the “open-minded but discriminating acceptance of the
inevitability of change, and a shared awareness of continuities with bygone eras that live on in the traditions of the Club.”

Finlay was writing of the Club, but he could have been writing of the College. Secure in our traditions and our sense of continuity to Trinity’s great past, we launch this programme for change in the 21st century, that we may continue to sustain – and, indeed, excel.

And I hope that “open-minded and discriminating” continue to be the adjectives used to describe the Trinity graduate. I can think of no better attributes.

Thank you very much.

[1] Quoted by Eric Lowry, then Chairman of the TCD Dining Club, History of the TCD Dining Club London, p. 81

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I am delighted to welcome you all here this evening for the 2012 Provost’s Teaching Awards.

I would like to extend a special welcome to the nominees for this award and to their families and friends.

The Teaching Awards are a special opportunity to publicly acknowledge and celebrate those academic staff who are making an exceptional contribution to the education mission of the College.

The Awards are overseen by the Teaching Awards Review Panel and I would like to thank them for their support of this important scheme.

I would like to extend a special word of thanks to Professor Aine Hyland who has done an exceptional job on the review panel for the past four years. The awards scheme has been significantly developed over that period and we were able to call upon Professor Hyland’s expertise as one of Ireland’s leading educationalists – and specifically her experience as Chairperson of the Teaching Awards Committee of the National Academy for the Integration of Teaching and Learning. Professor Hyland is also a member of the European Universities Association Evaluation Team and in that capacity has been involved in university evaluations in Italy, Portugal, Turkey, Slovakia and Bosnia Herzegovina, as well, of course, as Ireland. We also appreciate her tireless work in the area of reforming admissions to higher education.

Therefore, it is my great pleasure to present her with a special gift this evening as a token of our appreciation of her contribution to our awards scheme. I thank also the Senior Lecturer, Dr Patrick Geoghegan.

On behalf of the Provost’s Teaching Award Review Panel, I would like to thank and commend each of the 32 candidates who took part in the nominations process this year.

I would like to present the 11 candidates shortlisted with a certificate of commendation:

1. Ms. Emer Barrett, School of Medicine
2. Dr. Neil Docherty, School of Medicine
3. Dr. Roja Fazaeli, School of Religions, Theology & Ecumenics
4. Ms. Caroline Jagoe, School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences
I would like to commend each of the nominees for this achievement. It is a serious tribute to be singled out for a teaching award by students and colleagues and it should be taken as a great compliment and source of pride.

It now gives me great pleasure to announce the 6 recipients of the Provost’s Teaching Awards for 2012:

1. DR. DANIEL FAAS FROM THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES & PHILOSOPHY

Dr. Faas is a deserving winner of the Early Career Award. Committed to developing independent learners, Dr. Faas believes that learning is a shared experience, occurring in multiple ways and contexts inside and outside the classroom, and that it is about developing interaction and interest in a particular topic. Particularly impressive is his dedication to acting as a facilitator of learning, and he encourages students to learn from one another.

To quote an alumni nominee:

‘His professionalism, good humour and courteousness have had significant impacts on the way I carry out my current job. Over two years after I graduated, I still consider him an inspiring mentor, and am proud to support his nomination’.

2. PROF. JAMES WICKHAM FROM THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES & PHILOSOPHY

James Wickham is a deserving winner of the Lifetime Achievement Award. He admits that after nearly forty years, he still gets an adrenalin rush in the classroom, and he sees teaching as not just training, but the transmission of the codified knowledge of a discipline and the development of the student as an independent, critical but tolerant person. This stems from his belief in the university’s public role. Prof. Wickham does not believe that teaching and research are contradictory, and he has shown great leadership in his own subject area and within College to ensure that both are combined in a rich learning experience.

To quote a peer reviewer of Dr Wickham’s ‘His enthusiasm for teaching in general and for teaching his specific topics is infectious’.
3. MR. JOHN KUBIAK FROM THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK & SOCIAL POLICY

John Kubiak considers that all students deserve the chance to learn in the best environment possible and be taught by methods informed by rigorous empirical research. His research influences his practice, and his students collaborate in his research. Mr. Kubiak has played a key role in the development of the innovative curriculum for the Certificate in Contemporary Living (CCL) that is offered by the National Institute for Intellectual Disability. Feedback from past and present students has informed the current development of the CCL towards a Level 5 award, and, once completed, will be a unique course for people with intellectual disabilities within a third-level educational setting both within Ireland and internationally. As a peer reviewer noted:

‘John teaches with great passion informed by the belief that empowering students with an intellectual disability to become active participants in their own learning will enable these students to become confident, capable learners. He takes a holistic approach and on a daily basis goes that extra mile for all who cross his path’.

4. DR. JOHN ROCHFORD FROM THE SCHOOL OF NATURAL SCIENCES

John Rochford’s career in Trinity has spanned generations of students and his contributions to the Science curriculum, student welfare, innovations in assessment, implementation of student feedback and his general engagement with student issues over the years, make him a worthy recipient of a Lifetime Achievement Award. He pioneered anonymous marking and promotes a collegial partnership between academic staff and students. His philosophy of teaching is based on enthusiasm and approachability as he facilitates the process of discovery and exploration. Dr. Rochford has ensured that Biology, and Science generally, is accessible to all. He was instrumental in introducing a Science component to the Trinity Access Programme for Mature Students in 1997. As a peer reviewer noted:

‘He is an amazing, meticulous and intelligently inventive manager and improver of all aspects of teaching…… Put together with his perpetual striving to change our practices for the better and improve, update and deepen the impact of all the courses he runs, makes John an all-round educationalist who works ceaselessly for the good of the students. He is an inspiration to me, and a superb colleague’.

5. PROF. ORLA SHEILS FROM THE SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

Orla Sheils is an enthusiastic and innovative teacher within the School of Medicine. She has responsibility for training undergraduate medical students in Laboratory Medicine, a key aspect to successful diagnosis and the
implementation of patient care. She approaches the subject material in an integrated manner so that the students appreciate the discipline in the context of the entire patient. Prof. Shiels has made a major contribution to the development of medical jurisprudence in the School and has been instrumental in establishing computer-assisted instruction within the medical jurisprudence modules. This innovation facilitates medical students who are often obliged to move between hospital sites while undertaking clinical rotations and has been welcomed by the students. Throughout her teaching portfolio Prof. Shiels has introduced interactive, challenging and thought provoking courses that are fresh, student friendly, interesting and accessible to all. As a peer reviewer noted:

‘I can think of no other teacher who brings to the role such enthusiasm, interest, innovation and inspiration and those who best judge our teaching – our students – respond wholeheartedly to both her extensive knowledge of her subject but also to her inspiring tuition style’.

6. DR. PAUL DELANEY FROM THE SCHOOL OF ENGLISH

Paul Delaney believes that education is at the heart of his work as an academic. He invites students to actively engage with the content of the curriculum through a variety of learning strategies (including in-class discussions, group-work, and formative or non-assessed exercises); and it is through these strategies that he helps to generate a research ethos in class, as students learn about the production of knowledge, inquiry-based activities and the research process. He believes that teaching in such a way encourages a sense of agency amongst students. It helps to foster a culture of independent thought and critical articulacy, and it promotes the development of discipline-specific competencies as well as personal, generic and transferable skills. To quote a student nominee:

‘His passion for literature was more than evident and was shared by all of us due to his teaching’. As a peer noted ‘Paul is an academic who thoroughly understands the centrality of undergraduate teaching... his impact on collaborative curriculum development’ has been monumental’.

I’d now like to share a short video which very briefly introduces this year’s winners in action. We’d like to thank Gary Baugh from the School of Engineering for his excellent work in filming the DVDs for all the shortlisted candidates at https://www.tcd.ie/CAPS/L/awards/provost/

I think you will all agree the video provided us with a tangible sense of why our 6 awardees were selected for this year’s Provost’s Teaching Awards. My congratulations to you all again.

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Tuesday, 29th of May 2012

**Launch of the Life Histories Digital Archive**

*Trinity Long Room Hub*

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen: It is my great pleasure to welcome you all to Trinity this morning for the launch of the Life Histories Digital Archive.

[Lifehistoriesarchive.com](http://Lifehistoriesarchive.com) is a digital collection of 24 autobiographies which were written by a group of women and men from Dublin and Belfast many of who I am delighted to see here today. I would like to extend a very special welcome to you all, and to your families and friends.

The aim of the Life Histories Archive is to facilitate what is called “intergenerational knowledge exchange” so it is very fitting that we are launching this archive in 2012 because it is European year for active ageing and solidarity between generations, and the launch is coinciding with the annual Bealtaine Festival which runs throughout May.

Bealtaine is an Age and Opportunity initiative part funded by the Arts Council which is a celebration of creativity as we age. At Trinity we are committed to making Ireland the best place in the world to grow old. Multi-disciplinary research on ageing, in all its facets, is a major priority for us and the Life Histories Archive is a creative and innovative research initiative that aligns well with this.

It is a narrative research project that goes some way towards preserving the legacy of a generation who, in their own words communicate the richness of their life experiences. And not just that but also the wisdom and knowledge gained from those life experiences.

The Life Histories Archive also has the capacity to invite visitors to contribute their own stories to the website. This can be done in a small way, by leaving a comment on the website relevant to a story, or it may be done in a bigger way, by contributing a complete autobiography to the site.

The archive is the university at its best – doing its work for the public good. This archive resource is offered by Trinity free to the public, and we are proud to be able to provide this service.

It is in making our research findings, and in the case of this Archive, the stories of men and women from across our communities, north and south, available through open access in the Library that the mutually beneficial outcomes of this project have real impact.
I would like to commend the autobiographers who have been brave enough to participate in this pioneering project. The importance of the stories and deep personal insights that you have donated to this Archive for sharing with current and future generations cannot be overvalued.

The generous donation of your stories to the TCD Library sets the stage for a continuing, mutually beneficial partnership. It is through academic and community based partnerships such as this that creativity and innovation prosper.

The Life Histories Digital Archive is not only a repository of a wonderful collection of books; it is an interactive teaching and research resource that can be accessed in Trinity by both academics and students.

The collection has tremendous benefits as a potential teaching resource and I understand from talking with Dr McTiernan that work is already underway to develop new pedagogies to maximise this potential.

The collection also creates a research corpora that academics and scholars across disciplines, including Psychology, Linguistics, Sociology, Gerontology, History and Women and Gender Studies, to name but a few, will be able to access and use for their own scholarly research.

I would like to thank the Irish Research Council for Humanities and Social Sciences for their support for this very valuable project.

I would like to congratulate the cross disciplinary Project Team, from the School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences, the Centre for Gender and Women’s Studies, and the Library on collaborating to create the organic and growing resource that is the Life Histories Digital Archive.

My sincere thanks to all the autobiographers without who this archive would not exist.

And now, it is my great pleasure to officially launch The Life Histories Digital Archive.

I want to finish by congratulating the Principal Investigator of the Life Histories Archive, Dr Kathleen McTiernan, who will now speak more to the details of the Archive and will walk us through an exhibition of an autobiography.

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Thursday, 31st of May 2012

Launch of *Enigma and Revelation in Renaissance English Literature*, a collection of essays in honour of Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin

*Trinity Long Room Hub*

Distinguished guests, colleagues, friends; Since taking on the duties of Provost last August I’ve given many speeches in which I’ve spoken of Trinity’s commitment to nurturing creativity. I’ve talked about the Oscar Wilde Centre for Creative Writing, the new Music Composition Centre, and the Lir Academy of Dramatic Art. And I’ve frequently mentioned the outstanding poets who are, or were until recently, members of Trinity’s staff; Brendan Kennelly, Gerard Dawe, Iggy McGovern, and of course, Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin.

Having such award-winning and inspiring poets shows, like nothing else, Trinity’s commitment to creative endeavours and how important they are to the broader academic enterprise.

As my predecessor, John Hegarty, said eighteen months ago at a reception to celebrate Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin being awarded the Griffin Poetry Prize – “Eilean is not only a leading Irish poet but a poet of the highest international standing... winner of the prestigious Patrick Kavanagh and O'Shaughnessy Poetry Awards”.

Eiléan is known far beyond Trinity, and beyond Ireland, as a poet. But it is the exceptional scholar that we celebrate this evening, and indeed today at this symposium.

This very handsome book - beautifully produced by Four Courts Press in celestial blue – is a festschrift of twelve essays on renaissance English literature.

The contributors are Professor Ni Chuilleanáin’s colleagues and former students. They come from as far afield as the universities of East Carolina, Syracuse and Groningen, as well of course as our departments in Trinity. And they are writing here about riddles and anonymity, allegory and decoding, resonances and enigmas.

I am not a scholar of English literature but I take from this book an exciting sense of what one contributor calls “the mysterious wisdom” of Renaissance literature - a mystery which can be unlocked but doesn’t, seemingly, yield its secrets easily. It requires expert researchers willing to dig deep.
I congratulate the editors, Dr Helen Cooney and Dr Mark Sweetnam. I don’t know what the exact brief was for those contributing to this book but the result is strikingly cohesive. This is not a random collection of essays but a series of thematic arguments. The approach throughout is interdisciplinary insofar as the contributors display not only linguistic and aesthetic awareness but also great historical and political understanding, which allows them to contextualise the works under discussion. I am, I must say, very keen on interdisciplinarity and consider it a hallmark of the Trinity education.

This fascinating book is a valued contribution to Renaissance literature studies. It’s also, I guess, a kind of kaleidoscope portrait of Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin because a Festschrift always reveals something of the character and scholarship of the person who inspired it.

The editors write in the introduction that “the range – both chronological and thematic – of the essays gathered here is testament to the breadth as well as the depth of Eiléan’s scholarship”.

Many of the works analysed in this book are well-known, even to me. They have entered the canon and are now considered timeless, but as this book underlines, they should also be understood as Elizabethan constructs, born out of a particular political situation.

The politics which gave rise to Spenser’s Faerie Queen and Shakespeare’s As You Like It also, of course, gave rise to Trinity College. (In fact The Faerie Queen and Trinity share a birthdate, more or less). I know that every university in Ireland – and indeed in the UK and the world – would have fought to have Eiléan on their staff, but I do think that Trinity, this Renaissance university, has provided the ideal setting for her.

And in return, she has enhanced College life and scholarship and we are fortunate to have had her for over forty years in the School of English. During that time she served as head of department, dean of faculty of arts (letters), and first director of the M.Phil. in Medieval Literature and Culture.

A teacher is, of course, known for her students, and the achievement of Eiléan’s students is manifest in this book. Eiléan has not only set sail poems on the world, but people, and some of these people have returned to harbour to give us these essays, and so continue the dialogue with their teacher – that unbroken dialogue through the ages which constitutes true scholarship, and which we, as readers, are fortunate to eavesdrop on.

Thank you.

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Olympians, Torch Bearers, Colleagues, Students and Friends, it is my great pleasure to welcome you here this evening.

Just over a hundred years ago, in 1908 – by coincidence when the Games were also in London – Trinity College athletes first participated in the Olympics. They distinguished themselves, taking home seven silver medals - six for the hockey team and one for tennis.

Today we celebrate over a hundred years of Trinity Olympians and we celebrate, for the first time, the Olympic Torch being carried through the streets of Dublin. This morning the Olympic Torch was met in Howth by President Higgins, before doing the tour of Croke Park and the city centre, where it went past Front Gate and along Nassau Street.

Thanks to Samsung, a presenting partner of the Olympic Torch Relay, three Trinity students, Áine Ní Choisdealbha, Natalya Coyle and Mark Kenneally, and one alumnus, Mark Pollock, had the honour of carrying the Torch.

These individuals were chosen to represent Trinity based on their contribution to the College community as well as their sporting and academic achievements. All four are exceptional: Mark Kenneally, a PhD student in physiology, has been selected for London 2012 in the Marathon, and Natalya Coyle, a BESS student, achieved the qualifying Olympic standard in China last week in Modern Pentathlon.

Áine Ní Choisdealbha has achieved the highest academic distinction and is honoured for her volunteering work in helping break down social exclusion and inequality – something which goes to the heart of the Olympic ethos.

Mark Pollock is an outstanding athlete who has competed in some of the world’s harshest terrains, from the Syrian deserts to the North Pole. His triumph over adversity is a source of inspiration to all he comes in contact with.

Being chosen, among so many deserving people in this city to carry the Olympic Flame – that same flame which was lit in Athens two weeks ago - honours these four individuals’ athletic prowess and their qualities as leaders. And it’s an honour for us, collectively, as a university – and is a reminder of the importance which sport holds, and historically has always held, in Trinity.
This evening we pay further tribute with this reception for “Trinity Olympians” – those Trinity students who have participated in the Games over the past hundred years.

A total of 45 Trinity students have taken part in the Olympic Games since 1908, in sports ranging from water polo to boxing, fencing, and athletics.

Maeve Kyle, who is here tonight, became Ireland’s – and Trinity’s – first triple Olympian in 1964, at the Tokyo Games. Remarkably over the course of three Games she competed in the 100m, 200m, 400m and 800m! Her record of participation was only beaten by David Wilkins who is Ireland’s – and Trinity’s - most capped Summer Olympian. Between 1972 and 1992 he took part in five games and won a silver medal in Moscow in sailing with Jamie Wilkinson, another Trinity graduate.

 Eleven medals have been won by Trinity Olympians at the Summer Games. At the Paralympics of 1984 and 1988, Ronan Tynan, who is also here tonight, won four Gold, two Silver and one Bronze, and was unsurprisingly awarded Outstanding Athlete of the 1984 Games.

Among the names of medallists I was surprised to see that of Oliver St John Gogarty in the 1924 Games. I think it was James Joyce who quipped that Gogarty was famous to his readers as a surgeon, and to his patients as a writer. I thought he had added another string to his polymath’s bow – that of athlete – but on closer inspection, he won in the category of ‘Mixed Literature’, an event which has now been dropped . . . . .

We cannot, of course, have Gogarty with us tonight but his grandson is here, and I’m delighted to say that of our 45 Trinity Olympians, fifteen are here in person and another four are represented by family members. Considering the timespan, that’s a wonderful turn-out. I thank all of you for being here this evening, embodying the spirit of the Games.

I would like to welcome in particular our oldest Trinity Olympian, Robert Tamplin, who has waited 64 years to see the Games return to London, where he represented Ireland at Rowing in 1948.

We also have with us tonight three generations of the Bulger family – the grand-daughter, great-granddaughter, and great-great-grandson of Daniel Delany Bulger.

Daniel Delany Bulger was a distinguished late 19th century athlete and Trinity graduate. We remember him tonight because as Vice-President of the Irish Amateur Athletic Association he attended the Congress of the Sorbonne
in Paris in 1894, which led to the establishment of the Olympic Games of the Modern Era.

Two years later the inaugural Games were held in Athens.

Thus, an alumnus of Trinity College played an integral part for Ireland in the inaugural Olympic Congress, lighting the flame, well over a century ago, that has travelled today through the streets of Dublin. This is a most precious connection, made palpable by the presence of his family here tonight.

*      *      *

We celebrate our Trinity Olympians and we celebrate the great tradition of sport in Trinity – a tradition which goes back hundreds of years and which helps distinguish Trinity among world universities. Our Football Club – which of course is actually rugby football – is the world’s oldest documented football club.

We celebrate and build on this great sporting tradition because sport allows humans to excel – to achieve their potential, and indeed go beyond what they thought possible, breaking through mental and physical barriers. The Olympic Games is of course the great testing ground of sporting excellence.

But of course reaching the summit of human achievement is only one aspect of the Olympic Games, and it’s only one aspect of sport in Trinity. In the words of the Olympic creed, adopted in 1908:

“The most important thing in the Olympic Games is not to win but to take part, just as the most important thing in life is not the triumph but the struggle. The essential thing is not to have conquered but to have fought well.”

We encourage our students to get involved in sports and we invest in sporting facilities, not only because we are training elite athletes – and not only because science has proved the insight of the ancient Olympians, ‘Mens sana in corpore sana’ (although we know that sport makes our students healthier) – but because sport allows people to struggle, to achieve, to connect with others, to help others as well as to compete with them, to break down barriers, whether class, race, gender or disability based.

That’s why we do our best to schedule our academic syllabus around sporting needs; that’s why employers seek graduates whose college participation went beyond the lecture room to the playing fields; and that’s why Trinity’s four torch bearers represent not only sporting excellence but the spirit of social inclusion and triumph over adversity. These are the values I see in our Trinity Olympians. These are the values we have celebrated in this university for hundreds of years, and that we celebrate today.
Before concluding, on behalf of all of us here, I would like to wish Mark Kennelly and Natalya Coyle every success in the London 2012 Olympic Games. We are already tremendously proud of your success in qualifying for the Games.

Thank you very much.

* * *

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Good afternoon.

You’re all very welcome to the Saloon of the Provost’s House. This is a unique occasion for a unique group – the Ussher lecturers and their mentors.

Since becoming Provost last August – and indeed since before, when I was Vice-Provost – it has been my intention to hold a reception to mark these lectureships, to welcome you all, and to give you an opportunity to meet each other. I think it’s interesting for you to meet because while you hail from different disciplines across different schools, as Ussher lecturers you form a cohesive group.

I know that some of you have been Ussher lecturers since 2010 but most of you only took up your appointments within the last year, which is why it’s only now, at the end of the Trinity term, that I finally get this chance to meet you collectively, and to celebrate your appointments.

Of course new appointments are always welcomed, but the academic body of the College as a whole, is particularly heartened by you Ussher lecturers. Not only are there so many of you across so many Schools – but you represent hope, growth, and Trinity’s faith in the future in a time of difficulty and recession. In fact in the call for applications, these lectureships were referred to literally as ‘new blood’!

In Ireland, in these years, universities that are in the public sector are facing cutbacks and are unable to recruit academic teaching staff in the way they desperately need to, to meet student demand for high quality higher education. A university is only as good as its staff – not to be able to hire, not to be able to renew and develop academic staff is nothing short of a disaster; it really is a question of the university’s lifeblood being cut off.

Fortunately in Trinity we were able to find non-exchequer funds to enable these lectureships. I would like to acknowledge the role of the Treasurer, Ian Mathews, in securing these non-exchequer funds. Schools were invited to apply for candidates to meet priority research needs. One of the criteria was that Schools appoint mentors because these lectureships are specifically intended for academics at the start of their careers. We’re extremely grateful to the mentors – and I’m sure the mentors, in their turn, are greatly enjoying the experience of “communing” with younger experts in their disciplines.
I’m particularly proud of this initiative since it was one of my priorities as Vice-Provost in 2009. It’s not always that an idea bears fruit so triumphantly, but from a short paragraph in the College Strategic Plan of 2009-2014, there are now almost 40 ‘flesh and blood’ new lecturers in the College, from many different countries, and ranging in expertise from nanomagnetism to music composition, from implantable medical devices to 18th century French literature. If only all ideas could bear out so well.

A word on your progenitor – the onlie begetter of all these... As you probably know the lectureships are named for Archbishop James Ussher, who is often referred to as Trinity’s first scholar. This is his portrait here.

Ussher was an extraordinary man - I don’t have time to tell you all the stories about him. He was hailed as a prophet because he predicted the 1641 rebellion in Ireland, forty years in advance. He declined the provostship of this university – which I certainly consider extraordinary! He took the royalist side in the English civil war, yet when he died Oliver Cromwell insisted on burial in Westminster Abbey and a state funeral.

A fascinating man, but the reason why we gave his name to the lectureships is that he was a pioneering and meticulous scholar. His most famous feat was to painstakingly calibrate biblical events with those in ancient secular history to establish 23 October 4004 BC as the date of creation. This was widely accepted until well into the eighteenth century. It involved astonishing research – but it’s a pity in a way that it’s what Ussher is most famous for, since obviously it couldn’t survive Darwin. What is more significant is the way he prioritised primary sources. He was a protestant evangelist during a time of religious warfare but he insisted on authenticity, rigour and accuracy in the use of medieval manuscripts. Scholarship owes him much. He deserves to name not only one of our libraries but these important lectureships.

You are the first Ussher lecturers - and you may indeed also be the last Ussher lecturers! We expect a lot of you – that you will help enliven and regenerate your departments; that you will open up new avenues of research, and inspire young minds as you too were inspired.

No pressure – but we will watch your future careers with interest. I hope that some of you will flourish here in Trinity; some of you may go further afield. But each of you can achieve your ambitions here in this great centre of learning and of research. I hope that wherever you are, you will be proud of having started your academic life as Ussher lecturers.

Thank you.
Sunday, 10th of June 2012

International James Joyce Symposium Opening Reception

Dublin City Hall

Thank you, Sam.

Yes, I’m very attached indeed to that Patrick Ireland artwork in my office, although I admit I haven’t worked out why it’s called ‘Study for Purgatory’. If any Joycean here wants to take a look at it and enlighten me, I’d be most grateful.

As Anne and Hugh have said, this is the third Joyce symposium to be co-hosted by UCD and TCD. Trinity is delighted to be involved, particularly in this seminal year when Joyce comes finally out of copyright in the European Union.

Hugh has spoken about Joyce’s connection with UCD. In the friendly rivalry existing between our two great universities, there are many things I might argue with Hugh over – but I’m not going to argue over Joyce; ... although actually someone did have an alternative version ... At the very first Joyce symposium, held in Dublin in 1967, Giorgio Joyce was in a taxi with his wife and Gerry O’Flaherty, one of the conference organisers. When the cab passed in front of Trinity, Giorgio told his wife, ‘That’s where my father went to College’.

I believe Gerry O’Flaherty is here this evening and can confirm the anecdote.

I could also, in the interests of establishing Trinity’s connection with Joyce, mention all the references to Trinity in Joyce’s works. In Ulysses Annotated, Don Gifford, for instance, counts over twenty references. I suppose I might make much of this if I weren’t in a room full of Joyceans, but I’m sure you know much of it already. Considering the space Trinity occupies in the city centre, it would be extraordinary if it didn’t get many mentions in that great peripatetic book of Dublin.

In fact, probably more noteworthy than the number of mentions is the fact that Leopold Bloom only passes the College walls. He doesn’t go into the College, which is a tragedy really for us because we’re denied the master’s description of the College’s grounds – but it does of course say a lot historically about the rather hermetic nature of Trinity in the Edwardian period, something which I’m happy to say is no longer the case. All visiting Joyceans are most welcome, like all visitors, to walk through what Joyce
called 'Trinity's surly front'. They won't require, as Bloom would have in his
day, a nod from the porter.

As Provost of Trinity, I do have the distinction of living in a house mentioned
in *Ulysses*. You'll recall that as Bloom walks by Number 1, Grafton St – which
is the postal address of the Provost’s House – he’s reminded of the Provost,
the Reverend Dr George Salmon and thinks: ‘Tinned Salmon. Well tinned in
there.’ Tinned being of course Dublin slang for moneyed.

And the next line is that the house is ‘Like a mortuary chapel. Wouldn’t live
in it if they paid me.’

Actually this was a rare instance of Joyce making a factual error because the
Reverend Dr Salmon died in January 1904 so wasn’t Provost on 16th June.
But perhaps it wasn’t a mistake so much as artistic license – Salmon’s
successor was called Dr Anthony Traill which, Sam tells me, isn’t a name that
lends itself so well to the food-related mania of that episode.

Which makes me wonder what Joyce would have done with my name…

But Trinity’s connection to, and celebration of, Joyce isn’t really about how
many mentions the College gets in *Ulysses*. It’s about our scholarly interest
and our prioritising of Joyce studies. We’ve been lucky to count distinguished
Joyceans among our staff – both David Norris in the past and now Sam Slote
were key organisers of this symposium and they have been instrumental in
making Trinity a research centre for Joyce studies.

This symposium is part of a wider framework of cooperation between UCD
and Trinity. As a response to what they called a ‘time of national crisis’, Hugh
Brady and my predecessor as Provost, Dr John Hegarty, established a
partnership, called the TCD/UCD Innovation Alliance, to enable our two
universities to work with state agencies and business and venture capital
communities, to drive enterprise development in Ireland.

The Innovation Alliance enables the two universities to fuse research abilities,
expertise and resources. Some people may associate innovation solely with
high tech or digital and mobile industries, but we think this is a limiting view.
Innovation Dublin-style, will, I believe, combine this city’s significant cultural
capital and humanities resources with high-tech industries.

For instance the digital resource, *Inside Joyce’s Dublin*, is a collaborative
project between Trinity, UCD, the National Library, the Dublin James Joyce
Centre and RTE. It will build on existing assets such as maps, photographs,
buildings, and the Censuses of 1901 and 1911, to reflect the topography,
buildings and people of Dublin in 1904.
The project is interdisciplinary, combining the latest computer virtualisation technologies with the latest Joyce scholarship.

But I guess I don’t have to convince this audience that innovation also means creativity and the arts.

We are here to celebrate arguably Ireland’s greatest innovator, someone who shook up their discipline so radically that aftershocks are still being felt. Joyce didn’t use the term ‘innovator’ but I think his preferred word ‘artificer’ amounts to the same thing.

Thank you very much.

* * *
Raising the Green Flag at Scoil Mochua Primary School, Oulart

Scoil Mochua Primary School, Oulart, Co Wexford

Fr Browne, distinguished guests, TDs, teachers, and pupils of Oulart’s Scoil Mochua. Good morning!

I would like to begin by thanking the Principal, Mr John Brennan, for the invitation to return to Oulart primary school after thirty five years.

Thirty-five years is a long time to be away, so this invitation to raise the Green Flag is very welcome; indeed it’s a real honour for me to have this opportunity to congratulate the School, and the Green School Committee, for the success in being awarded a Green Flag for water conservation.

It’s a great achievement. From the turnout here today we can see that the whole parish is proud.

It might be easy, living in such a beautiful green environment as we have here in Oulart to take it for granted, but of course nothing should be taken for granted. Our environment is precious. And water conservation in particular needs our care and attention.

By winning the Green Flag, you, the pupils of Oulart’s Scoil Mochua primary school have shown your awareness of the need to conserve water. You are part of a global understanding that this liquid is not to be taken for granted. Children all over the world, on all continents, are taking the lead in water conservation.

Water conservation was unheard of in the 1970s when I started as a pupil here. Indeed this fine school building itself was not here – I attended what is now the community centre or the ‘Old School’, the same one that my father attended in the 1930s. Indeed both my grandparents attended Oulart National School in the 1890s – that small place now called ‘The Hall’; my grandparents were Pat Prendergast and Anastasia Dempsey. They were great conservators too, growing much of their own food and, for most of their lives, the water they used was brought in buckets from a nearby stream. Only later on, when electricity came in the 1950s, did they sink a well and install a pump to deliver water to taps in their house.

I would like to thank my teachers from all those years ago: Ms O’Riordan, Ms Flood, Mr Stack, and the Principal in my time here, Mr Bracken. They set me on the academic road to the position I have now and I will be forever grateful.
to them. I came here as a four year old in 1970 and I have very good memories of school:

- I remember marching up Oulart Hill on history lessons with Mr Bracken, looking for the 1798 monument which is now, of course, easy to find. But it wasn’t back then – it involved climbing over a lot of ditches. As for geography, I still know three towns in every county in Ireland … …
- We won the Nicky Rackard league in hurling, I think it was 1978. Now I can’t claim much credit for that victory but I see at least one of my classmates from back then who certainly can. The one thing Oulart The Ballagh is known for all over Ireland is hurling, people are always congratulating me up in Dublin for Oulart’s successes.

But memories of actual school fades with time, and one is left mainly with impressions and general feelings of goodwill towards everyone from all those years ago. And that is certainly how I feel. Best of luck to all the pupils of the school in the years ahead.

Thank you.

*     *     *
Launch of the Arts Education Research Group, School of Education

Trinity Long Room Hub

Minister Deenihan, distinguished guests, colleagues and friends, I am delighted to welcome you to the launch of the School of Education’s new arts education research group.

My thanks to the postgraduate students involved in the piece of Invisible Theatre which we have just participated in.

It highlights for us the many perspectives that people hold in relation to the arts-in-education. Some of these perspectives can be quite strongly held by various stakeholders, and can prove difficult to challenge.

That’s why this initiative from the School of Education to engage concretely with arts education in the formal and informal educational sectors, is both timely and welcome.

For many years, the School of Education has attracted teachers, artists, educators, policy-makers, researchers, and other advocates for arts and learning, from around the world to their graduate taught and research programmes.

The creation of this Arts Education Research group will serve as a platform to bring together colleagues who work in the areas of Drama and Theatre in Education, Music Education, Dance Education, the Visual Arts, and Poetry in Education.

It will also provide an important focal point for research in the area of the Arts in Education in wider society, and to support valuable networking opportunities between diverse organisations and institutions involved in arts education.

Trinity has prioritized ‘Culture and the Creative Arts’ as one of its five priority research areas.

The College recognises [and I quote] that:

‘Creativity in the Arts and Humanities, and the output of Arts and Humanities research, change the way we think, the values we hold, and our interpretations of ourselves and the world around us. They provide the cultural infrastructure that sustains us as a society’. 
As part of Trinity’s commitment to engagement with society, it has pledged to ‘Catalyse new cultural and scientific initiatives in the city’.

And as part of that commitment, it has established facilities and organisations such as the Long Room Hub, the Samuel Beckett Centre and the recently launched Lir - National Academy of Dramatic Art, the Douglas Hyde Gallery, our Science Gallery, the Arts Technology Research Laboratory in the Trinity Enterprise campus, the Oscar Wilde Centre for Irish Writing, the Creative Arts, Technologies and Culture initiative, and a number of student-led clubs and societies. All seek to maximise our contribution to Dublin as a city of learning and culture, set against the four centuries old tradition of our university as patron, promoter, and catalyst of artistic creativity.

Arts education embraces both

- artistic education, that is the person making art,
- and aesthetic education, the person as receiver of art.

Arts education is life-enriching, is central to young people’s development and is invaluable in stimulating creative thinking.

Research has identified increased student engagement in learning as one of the most important effects of arts-in-learning programmes. These researchers have called for further study of the issue of engagement in relation to arts-based learning and arts education. The establishment of this Arts Education Research Group in the School of Education seeks to address the concern that until relatively recently much of the research in the field of arts-in-learning has been conducted in other countries. It intends to liaise with key stakeholders in arts education to strengthen the existing theoretical framework for thinking about arts-in-learning, as well as to engage in quantitative and qualitative research on the benefits and outcomes of partnerships between artists, arts organisations and the education sector.

Artist and film maker, Philip King, when speaking to members of the Arts and Culture Committee of the National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals in 2010 about the role of ‘The artist in shaping the new Ireland’ said:

[...] the ability to imagine something new every day, to dream and imagine the new thing must be the greatest natural resource we have. The more you exercise the imagination muscle the stronger it becomes. We need people who will bring us to the next place, people who invent things but it’s the same imagination that invents in the science laboratory, the same curiosity....
It is very fitting that we have with us this evening a stalwart advocate of the arts and culture, Mr James Deenihan, Minister for the Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. I would now like you to join me in welcoming the Minister to officially launch our latest initiative in the arts.

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Friday, 29th of June 2012

**Summer Honorary Degree Commencements Dinner 2012**

*The Dining Hall, Trinity College Dublin*

Chancellor, Pro-Chancellors, Distinguished Guests, Colleagues, and Friends,

In just under a fortnight Dublin has the honour of hosting Euroscience Open Forum, which is Europe’s largest science conference and the largest open forum of its kind. It will be a global gathering of Nobel Laureates, leading researchers, policy makers and business leaders. And to celebrate this prestigious international event, Dublin has been named “City of Science 2012”.

It will, I hope, be impossible, for anyone living in, or visiting, our city to escape science in July.

The programme of events is immensely rich and varied. There are films, workshops, masterclasses, visual exhibitions, environmental exhibitions, tastings, talks, and theatre performances including ‘Busking Physics’, which takes science right onto the streets.

[Our own] Luke O’Neill, our professor of Biochemistry is the Chair of the Euroscience Open Forum committee and has had a key role in organising the programme. And other of Trinity’s scientists will, of course, be among the 5,000 delegates to the Forum.

The college is also an important venue for City of Science events. I’m particularly looking forward to two debates taking place here on July 12th.

- Seventy years ago, one of the greatest scientists of the 20th Century, Erwin Schroedinger, delivered a lecture entitled ‘What is Life?’ here in Trinity. Now Dr Craig Venter, a leader of the Human Genome Project in the 1990s and a pioneer of synthetic biology, will revisit Schroedinger’s question in a lecture entitled ‘What is Life in the 21st Century?’ This unique event will connect an important episode in Ireland’s scientific heritage with the frontiers of contemporary research.

- The other Trinity debate on 12th July is entitled ‘The Age of Reason’ and will be held in the Edmund Burke Theatre. Among the panellists is Dara O Briain who, as well as being a comedian, has a BSc in Physics. That’s the type of interdisciplinarity I like to encourage in our students.
Today, Trinity has conferred its highest honour on five exceptional individuals. We celebrate their achievements and, in doing so, we celebrate science itself and its great power and ability to transform all of our lives.

These five recipients of honorary degrees are remarkable too for their constant striving to improve human life and understanding - in terms of preventing disease, improving access to health care, and contributing to our understanding of how the universe works.

PROFESSOR WILLIAM CECIL CAMPBELL, FORMER DIRECTOR OF PARASITOLOGY AT MERCK, is a graduate of this university. He was centrally involved in developing Ivermectin, the cure against river blindness, and he spearheaded the decision by Merck to distribute Ivermectin free to millions of people in what became one of the first and foremost examples of a public/private partnership in international health. As the Public Orator put it in her address: “No longer a dejected cry, but a song of praise, rises from the from the 25 million people in three continents every year, to the man who found the remedy and freely distributed it”. It is a tremendous achievement and today he was conferred with the degree of Doctor in Science from this university.

CLINICAL SCIENTIST, DR JOHN CLIMAX IS FOUNDER OF ICON PLC, a global provider of development services to pharmaceutical and related health industries. Founded in Dublin in 1990, ICON has grown from a small team of five into one of the world’s leading clinical research institutions, today employing some 9,000 people in 42 countries. Born in India, raised and educated in Singapore, Dr Climax is Chairman Emeritus of ICON and Adjunct Professor at the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland. He is also a founding member of the Science Gallery at Trinity College. In 2004, he established the Human Dignity Foundation, a charity which seeks to alleviate child poverty; he is known as a compassionate promoter of human dignity and well-being. Â He was conferred with the degree of Doctor in Science.

IMMUNOLOGIST AND NOBEL PRIZE WINNER, PROFESSOR PETER DOHERTY is the Michael F. Tamer Chair of Biomedical Research at St Jude Children’s Research Hospital, Memphis, Tennessee and Laureate Professor at the University of Melbourne. The Public Orator put it well today: “He embarked as a young man on a courageous journey into the battlefield of immune defence, he broke the secret code of our little white allies, and brought back the spoils of our viral enemies”. For these discoveries, he was awarded, in 1996, the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine with Rolf Zinkernagel. He headed the review of Biomedical Sciences in Trinity which recommended the creation of the Trinity Biomedical Sciences Institute. He was today conferred with the degree of Doctor in Medicine.

KIRAN MAZUMDAR-SHAW IS A BUSINESSWOMAN AND INNOVATOR IN BANGALORE, and founder, chair and managing director of Biocon, India’s
leading biotechnology enterprise. She joined Biocon Biochemicals in 1978 in Cork and started Biocon India in the same year. She was recently voted the Most Influential in Bio-business Person outside Europe and the US by Nature Biotechnology. In 2004, she established the Biocon Foundation to conduct health, education, sanitation and environment programmes for the benefit of economically deprived sections of society. This foundation has improved the lives of 300,000 people through its holistic healthcare approach. Dr Mazumdar-Shaw is currently the Irish Honorary Consul in Bangalore. She was today conferred the degree of Doctor in Science.

THEORETICAL PHYSICIST, MATHEMATICIAN AND COSMOLOGIST PROFESSOR SIR ROGER PENROSE is Emeritus Rouse Ball Professor of Mathematics in the University of Oxford. Throughout his life has persevered “in an unrelenting quest into the nature of physical reality and human consciousness”. In 1988, he shared the Wolf Prize with Stephen Hawking for his contributions on the theory of general relativity, gravitational collapse and black holes. In 1990, he received the Einstein medal. More recently, his interest in artificial intelligence has led to a series of highly influential books such as The Emperor’s New Mind (1990) and Road to Reality (2004). He was conferred with the degree of Doctor in Science.

* * *

To our new Honorary Doctors, you are true role models of what can be achieved in science. We are privileged to have conferred degrees on you in this year when Dublin is European City of Science.

I would also like to thank the Public Orator, professor Anna Chahoud, for the splendid orations given today.

* * *

I am now coming to the end of my first year serving as Provost. It has been a tremendously exciting and dynamic year and it has been a great year for science. In my official capacity I’ve celebrated the tercentenary of the School of Medicine; I’ve given a talk in a tent at the Electric Picnic Festival. I’ve seen the proposed site for the Science Gallery in Moscow, and I’ve given any number of speeches on Innovation and on what this university is doing to encourage the commercialisation of scientific research.

It seems fitting that an academic year so devoted to celebrating science should finish with the Forum, the City of Science festival, and with the conferring of these exceptional individuals whose achievements so inspire us. I’m reminded now of a marvellous quote from Trinity’s great 19th century physicist and mathematician, William Rowan Hamilton. Of the moment when he discovered quaternions, he wrote: “I felt the galvanic circuit of thought close”. That’s less immediate than ‘Eureka!’ but it’s also more poetic and it
reminds us that scientific discovery is also, in the first instance, creative and imaginative, and that what we admire in great scientists is the ability not only to amass knowledge through research, but to make a leap. It’s not given to all of us to make that leap. But it is given to all of us to admire and praise those who do as they show us the summits of human achievement.

I now invite Dr Mazumdar-Shaw to respond on behalf of our new Honorary Graduates.

* * *
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure, as Provost, to welcome you to Trinity College and to say how delighted we are to have this important conference back in our university. It was last held here twelve years ago - in 2000.

I would like to express my appreciation to the local organisers, Dr Oonagh Kinsman from Trinity and Dr John Donovan from Dublin Institute of Technology. It’s a real pleasure to note that the conference is co-organised together with Dublin Institute of Technology, and to welcome here also this morning Professor Ellen Hazelkorn, Vice-President for Research and Enterprise at DIT.

This year is a particularly significant and apt year for us to be hosting EARMA because Dublin has been named City of Science 2012 and is, of course, this year’s venue for Euroscience Open Forum, or ESOF, Europe’s largest science conference.

ESOF starts in two days’ time. I imagine some of you will be staying on to attend it.

Throughout this month of July, science is being showcased round Dublin and Trinity - and that’s science for all levels, from primary school children to expert researchers. As well as the talks, papers, and seminars associated with the conference, there are films, workshops, visual exhibitions, environmental exhibitions, tastings, and theatre performances. One particularly interesting event is a lecture by the synthetic biologist, Dr Craig Venter, on What is Life? - recalling the lecture with the same title some 70 years ago by Erwin Schrodinger.

I know that EARMA has a particularly full and interesting programme of papers and workshops over the next few days, but I do hope that you will get the chance to visit Trinity’s Science Gallery. The current exhibition is called ‘Hack the City’ and is interactive, so those secretly drawn to the world of the hacker can see how it’s done.

*   *   *
In the twelve years since EARMA was last in Trinity, much has changed. We are, in many ways, facing a different world.

But the importance of collaborative transnational research has only grown. As a result, the importance of your role as key enablers and facilitators of such research, has grown.

For Ireland, as for many European countries, the key to emerging from recession lies in developing an economy based on the smart creativity of our people, where ideas are translated into valuable processes, products, and services. Research is the backbone, or the heart, of a knowledge economy; and that research must be globally competitive.

These are difficult times for Europe. Member states do not always agree on the direction the European Union should take. But there is widespread agreement on this at least: research and innovation is the key to our growth and prosperity; we should combine strengths to tackle the major research questions of our time - and we should work together to innovate and to turn the outputs of research into concrete reality.

We are committed to the free movement of scholars, researchers, and ideas. The European Research Council and Horizon 2020 were initiated to boost European competitiveness but, like all the best EU ventures, they are also important instruments of integration and connectivity among member states and with our partners outside the EU.

This conference is, in itself, an example of such connectivity. It allows colleagues from over thirty countries to meet up, including most European countries and the USA, Canada, South Africa, China, and Israel. Debating your shared aims and challenges, and spending time together in this vibrant city, will serve to strengthen the ties between you - and, through you, the ties of the universities, scientists, governments, industry, and policy agencies, whom you represent and support.

* * *

EU member states and their partners have a long tradition of research collaboration through fellowships such as the Marie Curie, going back many decades now.

As a postdoc back in the early 1990s, I personally benefitted from a Marie Curie fellowship to carry out research in the University of Nijmegen in the Netherlands. I remember the project was called “Structural modelling of the bone/implant interface”. It was a time of great development, both career and personal, and it has left me a strong advocate, an evangelist even, for these fellowships and for inter-institutional and transnational research.
I was elected Provost a year ago. In my inaugural address I spoke of “the increasing emergence of higher education as a globally traded and borderless activity”. This is something that is creating wonderful energy and dynamism in the sector, but like all great changes, it’s also something we must learn to meet with creativity and adaptability.

Horizon 2020 represents the European Union’s commitment, at the highest level, to cutting edge research. It will enable peer universities to co-ordinate research activities and respond dynamically to the needs of the citizens, and of government, industry, and consumers.

Horizon 2020 gathers all existing EU research and innovation funding streams into a single set of rules, and so provides what it calls on its website “a major simplification” of the application and funding process. I’m sure it does do this, but I have say - and I don’t think I’m alone among academics - that I still don’t find Horizon 2020 that simple to follow!

This is where an organization like EARMA comes in. Working with all players, you form the interface between research funding organisations and the scientific community, and you help bridge differences between countries.

Speaking for this university, I know that the information learned at this conference and the experience of attendees will be crucial to the staff of Trinity Research and Innovation - and particularly the Research Development Office, headed up by my colleague Doris Alexander - in ensuring that we plan for Horizon 2020 and develop the necessary research management and administration capabilities.

If I may end with a quote from Ireland’s recently-elected President, Michael D. Higgins: “The exciting people, the genuinely original, innovative people are those who are able to draw the different sources of knowledge and wonderment together.”

‘Drawing the different sources of knowledge and wonderment together, across Europe and beyond’ - I think that can stand as a quote for the activities and achievements of EARMA.

Thank you.

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Thursday, 12th of July 2012

Address at the Reception to Unveil the Walton Sculpture Design (after Craig Venter Lecture ‘What is Life?)

Saloon of the Provost’s House

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, Colleagues, Friends, members of the Walton Family.

It is my great pleasure to welcome you here this evening to the Saloon in Number 1 Grafton Street, the Provost’s House, after such an inspiring, and indeed historical, lecture and a stimulating exchange of views.

Now there is another historical moment to be shared – the unveiling of the design of a new Trinity sculpture to celebrate Nobel prize winner Ernest Walton.

This new campus sculpture was commissioned by the Board of Trinity College Dublin to mark Dublin’s designation as the European City of Science 2012 and to commemorate Trinity’s Nobel Laureate and former Erasmus Smith Professor of Natural and Experimental Philosophy, Ernest Thomas Sinton Walton.

Born in Dungarvan, Co. Waterford, Ernest Walton is Ireland’s only Nobel Prize winner in Science, jointly awarded with Sir John Cockroft in 1951 for ‘their pioneer work on the transmutation of atomic nuclei by artificially accelerated atomic particles’.

Walton was also well known for his commitment to the improvement of the standard of science education in Ireland – In Professor McBrierty’s Trinity Monday Discourse on him earlier this year we saw much of this positive patriotism about Walton.

Trinity invited six artists to submit a design to respond to the persona of Walton, his teaching, his research achievements, and his connection to Albert Einstein’s E=mc² equation which was first demonstrated by Walton and Cockroft’s splitting of the atom.

The selected winning design by Eilis O’Connell, whom I am delighted to say is here this evening, was chosen by a panel comprising members of the Walton family, representatives from the School of Physics and Department of History of Art and Architecture, the Curator of the College Art Collections, a representative of the students, and the directors of The Dublin City Gallery.
The Hugh Lane, The Royal Hibernian Academy, and Dublin City Council’s Public Arts Officer.
This is the first time in Trinity’s 420-year history that this kind of site-specific sculpture has been commissioned to commemorate such a significant figure in the history of the College and the development of science globally. It great to see we can still do things for the first time....

Eilis O’Connell studied at the Massachusetts College of Art in Boston and the Crawford School of Art, where she received the only award for Distinction in Sculpture in her year. She is a founder director of the National Sculpture Factory in Cork, a member of Aosdána, the Royal Hibernian Academy, and a former member of the Arts Council of Ireland. She has received many key awards and her works have been widely displayed nationally and internationally, from the Venice Biennale to the Guggenheim Museum. She has won many prestigious public commissions, a significant number of those in the UK, and represented Ireland at the Paris Biennale in 1982 and the Sao Paolo Biennale in 1985.

I will now ask Catherine Giltrap to do the unveiling. And Eilis has kindly agreed to say a few words about her approach....

HAND OVER:
To describe the sculpture in the artist’s own words: ‘the proposal is a tall stack of mirror polished spheres, reflected in them are specially planted native Irish apple trees. This sculpture refers to Walton’s most important characteristics - his intellectual rigour and hands-on ability to actually build the Particle Accelerator with which he and Cockroft split the atom and his nurturing ability as a teacher and, privately, as a grower of fruit trees. A man is not only defined by his academic achievements but also by the memories he leaves behind in others’.

I was very struck by ETS Walton’s daughter, Marian Wood’s description of him as father and scientist and in particular his ability and enthusiasm for fabricating his own tools - from garden tools to the scientific apparatus he constructed to carry out the experiments to ‘split the atom’.

Thank you Eilis. Ireland has been home to many scientific heroes and today we continue to excel in the sciences in fields such as immunology, materials science and genetics. I look forward to seeing the sculpture in situ for it to be enjoyed by students, staff and members of the public as they pass by.

Please enjoy the late evening drinks in the Saloon.....

Technical information
Dimensions: height 4.2m / width 1.7m / depth 1.5 m
Medium/ Media: Polished stainless steel and Apple Trees to be planted in the lawn opposite.
Friday, 13th of July 2012

European Science Open Forum (ESOF) 2012 President's Dinner

The Dining Hall, Trinity College Dublin

Lord Mayor of Dublin, Tanaiste, Ambassadors, Chair of ESOF 2012 Prof Cunningham and President of Euroscience Prof Benda, Commissioner Geoghegan-Quinn, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Welcome to Trinity College, on this wonderful occasion of Dublin hosting ESOF - the Euro-Science Open Forum. This is a great event for our capital city, and for Trinity, which has the honour of hosting a number of ESOF events.

I hope you enjoyed the Ernest Walton exhibition in the Old Library. And I’m sure many of you were present yesterday at Dr Craig Venter’s keynote address ‘What is Life?’ This was a reprising of Erwin Schrodinger’s lecture of the same name, delivered seventy years ago. Schrodinger’s lecture featured in Time magazine, and was cited by Drs Watson and Crick as an inspiration for their discovery of the structure of DNA.

As Provost now for a year, I’ve found science to be a cause for constant celebration. For me - as for other heads of Irish universities - there have been real challenges in this academic year to do with the funding crisis and our striving to maintain Ireland’s reputation for high-quality of higher education.

This will receive our serious attention, but one thing we recognise and put to good use is Ireland’s excellent science and research record. It is clear that the universities make a massively important contribution to serving the public good and maintaining Ireland’s reputation abroad.

I feel proud when I open a newspaper to see Trinity research making headlines and engaging the public. Whether it’s the insight - which came as a revelation to me - that the brains of teenagers who take drugs are wired differently and have less of the inhibitory mechanism, or whether it’s the news that our nanoscience centre, CRANN, recently received large-scale investment from industry for the production of grapheme.

And other Irish universities have similar stories of delivering scientific achievement, and we aim to continue to do this despite the financial crisis in universities and a sceptical public and media environment.
Such confirmation of the significance of the work we’re engaged in spurs me on in my demands that we make of this country an educational hub - that we invest to realise our potential for excelling at research and innovation.

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Thinking of Walton and Schrodinger; I’m reminded that both were appointed in the 1930s. When Ireland was then, as now, financially strapped. But in those days we had two Nobel Prize Winners in Science in key teaching and research positions. In fact Schrodinger was appointed despite, as we heard in the introduction to last night’s lecture, his rather unorthodox matrimonial arrangements.

In an amusing recent piece in the Irishman’s Diary, Frank McNally, pointed out that, not only was Ireland then in recession, it also had, in the person of Eamon de Valera, a leader famously dedicated to a pastoral vision of Ireland.

Because De Valera was also a mathematician with - as Lloyd George pointed out - “a mercurial ability to slip through arguments”, he managed to reconcile his vision of an Ireland ‘bright with cozy homesteads’ and ‘devoted to things of the spirit’, with the appointment of a revolutionary and somewhat controversial scientist like Schrodinger.

So in this month, when we celebrate Ireland’s scientific achievements, and welcome world-class scientists to Dublin, let’s reaffirm our commitment to creating a science, research and innovation hub in this country. As the Minister said in his letter to the Irish Times last Tuesday “the full spectrum of research must be supported in order to have a viable system that continues to deliver impact”.

I couldn’t agree more, and I’m delighted that the Minister emphasized ‘the full spectrum of research’. We do need to ensure that excellent science is funded, and not just the science that seems strategic at a particular time.

Let’s instead believe in people, and let the commitment to making discoveries be our mantra.

Walton and Schrodinger’s work has proved vital, but their impetus was the simple passion of discovery. Let’s support the smooth frictionless functioning of scientific and technological innovation in this country. Let’s ensure that excellence - of projects and of researchers - is the criteria for funding.

If De Valera could find his way to accommodating Schrodinger, we can find our way to putting our money on the best people in this country - and with the youngest demographic of all EU 27 countries this means our young people - in their ability and their competitive spirit. That’s why education and research are important.
On that note, I thank you all for being here tonight, and I hope we continue to enjoy a wonderful conference.

It’s now my pleasure to introduce the government minister from my own constituency of Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown, a constituency which perhaps has more PhD scientists than any other in Ireland. He is currently at the helm of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), and is advancing that organisation’s human rights brief, with special emphasis on internet freedom, institution building and conflict resolution.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the Tanaiste and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Eamon Gilmore, T.D.

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