of course, my appointment as Chair of Council, however, a milestone moment as it followed the sad passing in August 2015 of my predecessor, colleague and friend, Dr Jim Hartmann. Jim served on Council for 11 years where his energy and commitment to higher education and skills development made him a central figure in the University’s forward direction and momentum. He will be greatly missed.

Jim did well to witness the start of some of the University’s most ambitious and important development plans, plans that are now progressing or planned, more resilient and socially conscious, are competitive in an increasingly globalised world, while still remaining a civic university responding to the needs of the next generation of talent. It gives me great pleasure to reflect on this annual review into the future that is ahead of us, the future for Ulster University.

My first year as Chair of Council, Mr John Hunter
2015/16 Highlights

Polly Poppet aka Sarah Lyle with Meabh McComish (two) who took part in the Book Trust’s Rumble in the Jungle song and rhyme session at Ulster University as part of Culture Night Belfast 2015.

Alumni of Ulster University Business School celebrate its 40th anniversary.

Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal officially opened Phase One of Ulster University’s Belfast campus development.

Cara Simpson (Ballycastle High School) and Oliwia Mankiewicz with Dr Bridgeen Callan at our week-long Chemistry Summer School.

Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal officially opened Phase One of Ulster University’s Belfast campus development.

Ulster University marked 100 days to Rio with an Olympic-themed celebration that gave local school children the opportunity to try out new sports.

Dr Arun Gandhi delivered an inspiring speech on peace and non-violence at a special lecture hosted by Ulster University.

Joanne Mercer celebrates her degree in adult nursing with son Hudson (five) at the Ulster University winter graduations.

Sarah McGrath (Ulster University Sports Science student) and Sophie Burns meet Olympic gymnast Max Whitlock, as he lends his support to Ulster University’s GymFUN initiative.

Sports Minister, Carál Ní Chuilín, visits Ulster University’s Jordanstown campus and meets participants on the ‘Unblocking Potential’ initiative.

Ulster University Annual Review 2015/16

06/07
Excelling in Education

At Ulster University, we want all our learners to benefit from both our high quality research and our commitment to teaching excellence. Working in partnership with our students is central to our ethos, ensuring that our focus is student-centred and that learners are equipped with the knowledge, skills and confidence to excel in professional life.

We strive to create and encourage conditions in which all Ulster students experience transformative learning through participation and interaction with staff and fellow students, building relationships in which they learn collaboratively and progressively and practice their discipline.

We have opened an exciting variety of new learning spaces across our landscape to support students’ intellectual and personal growth, providing opportunities for non-traditional learners to engage with the University community and harnessing new technologies to enhance the student experience.

Student spaces

Ulster University has continued to enhance our learning and study environments. The new teaching block in Coleraine accommodates ‘The Writing Pad’, a space where students from any discipline can go for help with any aspect of their writing – from brainstorming ideas to polishing a final draft of an essay. Modelled on writing centres found on American college campuses, The Writing Pad will create an inviting space where students can meet to discuss and improve their writing and communication skills and simultaneously learn from their peers.

An exciting development was the installation of a new financial innovation laboratory at Jordanstown in August 2015. The laboratory features a state-of-the-art real-time trading room, which allows students to have an insight into the fortunes of stock markets around the world and to prepare them for the unpredictable world of finance. More than £100,000 of funding for the new lab was provided by the charitable arm of The Chicago Mercantile Exchange, a Chicago-based financial services firm which has an office in Belfast and this is the first time its foundation has awarded a grant outside of the US.

High degree of satisfaction

Ulster University continues to enjoy consistently high levels of student satisfaction. The University’s overall satisfaction score is an impressive 88 percent, exceeding the national average of 86 percent.

This result underlines the University’s ongoing commitment to working in partnership with students to provide a high-quality and transformative student experience. More than 70 percent of our subjects achieved satisfaction outcomes of 85 percent or better. For the third consecutive year, Ophthalmics students recorded a 100 percent satisfaction rating. Twenty-nine other subject areas achieved strong results with overall satisfaction above 90 percent, with some areas of research strength, notably law (96 percent) and subjects allied to medicine including biomedical science (93 percent) performing well. The University’s outstanding learning resources were also recognised with a high satisfaction score of 90 percent (4 percent higher than the sector average).

Learning new lessons

On a regular basis, we look at the courses we offer to ensure that they are responding to demand from potential students, and critically, to the needs of employers and industry in Northern Ireland and beyond.

A number of new undergraduate and postgraduate courses were introduced in 2015 including MSci Pharmaceutical Biosciences, BEng/MEng Safety Engineering and Building Management, BEng/MEng Electrical and Electronic Engineering, MSc Pharmaceutical Therapy, MSc/MPhil Chemical Sciences in Biotechnology, BSc Business Technology, BEng/MEng/PG Diploma Applied Health Studies, Integrated Masters in Biomedical, Medical and Health Care Sciences, BSc/Hons Biomedical Sciences, and BSc/Hons Materials and Biomedical Sciences.

In June 2016, Ulster University launched Northern Ireland’s first ever Physician Associate Postgraduate Diploma course. The two-year full time programme will provide intensive evidence-based teaching combined with hands-on workplace training. The new course will fully equip students with the skills and knowledge required to support doctors in clinical diagnosis and management of patients. It will be delivered in partnership with multiple Health and Social Care Trusts in Northern Ireland.
New partnership
In June 2016, Ulster University announced a new partnership with Luton University of Technology Institute of Technology that will enhance the skills base in the wider North West region and beyond.

The partnership will enable Higher Certificate level pharmacy technician students at Luton University to meet the Ulster University entry requirement for pharmacy to automatically progress to Ulster University’s Level 7 Pharmacy course. The partnership will enable even more people to access one of the best university-level pharmacy teaching experiences currently available.

Ranking recognition
During 2015, the University continued to improve its ranking in all three domestic league tables for universities, climbing more than 10 places in The Complete University Guide, The Guardian and the Good University Guide assessments.

At an international level, the University broke new ground by being included, for the first time, in the prestigious THE World University Rankings. University’s School of Nursing was recognised as 6th best in the world, in the prestigious QS World University rankings.

During 2015, Ulster University announced it was named in the top 100 under 50. This ranking recognises those dynamic young universities that will improve its ranking in all three domestic league tables for universities, climbing more than 10 places in The Complete University Guide for the second year in a row. Ulster University also featured as one of the top ten universities in the UK to study courses in civil engineering, business and finance production and photography.

In March 2016, Ulster University’s School of Nursing was nominated as 6th best in the world, in the prestigious QS World University rankings.

Along with the financial assistance, students will be given access to an individually tailored programme of support services from University experts including performance planning, screening, physiotherapy, strength and conditioning, sports nutrition and sports psychology. The athletes will also benefit from flexible learning opportunities to enable them to pursue their sporting careers at the highest level while successfully completing their university degree.

Placement partnerships
The University collaborates with businesses across all sectors to provide work-based learning for its students. Through work experience placements, the University is helping to bridge the gap between the classroom and workplace for our talented learners and simultaneously, the companies we partner with also benefit, by getting the opportunity to actively shape the next generation of business leaders. Our placement partnerships are celebrated annually at the Placement Employer of the Year Award, which is the largest of its kind in the UK, and 41st best in the world, in the prestigious QS World University rankings.

It was rewarding to note that Ulster University was named in The Guardian league table as the top university in the UK for studying pharmacy and pharma macy. Ulster University was named in The Guardian league table as the top university in the UK for studying pharmacy and pharma macy. Ulster University was named in The Guardian league table as the top university in the UK for studying pharmacy and pharma macy. Ulster University was named in The Guardian league table as the top university in the UK for studying pharmacy and pharma macy.

The University’s Law Clinic, the only public law clinic in Northern Ireland, was named for the Law Society’s Attorney General Student Awards. Ulster University’s Law Clinic was one of just five public law schools for Northern Ireland to receive its award for outstanding contribution to access to justice and the provision of free legal advice, and ranked among the top 10 universities in the UK for pharmacy and pharmacology.

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Learning for life

In 2015, over 1,000 part-time adult learners accessed learning through flexible and continuing education modes. Adult learners engaged with the University across a range of collaborative partnerships, including 54 Polish students within the wider Ballymena and Derry-Londonderry areas, who achieved accreditation in English language. Learning partnerships with the PSNI, further education sector, schools and community groups have enabled our Continuing Education team to engage with a diverse range of adult learners and groups across sector, to improve older salary, innovative practice in curriculum design and knowledge transfer in rural world engagement.

HEAR, HEAR

The University led the way in Northern Ireland last year, making it possible for Ulster University undergraduates to access a Higher Education Achievement Record (HEAR) – a record of academic achievements and extra-curricular achievements which are recognised by the University outside of their degree programme, as representing real achievement.

The HEAR document is designed to showcase student skills and achievements by capturing not only their academic performance but also other accomplishments and contributions, outside of their degree programme, that are recognised by the University as representing real achievement.

The University successfully installed the Gradintel software solution for the production, storage and third party access of HEARs, and has released over 15,000 HEARs so far, with provision to accommodate reports for future eligible full-time undergraduate students and graduates.

Digital futures

The Executive Summary of Ulster University’s emerging Digital Learning Strategy was launched in 2015.

Entitled Digital Futures – a strategy to shape the future of Blended, Open and Distance Learning at Ulster University, it is a key component of the University’s Learning and Teaching Strategy and embraces the emerging principles of the student experience.

The strategy reflects the ever-changing higher education landscape. It provides an overview of the dynamic process of digital learning and the broad range of tools, resources and approaches that will play an increasingly central role in our classrooms to enrich teaching and learning and research led dissemination.

Science Shop

Ulster University’s Science Shop is a community-engaged research and learning initiative which pairs skilled students with community groups in need of specific knowledge and expertise.

These real-world projects not only increased student employability, but also enhanced the confidence of more than 20,000 school pupils.

Science Shop community partners

In 2015, 812 undergraduate and postgraduate students across campuses and faculties completed 265 projects for 145 Science Shop community partners.

Schools engagement

Ulster University continued to celebrate success through active partnerships and projects involving schools, industry, staff and the University student community across the STEM areas.

During 2015, learning partnerships in science and engineering initiatives supported the achievements of 116 school pupils from inner city schools in Belfast and Derry-Londonderry, while 425 University students richly enhanced the experience of 20,000 school pupils through ‘Tutoring in Schools’ projects.

265 projects completed for 145 Science Shop community partners

Excelling in Education

Ulster University Annual Review 2015/16

12/13
With over £30m invested in research during the academic year 2015/16, Ulster University has been leading the way with global breakthroughs and local discoveries that will shape society and the world around us.

Our dedication to innovation and providing access to knowledge, supported by a £2.9m investment in these areas, allows us to both inspire fresh-thinking and develop pioneering solutions that make a meaningful contribution to the economy and society.

Research in action

In 2015/16, Ulster University researchers secured grants equating to over £14m and recurrent research income of over £16m. The combined total of over £30m in research income supported teams across the University to conduct research that is making significant impacts across all sectors right around the world.

Health and wellbeing

Ulster University made a number of significant breakthroughs in the health and wellbeing sector, across a range of conditions from hereditary blindness and cancer to stroke and cardiovascular disease.

Ulster University secured in July 2015 almost half a million pounds of research funding to explore the benefits of taking folic acid in later pregnancy. With the benefits of taking folic acid supplements prior to and in early pregnancy already well documented, Ulster University researchers are now examining the potential long-term effects on brain function and psychological development among children whose mothers continued to take the supplement during their second and third trimester.

The new project is also looking at how these effects may be passed on, in addition to the information contained in the genes, and is incorporating research from the fields of psychology and computing as well as nutrition and genetics. Human trials will follow and the objective is for an ophthalmologist to be able to treat a patient with a single injection and prevent vision loss. This would be a permanent fix for one type of hereditary sight loss but the discovery also has the potential to be applied to target other eye conditions and other genetic diseases affecting different parts of the body.

In October 2015, the University secured £450,000 for research into cutting-edge wearable technologies that will continuously monitor blood pressure and heart rate, dramatically reducing the risk of cardiovascular disease across the globe.

The project is part of a £2.8m connected health project funded by Horizon 2020 under the Marie Sklodowska-Curie Innovative Training Networks scheme. Connected health experts at Ulster University will develop two non-invasive devices that can be worn by patients over prolonged periods and do not require intervention from a medical professional such as a GP or nurse. The devices will allow patients to take control of their own health, enhance early detection of cardiovascular disease and decrease the risks of delayed treatment.

Researchers at Ulster University made a major breakthrough in November 2015 in the global fight against pancreatic cancer, the fourth most common cause of cancer-related deaths globally.

Pioneering Research and Innovative Impact

Ulster University Annual Review 2015/16
The work revealed the potential of a new, minimally invasive treatment, activated by harmless sound waves, also known as ultrasound.

In developing this technology, Ulster University Professor Matt Callan and Tang McIke teamed up with the University of Oxford's Professor Eleanor Taylor, to produce the minimally invasive treatment that has the potential to significantly improve the outcome for pancreatic cancer patients.

In a world-first in December 2015, researchers at Ulster University, found how to measure the speed and direction of visual signals between parts of the brain, a major discovery that could help medical professionals globally, better understand and treat brain disorders, such as stroke and neurodegenerative diseases.

Computer science experts at Ulster University, in partnership with Trinity College Dublin, used 3D computer modelling of the brain to explore the speed and pathway that visual signals travel from the optic nerve, the part of the brain that interprets what we see, to the frontal, parietal and temporal lobes, which process more complex cognition and treat brain disorders, such as stroke and neurodegenerative diseases.

The tool will extract important features from clinical images, such as mammograms, to assist breast tissue and tumour characterisation, providing vital information for breast cancer diagnosis and treatment.

Ulster University researchers are also contributing to the development of a decision support system that can help doctors to make personalised treatment recommendations based on previous, comparable cases and the patient's genetic information.

In March 2016, researchers from Ulster University secured over €550,000 as part of a €3.3m European-wide project aiming to transform the decision making process for doctors in diagnosing and treating breast cancer.

In addition, Ulster University is currently studying the benefits combined drug therapy can bring in targeting the low oxygen levels in the tumour, not because the treatment is ineffective, but because a lack of oxygen in the tumour can trigger genetic changes that accelerate the growth of new cancer cells.

A two-year research collaboration between Ulster University, Almac Discovery and the McClay Foundation was announced in May 2016. The research will investigate if a specific type of protein could help to treat breast cancer of the eye.

Using state of the art-technologies, including gene editing, Ulster University will closely examine the effects of the protein, known as FKBPL, after it is administered to the eye. The objective will be to observe the protein and develop an understanding of precisely how and why it works such that methods of treatment delivery can be created or refined.

Funding and Innovative Impact

Pioneering Research

Ulster University Annual Review 2015/16

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Mental health

New research from Ulster University in December 2015 uncovered a pressing need for suicide prevention work to be specifically targeted at people from black and minority ethnic backgrounds who have difficult life experiences.

In the first study of its kind in the UK looking at all events prior to death, the institutional period, Ulster University researchers studied over 2000 people in a study that explored suicides and undetermined deaths in Northern Ireland.

The study provided an analysis of gender differences across a number of risk factors including prior suicidal behaviour, communications, substance abuse, employment status and life events prior to death.

The findings of this research will help policy makers and service providers understand what could be taken to prevent such deaths.

In 2015 Ulster University secured two rounds of funding from the Forces in Mind Trust (FiMT). The first phase of the funding, worth £355,000, is for research into the mental health needs of ex-service forces veterans and their families living in Northern Ireland. The second award of £397,000 is for a three year study into the mental health needs of ex-service personnel living in Northern Ireland.

In May 2016, Ulster University psychologists secured €1m to train a new generation of researchers to work with multiple trauma exposed populations in Europe.

The four-year CONTEXT (Collaborative Network for Training and Excellence in Psychotraumatology) project will be led by Trinity College Dublin in collaboration with Ulster University, the Helmut-Schmidt University in Southern Germany, the Dublin Rape Crisis Centre, SPIRASI, the Probation Board of Northern Ireland (PBNI), the Danish Red Cross Psychotrauma Support Centre, and the Bonn University South Childen’s Centre.

Researchers will study the psychological effects of exposure to traumatic life events amongst groups including refugees, asylum seekers and migrants who have-emigrated from Europe—conflict zones. Also included will be humanitarian workers tasked with providing aid to traumatised individuals, and victims of gender based and childhood sexual violence.

Social policy

In December 2015, Ulster University launched the first ever study into social exclusion and sport in Northern Ireland. Almost 60 per cent of people in Northern Ireland believe that sport is a way to break down barriers between Protestants and Catholics, according to the report on public perceptions on the key issues relating to sport and social exclusion here.

In March 2015, Ulster University secured a share of a £4m research grant that will see two institution collaborate on a major global project aimed at helping countries affected by conflict to successfully and peacefully transform into peace.

Politics

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Innovative impact
Ulster University is dedicated to driving innovation and entrepreneurship across industry, supporting businesses to access the knowledge and expertise that will help them develop their economic potential. The University secured almost £3 m in income from innovation during 2015/16, delivering a range of services including more than 100,000 days of management training and providing over 1,000 innovative solutions to companies.

Knowledge Transfer celebrations
In 2015, Ulster University marked 40 years of Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTP) and 20 years of its operation at this institution. KTPs help businesses access knowledge and expertise from within academic, promoting collaborations to drive innovation and development. The University is ranked in the top 10 KTP providers out of 108 Knowledge Bases across the UK, having managed around 230 successful KTPs since 1995. These KTPs have generated more than £22 m in funding for businesses, developing £21 m in government funding and £7 m committed by local companies.

Partnerships in action
Special KTPs Pioneered during the 2015 anniversary year. A partnership between the University and Mito Group saw the leading global specialist in refillable and fill-out services to the marine, commercial and private sectors announce an estimated turnover of £13 m at the end of the year. The University placed a KTP Associate into the business, working to develop advanced, lighter materials that can withstand extreme environmental conditions and reduce the weight of a ship’s interior fit-out by around 50 percent. This provided considerable fuel savings and reduced the carbon footprint of cruise ships.

The University also supported Arisk Electronics, a luminously based company specialising in the design and manufacture of innovative energy storage solutions, to enhance business opportunities in both domestic and export markets by developing a customer focused business research and development model. The partnership has helped the company prepare to launch its pioneering product range into key global markets including Europe, North America and the Middle East.

Access to innovation
The support Ulster University provides to business and industry has been further strengthened with the launch of two innovative products.

In June 2015, Employment and Learning Minister, Stephen Farry MLA, launched Access Ulster, the University’s unique online portal that provides access to our worldwide research and expertise.

The portal brings together Ulster University’s research, learning technologies, state of the art facilities and internationally recognised experts in an easily accessible platform. The platform aims to increase the levels of research and development, and improve creativity within business and the wider community and is available at accessulster.com.

In July 2015, the University launched a state of the art user experience lab to help businesses explore how new consumers can better interact with technology to increase the success of their products and services. Ulster University’s Lab uses cutting-edge technology to back users’ biometrics, including eye movement, brain signals, heart rate and facial expression to better understand user behaviour. It is giving companies of all sizes and from across all sectors direct access to world leading expertise and advanced sensor technology that will ultimately enhance competitiveness in global markets.

Spin out success
By the end of 2015, there were 20 Ulster University spin out companies operating with an estimated turnover of almost £28 m and employing 296 staff.

2015 was a landmark year for one of Ulster University’s leading spin out companies, Get Invited. The company, which provides online event registration and ticketing, reached 8.5 m sales, online two years into trading.

The company also secured a deal with an international publishing group, Future Publishing, to support their CENETE confereences in New York, San Francisco and London during 2016.

In December 2015, Ulster University graduate, Daniel Crawford, secured a £300,000 investment into his 3D medical printing company, Axial 3D which manufactures orthopaedic models for the medical industry and has made a significant impact on the UK market. The funding, secured from Ulster University’s Technology and Knowledge transfer company, Innovation Ulster, in association with TechInvest NI and a number of private ‘angel’ investors from the Halo network with TechStart NI and a number of private ‘angel’ investors from the Halo network (the Northern Ireland Science Park, will be used to expand Axial 3D’s customer base in the private and public healthcare sectors outside UK and Ireland, initially focusing on Scandinavia and Germany followed by the United States.

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Ulster University is committed to providing innovative spaces for our students and staff, supporting their learning and research activities. We have reached a number of key milestones in our exciting campus development programmes, shaping both our teaching and learning environments and our local communities.

Greater Belfast

The significant enhancement of our Belfast campus remains one of the largest construction projects in Northern Ireland, with 15,000 staff and students due to be located at the completed campus in 2019. In April 2015, Ulster University awarded the £150m contract for phase two of the work to a joint venture between local company, Lagan Construction Group and Portuguese firm, Somague Group.

Work on the heart of the campus redevelopment, which will see two new blocks developed on York Street, directly opposite the existing campus building, got underway in the spring of 2015. In September 2015, the first phase of the campus renewal was completed and the first new campus building was handed over to the University. This phase has created new teaching and learning accommodation for the Faculty of Arts, Design and the Built Environment, Ulster University Business School and the Faculty of Arts, as well as providing temporary accommodation for the Library and operational and administrative support accommodation.

Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal officially opened phase one of Ulster University’s Belfast campus development in April 2016. Princess Anne toured the modern building and met with students from Ulster University’s Belfast School of Art, who showcased their creative skills in silversmithing, fine art, and ceramics.

At Jordanstown, work has continued to promote the University’s vision for the campus when the relocation to Belfast is completed. We are committed to working with partners and stakeholders to ensure the University leaves a meaningful and beneficial legacy to the local area.

15,000 staff and students are due to be located at the completed Belfast campus in 2019.
the health and social care workforce in Northern Ireland, and develop highly skilled graduates who can deliver high quality care to patients.

Plans are at an early stage and a business case is currently being developed to move this proposal to the next phase.

Coleraine

The new, £5.1m teaching block at the Coleraine campus was completed in spring 2015, welcoming staff and students in time for the 2015-16 academic year. The three-storey block is connected to the central campus buildings by a glazed walkway on the first level. It includes a 250-seat raked lecture theatre and 11 teaching rooms that can accommodate 20, 40 and 60 people.

The new facility provides an active learning environment that facilitates active and participative learning amongst and between students, allowing for more flexible and technology-led learning styles. It has three open access student hubs, used for informal learning, study and group work and social space.

The new Faculty of Arts building at the Coleraine campus also opened in the summer of 2015 following a £6.75m investment. The block is home to a vast digital media archive, state-of-the-art media facilities including radio and television studios and a postgraduate research centre as well as office and administration accommodation.

In December 2015, the campus development plans took another significant step forward with the commencement of a new £5.1m sports centre at the campus. Due to open in early 2017, the centre will include an eight-court sports hall, a fitness studio and upgraded changing facilities. It will help to accommodate the high demand for student sport and create a fitness and wellbeing hub that can be accessed by the local community.

Magee

In April 2015, Employment and Learning Minister, Dr Stephen Farry MLA, approved the development of a new teaching and learning block at the Magee campus.

The £11m investment will see the construction of a new facility close to the existing campus library that will include a 340-seat lecture theatre, two smaller lecture theatres, a number of classrooms, three student hubs for informal learning, study and group work and a café.

The construction works started on site in September 2015 and the buildings will take two years to complete.

In January, 2016, Ulster University, in partnership with Derry City and Strabane District Council, submitted its revised outline business plan for the expansion of Ulster University’s Magee campus in Derry-Londonderry.

The plan outlines the preferred option for expansion of student numbers and other wider considerations, with the intention that by 2025, the overall provision at the Magee campus will rise to 9,600 full-time equivalent students.

In March 2016, University representatives met with Health Minister Simon Hamilton MLA to explore the potential of a medical school in North West. Ulster University believes this will help to strengthen the health and social care workforce in Northern Ireland, and develop highly skilled graduates who can deliver high quality care to patients.

Plans are at an early stage and a business case is currently being developed to move this proposal to the next phase.

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£5.1m teaching block at the Coleraine campus was completed in spring 2015
With a progressive approach to teaching, a dedication to pushing research boundaries and a strong commitment to economic development, Ulster University has a uniquely important role to play in building a prosperous, inclusive, self-reliant and confident Northern Ireland with much to offer the wider world.

Magee at 150

As a regional university, we are uniquely placed to engage with communities, with leaders and with imaginative partners who share our ambitions for Northern Ireland and its young people.

In 2015, Ulster University celebrated 150 years of teaching, learning and research at the Magee campus. Founded with a bequest of £20,000, it is now the home of multi-million pound investments in hi-tech teaching space and research equipment.

To mark this significant milestone, the University hosted a wide range of public events on campus including public readings, live music performances by staff and students, a public lecture, a historical guided tour and a dedicated library exhibition displaying special collections telling the story of the foundation of the college from 1815 to 1865.

While we marked Magee's sesquicentennial, our focus remains firmly on the future. As we prepare graduates to excel in a diverse and interconnected global society, we are committed to developing and sustaining a broad range of high-quality, relevant, career-focused undergraduate and postgraduate courses, across a wide range of disciplines at all our campuses.

Supporting Ulster

Our University has a long and proud history of philanthropy, firmly rooted in its foundations. We work in partnership with a wide range of stakeholders, developing strong partnerships with business and industry in support of our strategic goals.

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maximise their potential. The University will continue to work with local, national and international partners to secure support which provide exceptional opportunities for learning and development. New Northern Ireland supports disadvantaged students and helps meet emerging needs and challenges.

Having secured the £3m required to establish the University’s first-ever endowed Chair, the John M. O’Neill Chair in Peace, the University has launched this position in June 2016, welcoming Dr Arun Gandhi to the Magee campus as part of the proceedings.

Ulster’s American links
As the University continually strives to maximise their potential, Ulster’s links with its US-based supporters to secure new opportunities for our students, enable us to further develop the experience for the coming years, we aim to enhance the links with our US-based supporters to secure new opportunities for our students, as well as to achieve the University’s first-ever endowed Chair, the John M. Hume and Friends Chair in Peace, the University has launched this position in June 2016, welcoming Dr Arun Gandhi to the Magee campus as part of the proceedings.

Alumni engagement
Ulster University, who were deeply moved by the University Choir’s performance. Such experiences can be truly life-changing for our students, can be truly life-changing for our students, can be truly life-changing for our students.

Spectrum Centre with the aim of transforming unused places into social and community spaces for the community.

Driving Development
Ulster University Annual Review 2015/16

With the support of the Development and Alumni Relations Office, the Ulster University Choir performed to an international audience at Carnegie Hall in New York in February 2016. A special evening was also arranged at the American Irish Historical Society for graduates and friends of the University, who were deeply moved by the choir’s performance. Such experiences can be truly life-changing for our students, helping to raise their aspirations and enhancing their academic experience.

These events also enabled the University to showcase its pioneering peace-building and conflict resolution activities, our inspired application of new technologies and our impact on public health and well-being, business, industry and the professions.

Over the coming years we aim to enhance the links with our US-based supporters to secure new opportunities for our students, as well as to achieve the University’s first-ever endowed Chair, the John M. Hume and Friends Chair in Peace, the University has launched this position in June 2016, welcoming Dr Arun Gandhi to the Magee campus as part of the proceedings.

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Ulster University’s graduate community is a diverse, talented and ever-increasing family of 170,000 alumni worldwide. Distinguished in every sector, from business and civil leadership, sport and healthcare to community relations and public service, we are very proud of our alumni - so many of whom continue to contribute to the life of the University.

As part of our commitment to providing excellence, the University constantly explores ways to enhance the experience of our current students, as well as to achieve the University’s first-ever endowed Chair, the John M. Hume and Friends Chair in Peace, the University has launched this position in June 2016, welcoming Dr Arun Gandhi to the Magee campus as part of the proceedings.

Dr David O’Hagan and Dr Sarah Dickson, members of Staff on the Ulster University Strategy Team, outlined the University’s ambitious plans for the coming years, which bring global stories to Northern Ireland and builds local, regional, national and international connections.

In 2015, highlights included a visit by Axel Scheffler, the illustrator of the well-known children’s book The Gruffalo with Aberrant Architecture and The Transmission Ballycastle, nominated documentary filmmaker Sean McMillan, and Transmission Ballycastle, a walking art trail through the town.

Further highlights included one of the world’s largest interactive sound art installations, a fine art exhibition, and the Ulster University Choir performed to an international audience at Carnegie Hall in New York in February 2016.

The University participated in networking events in New York and Washington, which provided great opportunities for staff and graduates to rub shoulders with other individuals, companies and academics.

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In 2016, students from the University designed, built and installed a pop-up music booth on the Shankill Road to give local residents, and people interested in music for much further afield, the chance to get creative and record music. The installation was developed in conjunction with Aberrant Architecture and The Spectrum Centre with the aim of transforming unused places into social spaces for the community.

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Student showcases

The annual student music, design and drama showcases form part of the successful Creative Platforms programme developed by the University and supported by Diamond Corrugated Ltd.

In May 2015 and May 2016, our next generation of artists, musicians and designers showcased the importance and relevance of the creative arts to the economy and society at the University’s annual student exhibitions. Providing a platform for emerging talent, the shows gave final year students the chance to share their creative skills with industry leaders and the wider public as well as demonstrate the impact and value of the creative arts sector.

In 2015, St Anne’s Cathedral was the venue for the Ulster University Graduate Fashion Show, with the Show returning to the Europa Hotel in 2016. These extremely well attended events provided wonderful opportunities for the emerging fashion designers to show off their final year works.

Ulster University is world renowned for its artistic talent, both from a research perspective and from notable graduates including Turner Prize winning artists Duncan Campbell and Susan Philipsz OBE. The annual End of Year Shows for Architecture and the Belfast School of Art have become an important date in collectors’ diaries due to the consistently high standard of work produced by the graduating students, ranging from fine and applied arts, textiles and fashion design to visual communication. In addition, the shows in both years highlighted the excellence of work in architecture, as well as furniture, product and interior design.

At the Magee campus, the 2015 inaugural Drama End of Year Showcase demonstrated both the high level of achievement of students in drama and the ways in which their degrees prepare students for future careers. As well as student research seminars on topics as diverse as contemporary Irish theatre and performance and health, there was an exhibition of theatre designs for a production of La Tempête, together with an interactive exhibition and installation on performing working class identity.

The 2016 programme included an exhibition entitled ‘Costuming the Mechanized Body’, and three performance pieces, co-working with young audiences, a directing showcase, as well as an independent project piece. The Maple Showcase, also at the Magee campus, provided not only a sample of the work from the past year but a unique sneak preview of potential stars as they prepare to embark on their musical careers.

In 2015, performances spanned classical, musical theatre, Irish traditional, jazz, rock and singer-songwriter with student musicians joined by songwriter and performer, Duke Special.

In 2016, the showcase was held in conjunction with the Walled City Music Festival, across two separate events. There was an ‘art music’ event comprising short performances by the five musicians and vocalists from the classical and traditional music genres, before performances by five ensembles led by our students, which embraced the rock, pop and jazz musical traditions. Special guests included Moya Brennan (‘The Voice of Clannad’) and Mikey Bradley, senior producer at BBC Radio Foyle and bass player for The Undertones.

Driving Development
Ulster University Annual Review 2015/16
Ulster University is educating, supporting and inspiring the future leaders of the sport and exercise industry. Alongside this, we work to support the development of sport in the local community, and those who are vital to it, through innovative courses, world-leading research, consultancy expertise and impactful community outreach.

Sporting success

Sport plays a significant role in university life and athletes across the 70 sports available to our students enjoyed team and individual success in 2015 and 2016. Our teams achieved eight British and Irish varsity titles, with Ulster University home to champions in hockey, cricket, golf, athletics, swimming, cue sports and karate.

The University also celebrated the success of three athletes who qualified for and competed in the 2015 Summer Universiade. Adam McMullen (long jump), Jordan Sloan (swimming) and Jordan Mitchell (archery) travelled to Gwangu, South Korea for the bi-annual global event, also known as the World University Games.

In May 2016, Ulster University Elks travelled to Prague to take part in the EuroHockey Club Champions Challenge, the leading woman’s field hockey competition in Europe. Competing for the first time in Europe, the Elks not only took gold but secured promotion to the second tier in Europe for Ireland’s qualifier next season.

Sport & the community

Ulster University has a strong track record of supporting sport in local communities, both through widening access to sport and using sport to drive social change. The crucial role of sport in addressing division and promoting diversity in communities both in Northern Ireland and across the world was recognised at a conference organised by the University in March 2015.

The conference, convened by the Sport Changes Life Foundation, of which Ulster University is a founding partner, explored the power of sport to enhance the ambitions of children from socially and economically deprived areas.
Delegates heard from World Super Bantamweight champion and Sport For Life Foundation Ambassador Carl Frampton about his experience and the capacity of sport to change lives for the better.

As founding partner of Sport Changes Life, Ulster University welcomed support from Rory McIlroy’s charitable organisation, The Rory Foundation.

In February 2016, the Rory Foundation donated £120,000 to support the Victory Scholars programme. This programme provides scholarships to accomplished student athletes who will act as role models to help build self-confidence, improve life skills and empower young people to use sport as the catalyst to drive change in their lives.

Recognition of Sports Outreach excellence

In April of 2015 and 2016, we held our annual Sports Outreach Volunteer Awards, recognising the contribution of over 200 Ulster University students who gave of their time to enhance the physical activity and wellbeing among some of the most disadvantaged young people in Northern Ireland.

2015 ended on a high when, in December, Ulster University fought off stiff competition – including from the Rugby Football Union (RFU) – at the prestigious UK Coaching Awards, hosted by sports coach UK in Manchester.

Awarded the prize for ‘Coaching Intervention of the Year’, Ulster University’s sports outreach programme was recognised for its outstanding work to widen access to sport and physical activity to disadvantaged young people across Northern Ireland.

This success was followed in June 2016 when the University’s sports outreach programme received the College and Universities Business Officers Innovation Award for Excellence in Student Experience.

In 2015, student volunteers delivered over 8,000 sport and physical activity sessions, creating almost 270,000 opportunities for children and young people to take part, working in partnership with 75 schools in Northern Ireland and 58 schools in the Republic of Ireland.

Facilities in demand

Ulster University hosted the finals of the independent.ie Sigerson Cup 2016 in February. Over the course of the tournament, the University welcomed 14 teams, over 500 players and coaches, and thousands of spectators for the pinnacle of university Gaelic football.

In advance of the Olympics in Rio, Ulster University became a pre-Games training base in June 2016 for the Irish, Spanish and Canadian hockey teams who took advantage of the world-class sporting facilities at our Jordanstown campus.

Supporting health & wellbeing

Ulster University is committed to supporting the health and wellbeing of its staff and students, providing on-campus gyms and a wide variety of fitness classes that are easily accessible and available in the morning, evening and during lunch hours.

During Freshers’ week in September, students were offered a trial period to experience the sports clubs that were being promoted at the Freshers’ Fayre. The allowed students to try out the sports they were interested in before paying membership fees, leading to an increase in the number of students engaged with our clubs.

In November 2015, we launched a Sport and Recreation Referral Scheme. Open to all students who are experiencing difficulties, the scheme provides support such as free access to the gym and fitness classes, and an introduction to the various clubs and societies in operation here.

The scheme is designed to support students through sport and exercise, to proactively manage stress and enhance their overall university experience.

World Super Bantamweight champion Carl Frampton with Professor Deirdre Brennan

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World Super Bantamweight champion Carl Frampton with Professor Deirdre Brennan
Partnership working and international development are integral to Ulster University’s aim of providing excellence in higher education. Collaborations also help us promote the economic, social and cultural development of Northern Ireland, promote the region internationally and welcome overseas students.

Student experience

Ulster University is committed to providing students with the necessary experience, knowledge and skills that will shape both their own future careers and support the local economy, to which skilled graduates are integral.

We believe that the best way to achieve this is to work with employers to understand the skills and attributes they require in graduates.

In March 2015, the Employment and Learning Minister Dr Stephen Farry MLA congratulated Ulster University graduate interns on their achievements as part of one such programme designed to do this – the Professional Experience Programme.

The programme offers students a six-month internship with employers across a range of key industry sectors. This enables the graduates to enhance key skills and apply their knowledge in the workplace, while employing organisations have an opportunity to access new Talent and shape their future workforce, benefiting immediately from the new ideas that graduates bring.

In November 2015, Ulster University hosted a first day graduate Recruitment Fair with 2,500 graduate job and work placement opportunities on offer, from leading global and local employers.

With jobs across the IT, finance, legal, environment and engineering sectors, the highly skilled Ulster University students and graduates were able to explore the varied careers available from companies including 3M, Westway, Reed, KPMG, UCAS, EY, Google, NEST,华为 and HarperCollins.

Engaging directly with employers, students were able to develop a clear idea of the skills and attributes they require and have an early opportunity to demonstrate their ideas and vision for their sector.

In April 2016, local businesses showed their support for developing the next generation of engineers by funding an Ulster University project designed to give first-year students an insight into the world of engineering.

Ulster University engineering students used their mechanical, electronic, design and biomedical skills to develop components of a racing car as part of the Formula Student initiative, Europe’s most established educational motorsport competition.

In addition to applying design and engineering principles, participating students also gained experience of project management and team working.

Honeypot – Creative Works!

2015 saw the conclusion of the pioneering Honeypot – Creative Works programme. Part-financed by the European Union’s European Regional Development Fund and managed by the Special EU Programmes Body, the programme was led by Ulster University with partners including Dundalk Institute of Technology and Creative Skillset.

This was a £3.58m project providing support for the economic, educational, social and cultural needs of the digital content sector across areas including animation, film & TV, games development, interactive media and music technology.

Across its core areas of research, networking, skills training and the provision of seed funding, the programme has made considerable success in its three years of activity.

The programme produced 19 reports, covering issues including the skills gaps within the sector, the sector’s role in the wider economy, the role of teaching and training, the economic impact of the sector and the future of the industry. The dedicated website for the project has over 2,500 regular users and has produced an innovative online skills database.

Almost 140,000 in contact work was secured across the lifetime of the project, with sales opportunities created both locally and globally through the hosting of more than 120 support events, including eight international events.

The programme led to the participation of more than 300 companies in small development courses, including 82 in a Winter course, and 44 attending professional development courses.

37 projects secured a total of £235,000 in seed funding through the programme, through three core funds: Cog Fund, the Create Fund and the C Çalış Fund.

The Honeypot – Creative Works programme has seen the University connect with small businesses and digital content practitioners, developing their skills, connections and aspirations in a rapidly growing and economically important sector.
New partners, new ideas

In February 2015, Ulster University was proud to be a core partner in the inaugural NI Science Festival, inspiring thousands of local people to take a fresh look at the major impact of science and technology. Over 1,000 people attended Ulster University events in Derry~Londonderry and Belfast to learn more about how the University is pioneering advances in a diverse range of areas; from robotics in healthcare and the latest virtual gaming and animation technology to the tailored diagnosis and treatment of serious illnesses, including heart disease and diabetes.

A further 1,000 attended events at our Jordanstown campus showcasing the very latest aerospace drone and electric car technology, 3D printing that is revolutionising the manufacturing industry, and the very latest health monitoring technology – including smart technology that can analyse your every move or support the elderly in an assisted living environment.

The festival provided a major opportunity to celebrate the positive impact that the University, and Northern Ireland as a whole, has on global research, the economy and the lives of people around the world.

Later in February, the University formed a new partnership with the inaugural Imagine! Belfast Festival of Ideas and Politics. The festival aimed to encourage participation of ordinary citizens in political debate and policy-making through a range of events including talks, theatre, workshops and debates.

The University’s Institute for Research in Social Sciences hosted a series of lunchtime events on contemporary political issues including elections and voting; gender and dealing with the past; the role of history and historians in dealing with the past; the future of the UK; and commemoration.

The events stimulated political debate and discussion, creating the opportunities to challenge political thought and for new ideas to come forward.

We were delighted to continue our partnerships with these festivals in 2016, providing interesting, exciting, thought-provoking events that educate, engage, inspire and impact audiences.

International affairs

Ulster University’s global educational partnerships continued to flourish and develop this year, providing more students than ever with the opportunity to study abroad as part of their time with us. Over 2,600 students are undertaking full-time and part-time undergraduate courses and postgraduate courses, including students from countries across the EU, North America, Africa, the Middle East and Asia Pacific.

The University now has 64 international partnerships with institutions in countries ranging from Portugal and Italy to the United States of America and Argentina.

China

During 2015, Ulster University established its new non-research partnerships with China, creating either articulation arrangements, where students from the partner institution complete their studies at Ulster, or Memoranda of Understanding, establishing relationships between the parties to explore potential areas of collaboration.

This brings to 29 the total number of partnerships in place with China.

In June 2015, the University met with Minister Counsellor Jin Xu from the Chinese Embassy in London as part of a delegation to promote the opportunities co-operation with the University can provide both for students and for research development.

Academic collaboration was strengthened by the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with Xiangyang Normal University to explore links with Ulster University Business School in September 2015.

Representatives from Ulster University Business School took part in the Invest NI trade mission to China in November 2015, highlighting the opportunities for business, research and academic collaboration to leading industry representatives there.
Internationalisation
Ulster University now has 37 study abroad or student exchange partnerships in place to provide students with the opportunity to spend time abroad as part of their university education.
For the academic year 2015/16, 224 were registered to participate in projects in countries including China, India and the USA, as well as across mainland Europe.
Erasmus
Ulster University students continued to benefit from the opportunity to study in Europe as part of the ERASMUS+ programme in academic year 2015/16. 183 students took part in the programme. 103 undertook ERASMUS+ traineeships where they take up work placement opportunities. Students on traineeships this year have taken placements with organisations as diverse as the International Agency for Research on Cancer in France to Adidas in Germany. 80 students undertook study placements at partner universities, including for the first time at Dalarna University in Sweden where a number of our Hospitality and Tourism students have been placed.
The continuing popularity of this programme reflects the significant potential for students to enhance their education, employability and skills through participation. Before returning to Ulster University to complete their chosen degrees, the students will share their experiences with other students on campus and, in some cases, may even remain in the host country to take up work placements.

Confucius Institute
Ulster University's Confucius Institute signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Hubei Normal University in Hubei Province, China. The agreement aims to foster greater links between the two organisations and build on the work of the Confucius Institute and Confucius Classroom Hubs at Ulster University that are going from strength to strength.
In 2015/16, the Confucius Classroom project, which delivers lessons in Mandarin Chinese and cultural awareness, operated across 123 primary and secondary schools in Northern Ireland, supported by 39 Chinese teachers. The number of students registered with the Confucius Institute at Ulster University across all programmes on offer saw a rise of more than 150 per cent during 2015. By October 2015 more than 15,000 were registered with the Institute, up from just over 6,000 in 2014. More than 2,000 students working with the Institute successfully passed the Chinese Proficiency Test or the Youth Chinese Test during 2015.
In February 2016, we hosted the Sichuan Opera during our Chinese New Year celebrations marking the Year of the Monkey, with Madam Wang from the Chinese Consulate as our guest.

India
Ulster University currently has partnerships in place with four institutions in India partnerships that were reflected on during the University’s meeting with the Indian High Commissioner in Belfast in February 2015.
Our aim to further strengthen our links with India was enhanced greatly in September 2015 with a successful bid for funding for GREAT UK.
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The GREAT campaign, established by the UK government, aims to promote the UK internationally as a good place to visit, study and do business. Ulster University and Ulster University, Belfast submitted a joint bid for funding to foster a familiarisation visit for Indian recruitment agencies to the universities in March 2016. The visit significantly strengthened our links with India and positioned Northern Ireland, and Ulster University, as an attractive place to study.

In April 2015, Ulster University’s Director of Research and Innovation, Tim Brundle, was the only Northern Ireland representative invited to present at the prestigious conference of the Brazilian Association for International Education in Goiaba, Brazil.

The aim of the conference was to create sustainable partnerships between universities around the world. Ulster University’s presentation considered the challenges presented in the global economy for the development of higher education, the importance of higher education in addressing these challenges and the need for global partnerships to ensure impact from research and the advancement of technology.
Presenting at the conference also provided an opportunity to establish relationships with Brazilian universities with a view to furthering our research and collaborative links as well as showcasing the experiences and successes of Ulster University in the local community and on a global stage.

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One of the great strengths of Ulster University is its great diversity. Our most important resource is people – each with different functions and responsibilities – but all vital to the achievement of the University’s vision. These staff, students and partners bring a range of talent, professionalism and energy to Ulster and their wider influence underpins the positive impact that the University has on the region and beyond.

The accomplishments of the Ulster University community during 2015 and 2016 are too numerous for this short section, but some of the most notable are highlighted.

Honoured
In recognition of their significant achievements, a number of individuals associated with the University were recognised in the Queen’s Birthday Honours list and the New Year Honours list.

Dorothy Black, lecturer, School of Education, was awarded an MBE for services to cross-community relations and education in Northern Ireland and Emeritus Professor Roy McConkey was awarded the OBE for services to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Ulster University Chancellor, Dr James Nesbitt, received an OBE for services to drama and the community in Northern Ireland. A fitting recognition of his contribution to drama on stage and screen, and of an acting career that began at Ulster University’s Riverside Theatre. 

Valerie Barr, personal assistant to the Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences, was awarded the British Empire Medal for Services to Higher Education and to the Community in Northern Ireland.

Ulster University graduate, Terry Cross, Chairman of the Board of Delta Packaging and winner of the Ulster University/First Trust Bank Distinguished Graduate of the year accolade in 2007, was awarded an OBE for services to the economy and voluntary service to the community in Northern Ireland.

Honorary graduate, Dr AP McCoy, who retired in 2015 after a career that saw him become the most successful jump jockey of all time, received a knighthood for services to horse racing. Rounding off an exceptional year, he also received a lifetime achievement award at the BBC’s Sports Personality of the Year show.

Inspiring appointment
The University community was delighted to welcome Professor Paddy Nixon as Vice-Chancellor and President in July 2015.

Professor Nixon joined Ulster University from the University of Tasmania where he was Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research). He is responsible for driving the research agenda to build an innovative and commercial experience, particularly in collaborations with global high tech firms. 

Inspiring People

Maurice Smyth, senior lecturer in the Department of Accounting, Economics and Finance was awarded an honorary professorship from Fudan University, University of Economics (C-9), China for his involvement in the development and establishment of the collaborative PhD Honours degree programme in finance and investment management between Ulster University Business School and SDE. Nick Reay, Business Development Manager, was elected Chair of the CBI Ireland board, which represents hundreds of research, marketing professionals.

Professor Mark Dorkin was made a Fellow of the Institute of Banking (FIOB) in Ireland, having been a member of the Institute for almost 30 years. The Institute of Directors’ Overall Director of the Year Award was won by Simon Hunter, Ulster University alumnus and chief executive of Hunter Apparel Solutions, a family-run business based in Derry-Londonderry.

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Inspiring People
Professor Tara Moore, Ulster University’s Biomedical Research Institute, was selected as one of the 50 most influential higher education HE professionals in the UK, using social media.

Dr Stephen McClean was announced as one of the 50 most influential higher education HE professionals in the UK, using social media.

Dr Philip McDermott was one of the scholars awarded at the inaugural Irish Academy of HealthCare, Champions Awards in 2015 for his project entitled Linguistic Tradition, Ability and Mobility in Scotland/ the Republic of Ireland.

Gary Anderson, inspires the next generation of engineers

Third-year mental health nursing student Mark Collins, won the 2015 Andrew Parker Student Nurse Award for developing an art therapy project during a six-week placement in the Western Health and Social Care Trust’s acute mental health ward for over-65s at the Watertown Hospital. Part-time masters student, Gerg Lutton, was selected as a mentor for the 1000 University’s Biomedical Research Institute.

The Psychology Research Institute’s Professor Mickey Keenan scooped an award for teaching parents the science of Applied Behaviour Analysis. He was presented with the Andrew Parker Student Nurse Award for developing an art therapy project during a six-week placement in the Western Health and Social Care Trust’s acute mental health ward for over-65s at the Watertown Hospital. Part-time masters student, Gerg Lutton, was selected as a mentor for the 1000 University’s Biomedical Research Institute.

Ulster’s people power

Professor Sara Moore, Director of Ulster University’s Biomedical Research Institute, was selected as a member for the 1000 Cells, ‘Help in your programme run by the New York Academy for Science’s Global STEM Alliance’. The mentoring programme aims to address the challenges of getting young women involved in science, technology, engineering and maths.

Professor of Sociology and member of the Institute for Research in Social Sciences, Professor Patricia Lundy, was awarded a Leverhulme Trust Major Research Fellowship to investigate and redress historical institutional abuse.

The British Psychological Society awarded Dr Philip McDermott the prestigious Neil O’Connor Award for excellence in the field of understanding the nature and causes of developmental disabilities.

Our students made an impact too and their significant personal successes reflect well on the University. Michaela Hollywood, student on the MSc Communications and PR programme was included in the BBC listing of the 100 most inspirational women in the world in 2015. Michaela, who has the rare genetic condition muscular atrophy, was recognised by prime minister David Cameron for her services to young disabled people.

The Psychology Research Institute’s Professor Mickey Keenan scooped an award for teaching parents the science of Applied Behaviour Analysis. He was presented with an award for International Dissemination of Behaviour Analysis at the annual Association for Behaviour Analysis Conference in Texas.

Professor Monica McWilliams addressed an organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) event in Vienna ‘In Pursuit of Peace and Security: How Gender makes a Difference’. She was also invited to southern Turkey by Public International Law Group, a global pro bono law firm based in Washington DC, to participate in a workshop on inclusive peacebuilding and reconciliation in Syria.

Ulster offers a global perspective

The International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies awarded the prestigious Neil O’Connor Award for excellence in the field of traumatic stress studies, and her dedication to studying the impact of traumatic exposure on psychological well-being.

Ireesa Al-Aqil, Professor of Law within Ulster University’s Transitional Justice Institute (TJI) and the Danish and Whitney Chair in Law at the University of Minnesota Law School, was appointed to chair – the Richard J. Soli Chair in Law, Public Policy and Society at the University of Minnesota.

Professor Richard Carson was elected Chair of the Council of the British Association and College of Occupational Therapists.

Dr Janice Smyth, lecturer in nursing, won the 2015 Andrew Parker Student Nurse Award for developing an art therapy project during a six-week placement in the Western Health and Social Care Trust’s acute mental health ward for over-65s at the Watertown Hospital. Part-time masters student, Gerg Lutton, was selected as a mentor for the 1000 University’s Biomedical Research Institute.

Ulster’s global impact

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Ulster alumnus Colin Davidson was commissioned by ‘TIME’ Magazine to paint the German Chancellor, Angela Merkel, for the cover of the ‘Person of the Year’ issue in December 2015.
Ulster University Chancellor Dr James Nesbitt received the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws (LLD) for distinguished services to peace and reconciliation in NI from Ivan Cooper. The local economy.

Bank, the award recognised Alyson’s contributions to film making, contemporary art and cinematography.

Local businesswoman Alyson Hogg received the University’s Distinguished Graduate Award at the 2015 winter ceremonies. Sponsored by First Trust, she graduated with a Graduate Award at the 2015 winter ceremonies.

In February 2016, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, The Rt Hon Theresa Villiers MP, visited our Belfast campus in June 2016, to meet with students and take part in the Life Stories series.

As part of the University’s prestigious Parliamentary Studies module, which is approved and co-taught by senior House of Commons and Ulster University staff, Speaker of the House of Commons, The Rt Hon John Bercow MP, gave a public lecture and a guest lecture to Politics students at Ulster University in April 2016.

On a visit to Ulster University’s Belfast campus in June 2016, Twinnie Enda Kenny TD delivered a keynote speech entitled ‘Working Together for Stability and Prosperity’ and engaged in a panel discussion in advance of the EU referendum.

Inspiring excellence

Our honorary degree recipients embody the qualities that inspire our students to succeed. At all our summer graduation ceremonies, we recognised the impressive achievements of individuals who have displayed leadership, progressive thinking and integrity.

2015 graduation

Thomas P O’Neill III, founder and chief executive of O’Neill and Associates, a consulting firm based in New England, USA received the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws (LLD) for distinguished services to broadcasting and charity.

Belfast born DJ, producer and composer David Holmes received the honorary degree of Doctor of Letters (DLitt) for his acclaimed work as DJ and producer.

Cinematographer Seamus McGarvey received the honorary degree of Doctor of Fine Arts (DFA) for outstanding contributions to film making.

In June 2016, we also welcomed the grandson of Mahatma Gandhi, Dr Arun Gandhi. Dr Gandhi met with Ulster University students and staff as well as community leaders and special guests.

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In June 2016, Ulster University hosted a number of esteemed visitors. In 2015, Ulster hosted friends of Ulster University politics students.

In February 2016, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, The Rt Hon Theresa Villiers MP, visited our Belfast campus in June 2016, to meet with students and take part in the Life Stories series.
Margaret Byrne, former CEO Sunderland AFC, received the honorary degree of Doctor of Science (DSc) for distinguished services to sport and business.

In recognition of his distinguished services to sport at the University, John ‘Tommy’ Joe Farrell, received the honorary degree of Doctor of the University (DUniv).

Former Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of Ulster University Council, Gerry Mallon, received the honorary degree of Doctor of Science (DSc) for distinguished services to the University at the University, and to the community.

In recognition of her distinguished services to the University and to the community, Dr Olive Buckley, received the honorary degree of Doctor of Science (DSc) for distinguished services to the vulnerable in society.

Inspector Anne Marks, Rowan Sexual Assault and Referral Centre, received the honorary degree of Doctor of Science (DSc) for distinguished services to the vulnerable in society.

In recognition of his distinguished services to sport and cross-community development, Gerry Storey, Head Coach, Holy Family Boxing Club, received the honorary degree of Doctor of Science (DSc).

Senior coroner, John Leckey, received the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws (LLD) for distinguished public service.

Politician and civil rights campaigner Ivan Cooper, received the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws (LLD) for distinguished services to the vulnerable in society.

Inspector Anne Marks, Rowan Sexual Assault and Referral Centre, received the honorary degree of Doctor of Science (DSc) for distinguished services to the Northern Ireland community.

Terry Cross, Founder and Chair of Delta Print and Packaging, received the honorary degree of Doctor of Science (DSc) for distinguished services to business.

In recognition of his distinguished services to the University and to the community, Auxiliary Bishop Anthony Farquhar received the honorary degree of Doctor of Letters (DUniv).

Supreme Court Judge, Lady Brenda Hale, was recognised for her distinguished services to the legal system with the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws (LLD).

Terry Cross, Founder and Chair of Delta Print and Packaging, received the honorary degree of Doctor of Science (DSc) for distinguished services to business.

Emeritus Professor Robert Fokker, former Acting Chair of the Press Complaints Commission, received the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws (LLD) in recognition of his distinguished services to public life.

Environmental conservationist, maritime historian and kayaker Robin Ruddock received the honorary degree of Doctor of Science (DSc) in recognition of his distinguished services to the community.

Dr Stephen Spinelli, President of Philadelphia State University, received the honorary degree of Doctor of Letters (LLD) in recognition of his distinguished service to education.

In recognition of her distinguished services to the community, Sister Mary Turley of the Flax Trust, received the honorary degree of Doctor of the University (DUniv).

Finally, the University community was deeply saddened to lose a number of great colleagues and friends during 2015 and the beginning of 2016 – Ulster is diminished by the loss. Among them, we remember Dr Jeremy Harbison, Pro-Chancellor of the University who served on Council for 11 years until his death in August 2015.
In January 2016 the Vice-Chancellor commenced the development of a new Strategic Plan, designed to chart a roadmap for the next five years of growth and a dynamic vision to take Ulster University to its fiftieth anniversary with purpose and confidence.

Through focus groups, drop-in sessions, campus conversations and digital surveys with staff across the University, early thoughts on the future potential and direction of the University were formed and refined, resulting in the completion of the strategy by June 2016 and its introduction in October 2016.

Civic in nature and global in ambition, Five & Fifty has academic excellence at its heart, underpinned by the professional skills and services necessary to enable academic ambitions to thrive.

Against a backdrop of challenging times for higher education, Five & Fifty sets out a vision for the staff and students who are part of the Ulster University community, alongside the impact and influence in the local community in which we are based. Academic expertise and leadership will find expression through four strategic themes, as the University focuses its efforts on global issues with local relevance.
Vision & Mission

As Northern Ireland’s civic university, Ulster University will deliver outstanding research and teaching that encourages the innovation, leadership and vision needed to help our community thrive.

Grounded in the heart of the community, Ulster University will:
- transform lives, stretch minds, develop skills and raise ambitions
- deliver globally significant research with local relevance
- encourage a diverse university community
- make a lasting contribution to society as a whole.

Themes

We will focus our civic endeavours around themes that will act as a common narrative across the entire University. These themes will be embedded within each strategic priority.

Civic Contribution
- Employment and Widening Access
- Social and Economic Development
- Campus Identities
- Meaningful Networks

Academic Excellence
- Teaching Excellence
- Student Experience
- Research with Impact
- Researcher Development

Global Vision
- Global Citizenship
- International Networks
- Global Challenge, Local Impact
- Diverse University Community

Operational Excellence
- People and Culture
- Reputation
- World-Class Infrastructure
- Financial Sustainability

Social Renewal
- Peace, conflict and transition, educational attainment, social and economic leadership, communication and leadership

Sustainability
- Urban renewal, energy and the environment, national infrastructure, food security, digital futures

Healthy Communities
- Mental health, ageing, health innovation and policy, sport for life, history and heritage

Creativity and Culture
- Creative economy, cultural diversity, design, media & the arts, innovation and creative entrepreneurship
Civic Contribution
As Northern Ireland’s civic university, we will focus our efforts on global societal issues relevant to Northern Ireland. Collectively, our impact will contribute towards the wellbeing and economic prosperity of our society.

Ulster University has always had a strong sense of civic responsibility. Our history, formed on a foundation of civic engagement, is a source of great pride. As the only university distributed across the region, we have a tremendous opportunity to fully participate and deliver meaningful impact across the wider community. The imperative for redesigning our civic contributions is a reflection of the societal transformation that Northern Ireland is undergoing. We need to be cognizant of and fully engaged in this change. Issues such as educational attainment and access to higher education are central to our society and we must maintain our focus on widening access. Moreover, we will continue to proactively contribute to the full spectrum of intellectual, economic, social and cultural life of Northern Ireland.

We will focus our civic endeavours around themes that will act as a common narrative across the entire university across schools, faculties, research and teaching. Capturing our civic focus in a more coherent way will help Ulster University, collectively, achieve greater impact. These are global challenges that have a particular significance within Northern Ireland and will influence how we approach our civic space. These themes will be embedded within each of the strategic priorities. By doing this we are positioning ourselves as a truly international university.

Academic Excellence
We will deliver teaching and research of the highest academic standing. Our research activities and outcomes will continue to have global significance and meaningful impact. Our educational experience will transform students, develop skills, raise ambitions and prepare future leaders. Excellence in teaching undertaken by world-leading research is the foundation upon which every university is built. Ulster University has an outstanding reputation for teaching and research, in developing knowledgeable and skilled individuals who consistently reach their potential, and transform our economy and society. This reputation, based on a rich historic legacy, is one that we aim to continually grow and enhance. In terms of research power, we are currently ranked in the top 25% of UK universities with 72% of our research activity judged by an independent review panel as ‘world-leading’ or ‘internationally excellent’ in the 2014 Research Excellence Framework. The University has always been a leader in many fields, preparing our students to take a leading role in civil society and providing an engaging, caring and supportive learning environment. Our educational experience promotes inter-disciplinary thinking and innovative solutions to contemporary problems.

Academic excellence permeates every aspect of our endeavour. We have individual schools that are recognised as the number one in their discipline for teaching or research, we have graduates that have won Turner prizes and Emmy awards, and we have fellows or Academies. In short, academic excellence is the cornerstone of Ulster University.

We will continue to distinguish ourselves by setting ambitious academic goals. We will confirm our position as one of the leading educational institutions as gauged by our teaching excellence and student satisfaction. We will focus on strengthening our research endeavour and will aim to double the number of staff actively engaged in research activity around a smaller number of research foci. This ambition will only be achieved by ensuring a deep link between our thematic priorities and our teaching mission; ensuring a deep link between our thematic priorities and our teaching mission; addressing issues of global relevance but with meaningful local impact on the social, economic and cultural life of Northern Ireland.

In order to deliver against these challenging ambitions, we must consider the broader context that will define our strategy for teaching excellence: the landscape of opportunities, potential and constraints that is unique for each unit. We will stretch ourselves by setting ambitious academic goals. As a relentlessly ambitious university, Ulster is committed to developing an even more ambitious research strategy that will ensure a growing and sustainable global reach. Where meaningful and appropriate, we strive to be aligned to the Programme for Government. Understanding the direction and priorities of this Executive ensures that we are sensitive to local issues, as an institution playing our part while preparing our students to be future leaders and global citizens.
Global Vision

Our global vision is premised on building a globally engaged and globally relevant university, one in which collaboration with the leading universities in the world and that attracts the highest quality staff and students.

Because of this, Ulster University will embrace a highly multicultural community of learners, promote a strong, internationally relevant curriculum, and deliver a transformative international experience for all students. We will also grow and enhance our international standing and identity through bold concentrations of research excellence around a small number of focused themes. These endeavours will be underpinned by deep partnerships with institutions that share our values and civic focus.

A strong, research-led university is the leading universities in the world and that attracts the highest quality staff and students. We will also grow and enhance our international standing and identity through bold concentrations of research excellence around a small number of focused themes. These endeavours will be underpinned by deep partnerships with institutions that share our values and civic focus.

Operational Excellence

We recognise that delivering this Five & Fifty plan is ambitious; particularly in such a challenging economic climate and within an increasingly competitive global market. For that reason, we have prioritised operational excellence within the strategic plan; both creating the right conditions to let people flourish and ensuring that every member of this University is recognised as playing a central role in achieving our ambitions.

Developing a global focus has clear benefits. An international university experience can transform the students who participate; a larger experience can be transformational for the students who participate; a larger experience can be transformational for the students who participate; a larger experience can be transformational for the students who participate; a larger experience can be transformational for the students who participate; a larger experience can be transformational for the students who participate; a larger experience can be transformational for the students who participate; a larger experience can be transformational for the students who participate; a larger experience can be transformational for the students who participate; a larger experience can be transformational for the students who participate; a larger experience can be transformational for the students who participate; a larger experience can be transformational for the students who participate; a larger experience can be transformational for the students who participate; a larger experience can be transformational for the students who participate; a larger experience can be transformational for the students who participate; a larger experience can be transformational for the students who participate; a larger experience can be transformational for the students who participate; a larger experience can be transformational for the students who participate; a larger experience can be transformational for the students who participate; a larger experience can be transformational for the students who participate; a larger experience can be transformational for the students who participate; a larger experience can be transformational for the students who participate; a larger experience can be transformational for the students who participate; a larger experience can be transformational for the students who participate; a larger experience can be transformational for the students who participate; a l
The 2015/16 results show that Ulster University achieved in the main its financial strategy targets and, in particular, delivered an operating surplus sufficient to support its sustainability investment strategy. This has been achieved against a background where, in the last 12 months, there have been significant cuts in Executive funding to the University that have necessitated significant reductions in both staff and student numbers.

Financial Statements

The financial statements comprise the financial results of the University, consolidated with the results of its subsidiary companies. The University is an independent educational charity, whose legal status is derived from a Royal Charter granted in 1984. The distinctiveness of the University within the higher education sector placed, within a small group of institutions that are research engaged and business-focussed with significant commercialisation of research, major knowledge transfer, relationships and diversity in the student population.

It has a focus on contributing to economic, social and cultural development in Northern Ireland and its global standing. This theme is continued in the University’s new Strategic Plan Five & Fifty.
Future Financial Health

Key performance indicators are set out below with an assessment on progress against the financial strategy target with red meaning immediate action required, amber more work required and green on track. When taken together, these measures reflect the strong governance and effective management of the University’s resources in sustaining financial health in the short, medium and long term.

Financial Sustainability Indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2016 Actual</th>
<th>2015 Actual</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Four year average historical cost surplus as percentage of income</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earnings before Interest, Tax, Depreciation and Amortisation (EBITDA)</td>
<td>£19.9m</td>
<td>£18.6m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liquidity ratio</td>
<td>250 days</td>
<td>250 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current assets to current liabilities</td>
<td>3.8:1</td>
<td>4.5:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-regulated income as a percentage of total teaching income</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Long Term Borrowing Indicators

Long term borrowing indicators are targets set within the Financial Memorandum and Banking Covenants established to support the Greater Belfast Development.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2016 Actual</th>
<th>2015 Actual</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Annual servicing cost of finance less than 6% of income (ASC)</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net indebtedness less than 50% of net assets</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EBITDA to ASC ratio greater than 1.5 times</td>
<td>3.83 times</td>
<td>3.58 times</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary of Financial Position

Key Performance Indicators from the financial statements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total income in £m</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>201.3</td>
<td>199.2</td>
<td>191.7</td>
<td>199.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash generated by operating activities in £m</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>14.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EBITDA £m</td>
<td>19.9</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>27.7</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td>20.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net assets £m</td>
<td>259.6</td>
<td>264.5</td>
<td>262.9</td>
<td>262.6</td>
<td>276.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The following tables provide further information on the University’s financial statements.

**Where the Money Comes From - £188m**

- Funding Body Grants
- Tuition Fees
- Research Grants and Contracts
- Residences and Catering
- Other Sources

**How the University Spends the Money - £191.5m**

- Academic Departments
- Research Grants and Contracts
- Services for Students
- Staff and Student Facilities
- Premises
- Residences and Catering
- Running the University
- Other

The underlying financial strength of the University is demonstrated by the financial worth which is shown in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financial Worth of the University £m</th>
<th>Excluding Pension</th>
<th>Pension Liability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The net cash inflow from operating activities for the year was £10.6m (£21.6m in 2015), interest paid totalled £0.8m (£0.8m in 2015), and interest received totalled £1.5m (£1.2m in 2015). Throughout the year, the University operated with a cash surplus and in line with its banking covenants. All treasury decisions are undertaken within the framework of the University’s treasury policy. The underlying principle of the policy is that the University operates a low risk approach in managing its investments and liquidity. All funds are placed with counter parties whose underlying credit rating is monitored against minimum criteria.

Endowment assets at the year end were £7.5m and are managed by Rathbones Investment Management.

During the year £26.7m was spent on acquiring fixed assets against which £4.4m of capital grants were received. The table on the right shows the impact of this capital investment on our cash balances.
Council Composition

Ex-Officio Members

Pro-Chancellors

Mr G Mallon (until 31 March 2015)
Dr J Harbison (until August 2015)*
Mr J Hunter (from 1 April 2015)

Vice-Chancellor

Professor Sir R Barnett
(retired March 2015)
Professor A Adair, Acting Vice-Chancellor
(1 April 2015 – 30 June 2015)
Professor P Nixon
(with effect from 1 July 2015)

Honorary Treasurer

Ms R Peters-Gallagher

Appointed Members

Eight persons not being members of staff or students of the University

Mrs M Clark
Mr J Hunter (Pro-Chancellor from 1 April 2015)
Mrs L Lard
Mr A Langan
Mrs H Laird
Mr A Langan (chair from September 2015)
Mr L Nellis
Mrs H Quigley
Dr AM Telford (member to June 2015)

Elected Members

Two members of Academic Staff

Professor N Black
Professor P Nixon
(with effect from 1 July 2015)

One member of Academic-Related Staff

Mr T Leath
(with effect from 1 April 2015)

One member of Non-Academic Staff

Mr B Magee (retired April 2016)

Audit Committee Composition

Chairman of Council

Mr J Hunter (Chair) (from 1 April 2015)

Members appointed by the Council

Mr J Hunter (Chair to May 2015)
Mr A Langan (Chair from September 2015)

Mr L Nellis
Mrs H Quigley

Statement of Primary Responsibilities

The University has adopted a statement of primary responsibilities which is available for download at:


Council Sub-Committee of The Organisational Development Committee 2014-2015

Nominations Sub-Committee Composition

Chairman of Council

Mr J Hunter (Chair until 31 March 2015)

Mr J Hunter (Chair with effect from August 2015)

Vice-Chancellor

Professor Sir R Barnett
(retired March 2015)
Professor A Adair, Acting Vice-Chancellor
(1 April 2015 – 30 June 2015)
Professor P Nixon
(with effect from 1 July 2015)

Independent members

Mrs Kieven
Dame G Keegan
Professor O Licence

Audit Committee Composition

Chairman of Council

Mr J Hunter (Chair to May 2015)

Members appointed by the Council

Mr J Hunter (Chair from September 2015)

Mr L Nellis
Mrs H Quigley

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Research Enquiries

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Ulster Graduates

Development and Alumni Relations Office
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E: daro@ulster.ac.uk

Potential Benefactors

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This publication is available in alternative formats on request from the Public Relations and Communications Department.

Governance / Contacts Ulster University Annual Review 2015/16 64/65

* Dr Jeremy Harbison passed away on 14 August 2015