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A WORD FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to issue 32 of The Ulster Graduate.

As always we have included a range of news items and stories to keep you up to date with developments at the University and with what our former students are doing now.

I have just returned from a short visit to Canada and the USA, where I and my colleagues had the pleasure of meeting with a number of alumni now living on the other side of the Atlantic (see page 15). It was a great reminder that our alumni community is truly worldwide – we now have alumni in 121 countries.

We have also held a number of events closer to home, including a very successful reunion for students from the Belfast campus, held at Ormeau Baths Gallery in Belfast and a reception in the House of Commons in London. For information on past and future events see pages 15-18.

We now have over 3,000 members of our online community – Ulster Alumni Online. If you haven’t yet registered you can do so at http://alumni.ulster.ac.uk. You can use the site to check and update the details we hold on you, contact other alumni members, book for events and see photographs of past events and reunions.

I hope that you enjoy reading this issue.

Best wishes

Sue Rees, Alumni Relations Manager

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Cover Photograph
New Chancellor James Nesbitt - see page 2 for full story.
New University Chancellor - James Nesbitt

The new Chancellor of the University is to be the acclaimed actor James Nesbitt.

The 45-year-old father of two will succeed former London Lord Mayor, Sir Richard Nichols who is standing down after eight years in the post.

The chair of the University’s ruling Council, Gerry Mallon confirmed the University had offered the star of ‘Cold Feet’, ‘Murphy’s Law’ and ‘Bloody Sunday’ the position and he had accepted.

“We’re delighted James, a former student at the University and an honorary graduate, has agreed to take on this very important role,” Mr Mallon said.

“James is taking over as Chancellor at an exciting time for Ulster and will bring considerable energy, dynamism and commitment to this post. This is also the first time there has been a Northern Ireland-born Chancellor of the University.

“He succeeds an eminent and respected Chancellor in the form of Sir Richard Nichols who has served the University with great distinction since his installation in May 2002. We very much appreciate the time and the commitment Sir Richard devoted to the University, its staff and students and we wish him and his family well for the future.”

In 2003, Broughshane-born James Nesbitt received the honorary degree of Doctor of Letters (D Litt) from the University for Services to Drama. He had previously studied French at Ulster but left to pursue a career in acting by studying drama at the Central School of Speech and Drama in London.

After a breakthrough role in Peter Chelsom’s movie ‘Hear My Song’ about the tenor Joseph Locke, he was propelled to stardom when he landed the lead role in ITV’s comedy drama ‘Cold Feet’ alongside Helen Baxendale, John Thomson and Fay Ripley.

Over the years, he has built up an impressive body of work on stage, television and movies, mixing comedy with more hard hitting material. This has included lead roles in the Colin Bateman penned BBC series ‘Murphy’s Law’, ‘Jekyll’, ‘The Passion’ and the Iraq War drama ‘Occupation’. On the big screen, he has appeared in Michael Winterbottom’s ‘Jude’ and ‘Welcome to Sarajevo’, the hit comedy ‘Waking Ned Devine’, Paul Greengrass’s ‘Bloody Sunday’, Woody Allen’s ‘Match Point’ and last year opposite Liam Neeson in Oliver Hirschbiegel’s post-Troubles drama ‘Five Minutes of Heaven’.

The actor, who is a passionate fan of both Manchester United and Coleraine FC, has been in Serbia shooting a movie of Shakespeare’s ‘Coriolanus’ directed by and starring Ralph Fiennes and also featuring Brian Cox, Gerard Butler and Vanessa Redgrave.

Taking a break from filming, he said: “I am deeply honoured to have been asked by the University of Ulster to be its Chancellor.

“It is a good time to be joining the University as it embarks on two major development plans in Greater Belfast and the North West which could make a significant difference to the academic, cultural, sporting and economic renaissance of the cities of Belfast and DerryLondonderry and also Northern Ireland as a whole.

“As a native of Coleraine I know how much the University contributes to the community there and its unwavering commitment to my hometown.

“The University’s investment in Northern Ireland’s sporting talent has also been very impressive and it is great to see the success Ulster students have enjoyed in recent years across a number of sports including athletics, soccer, rugby, Gaelic Games, basketball, hockey and golf and to see the wonderful sports facilities it has built including the state-of-the-art High Performance Centre at Jordanstown.

“As an actor, I know how important the Riverside Theatre has been for Coleraine but the University has also shown a tremendous commitment to the arts in general whether it is through the work of the Foyle Arts Centre or the School of Art and Design in Belfast or its active support for Derry/Londonderry’s bid to become UK city of culture in 2013 – a cause I very much support. And at a time when Northern Ireland is looking to forge a bright economic future, the quality of Ulster’s research and innovation, its investment in science, technology, engineering and maths, its provision of professionally accredited degree courses and its commitment to widening access to education is inspiring.

“I am very much looking forward to taking on this role and doing what I can to advance the University of Ulster.”

Vice Chancellor Professor Richard Barnett also welcomed James Nesbitt’s appointment.

“We are very pleased James has agreed to take on this important leadership role for the University,” he said.

“I have no doubt he will be a wonderful ambassador for Ulster and will serve the University with the same distinction as Sir Richard and other Chancellors before him. I would like to thank Sir Richard and Lady Nichols for everything they have done for the University and wish them well.”

As he stepped down from the role, Sir Richard Nichols told the Court of the University he looked back on his eight years at Ulster with a lot of “personal pride and admiration” at what the institution had achieved. “I have been very privileged indeed to be in this post in these busy and sometimes difficult times and look forward to hearing about the further successes of the University, its staff and students in the years to come,” he added.

Former Chancellor Sir Richard Nichols.
Green Light for Magee Expansion

The University’s development plan for Magee reached a significant milestone when the University signed an Option Agreement with Foyle and Londonderry College to secure 30 acres of land for expansion.

The Northland Road lands – which will become vacant when Foyle and Londonderry College migrates across the Foyle to its new site at Clonkey – will offer much-needed space for the growth of third-level education in the city.

Ulster’s growth strategy for Magee concentrates on developing and sustaining high-quality, regionally relevant provision with an emphasis on professional education for professional life.

The University has ambitious plans for development of the campus, including:

- The creation of an Institute of Sustainable Technologies
- The creation of an Institute of Health and Wellbeing
- Expansion of Computing, Electronics and Software
- Expansion of Creative Technologies and Animation
- Expansion in Business and Professional Services

Welcoming the Foyle and Londonderry College agreement, Vice-Chancellor Professor Richard Barnett said:

“The agreement signed here today is an important milestone in the delivery of our development plans for Magee, the city and the region.

“The University has always made it clear that a pre-condition for the expansion at Magee was the acquisition of additional land and we have submitted a bid to expand our student numbers which we hope will receive all party support in the Northern Ireland Assembly. With the news that we have secured an option on these sites – and once government gives us permission to recruit more students – we can commence our build-up of student numbers.

“Our aim is to help deliver the economic and cultural regeneration of the North West, injecting vitality, energy and creativity into the region, assisting its transformation into a dynamic cultural, creative and educational destination.

“Today’s agreement opens the door to a new era in the life of Magee.”

Celebrating the agreement were Professor Jim Allen, Provost of Magee; Jack Magill, Headmaster of Foyle and Londonderry College; Professor Deirdre Heenan, Dean of Academic Development at Magee, and Robin Young, Chairman of Foyle and Londonderry College Board of Governors.

UNIVERSITY BRIEFS CONGRESSMAN ON DEVELOPMENT PLANS

A leading member of the US Congress was just one of the people briefed on the University’s Greater Belfast and North West Development Plans during a recent visit by senior management to North America.

Massachusetts Democratic Congressman Richard E Neal and chair of the influential Friends of Ireland Group in Congress played host to a meeting with Vice-Chancellor Professor Richard Barnett during his visit to Washington DC.

Among those Professor Barnett also met were staff from Connecticut Senator Christopher Dodd’s office, the US State Department, US Department of Education, the Northern Ireland Bureau, the World Affairs Council and the British and Irish Embassies.

The Vice-Chancellor also toured the campus and met with senior management at George Washington University as well as hosting an alumni event in the National Press Club.

Pro-Vice-Chancellor Professor Alastair Adair used visits to Ottawa, Boston and New York to inform US and Canadian friends of the University and alumni on the plans to revamp the Belfast campus at York Street and expand Magee.

On their return to Northern Ireland, Professor Barnett and Professor Adair also met on the Belfast campus US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton’s economic envoy to Northern Ireland Declan Kelly to discuss the development plans and Ulster’s strong performance in the UK’s recent research assessment exercise.
Top Marketing Students Recognised

Six outstanding marketing students were recognised for their exceptional achievements at a special ceremony at the Jordanstown campus in January 2010.

The annual Marketing Excellence Awards celebrate the dedication and hard work of marketing students from the class of 2008/2009.

Charlotte Jess, who won Best Overall Final Year Student and Best BSc Dissertation, acquired the position of E-Marketing Executive at Randox Laboratories in Crumlin just a few months after graduating last year.

Professor Rodney McAdam, Head of the Department of Marketing, Entrepreneurship and Strategy said:

“All of these award winners were outstanding students. For those who left university last summer, we are glad to hear that many of them have gained employment in marketing.

“This is a day of celebration which brings together our students, family members, academic staff and sponsors.”

The winners were:

Charlotte Jess, BSc Hons Marketing, from Carrickfergus Marketing Institute of Ireland Award for Excellence - Best Overall Final Year Student

Chartered Institute of Marketing Award for Excellence - Best Dissertation

Claire McCamley, MSc Marketing, from Maghera Envision Management Consultants Award for Excellence - Best Dissertation

Catherine Robinson, BSc Hons Marketing, from Ballymena Hastings Hotels Award for Excellence - Best Overall Second Year Student

Emma Hawthorne, BSc Hons Marketing, from Carrickfergus Property News Award for Excellence - Best Overall E-Marketing Student

Richard Kee, MSc Marketing and Entrepreneurship, from Dundonald Wrightbus Award for Excellence - Best Overall Final Year Student

Dominic Darby, MSc Agri-food Business Development, from Belfast Moy Park Award for Excellence - Best Overall Student

GRADUATE INTO BUSINESS

University of Ulster graduates are offered the chance to turn their business dreams into reality with an exciting new initiative called Graduate Into Business.

The Graduate Into Business Programme addresses key issues of why graduates wait to start their own business, often delaying the process for up to 10 years after graduation. The programme enables graduates to match their skill level with an appropriate career in self-employment and entrepreneurship.

A range of support services are on offer, including mentoring in specialist areas such as financial management, commercial law, sales development and resource management. Networking events, market research services and incubation facilities are also offered, together with an opportunity to bid for funding in a unique Dragons Den style forum. Not only does the programme assist in the business start up phase, it also supports existing graduate entrepreneurs with the growth and development of their business.

One such Ulster graduate entrepreneur is Dr Andy Barr. As a child, Andy was captivated by the story of the Six Million Dollar Man, astronaut Steve Austin. This fascination influenced both his academic and career choices and Marturion was founded in March 2001 to offer innovation services to companies who need electronics and software design for new or existing products, with particular focus on the medical device sector.

Marturion now employs thirty people and trades out of Knockmore Hill Industrial Park in Lisburn, providing goods and services to markets as widespread as the Far East, Africa and the Americas. Andy is now proactive in sharing his experiences and encouraging local entrepreneurship.

Graduate Into Business is funded by Lisburn City Council and the EU Sustainable Competitiveness Programme NI 2007 – 2013, and delivered by Lisburn Enterprise Organisation. Full programme details are available from Seonaid@lisburn-enterprise.co.uk or log on to www.lisburngraduateintobusiness.co.uk
Lifelong Learning for Northern Ireland Graduates

In the 21st century, job patterns have changed and the concept of a job for life is one that seems a thing of the past. There is an identified need for more flexible and responsive workforce development, including a requirement for upskilling to ensure maximum performance and success. Institutions, including Ulster, are increasingly seeking to develop employability attributes as an explicit and embedded part of academic learning that an individual can continue to develop in order to remain employable throughout their working life. The underpinning ethos of successful lifelong learning is based on the modular and progressive acquisition of skill, enabling individuals in the workplace to gain recognition for their learning at a pace that suits them and their employers. Flexible part-time provision that is accessible at a time and place to suit the individual (and which enables collaborative activities where individuals can share experiences and evaluate achievements) is therefore central to the success of any programme that promotes the development of professional practice. The University is committed to providing opportunities for students to develop the skills, knowledge and personal attributes which will enhance their employability on graduation. Ulster places particular emphasis on integrating academic content with professional practice to consolidate and stimulate learning, by allowing students the opportunity to reflect on the relevance of course content and to put what they have learned into practice.

With these values in mind we turn to our alumni. As a result of economic recession there has been a significant downturn in the number of graduate employment opportunities available across the UK. Research has shown that for those just entering the labour market, a prolonged spell of unemployment can leave permanent scars, making individuals less employable throughout their working lives. The University is seeking to minimise this economic risk to graduates and the wider region in Northern Ireland, through an innovative programme which has been developed with key, strategic partners. Working with a range of local employers, the Department of Employment and Learning (DEL), Business in the Community and QUB, a new graduate initiative has been launched which seeks to preserve and strengthen the knowledge and skills of our graduates.

The Graduate Certificate in Professional Practice provides an ideal vehicle for those who wish to enhance their knowledge and skills within a professional practice context. Offered exclusively by the University it forms an integral part of the Graduate Acceleration Programme (GAP) www.gapni.com

GAP is a 26 week professional placement programme, supported by DEL which enables graduates who are eligible for job seekers allowance to enhance their practical and academic skills. Professional skills in practice are a central theme of the programme and one which is embedded in the new course at Ulster. The University is seeking to minimise this economic risk to graduates and the wider region in Northern Ireland, through an innovative programme which has been developed with key, strategic partners. Working with a range of local employers, the Department of Employment and Learning (DEL), Business in the Community and QUB, a new graduate initiative has been launched which seeks to preserve and strengthen the knowledge and skills of our graduates.

The Graduate Certificate in Professional Practice is a flexible course with 60 credits enabling alumni to extend their current knowledge and skills base. The course consists of two core modules which support professional practice and two optional modules such as Enterprise, Leadership and Change, Information Technology, Communications or Managing Behaviour. Ultimately the course provides a highly developed learning framework which will allow individuals to develop their overall job readiness, as well as challenging and enhancing higher order skills within a professional context. Study can be undertaken at any of the four campuses.

When graduates sign up for GAP, automatic access to a placement database is granted. Local employers have provided a wide range of graduate level opportunities and are selecting successful applicants through a competitive recruitment process. For those interested, opportunities for both graduates and employers are available.

The majority of the content is online to enable flexibility alongside the professional placement, so while there are a few face to face sessions the majority of the work can be completed at an individual pace and from any location.

For more information contact: lifelonglearning@ulster.ac.uk
The professor, who is an expert on earthquakes in the Sumatra region of Indonesia, first issued the plea in January as governments and agencies scrambled to send aid to the stricken people of Haiti, devastated by a 7.0-magnitude earthquake that claimed more than 200,000 lives.

He explained:

“The future need not look like Haiti. We know that a big earthquake will happen off western Sumatra. Science is not able to say exactly when and we might have years or even decades to prepare, but it could happen much sooner. Now is the time to prepare for the event, not the day it happens.

“Given the carnage of the Haiti earthquake and the slowness of the international response, the responsibility on the Indonesian government, the international community and the international NGOs is enormous.”

The Haiti catastrophe coincided with publication in Nature Geoscience of a study by Professor McCloskey and international colleagues of an earthquake that struck Padang, western Sumatra, in September 2009, killing more than 1,000 people.

They concluded it was not the ‘great earthquake’ that earth scientists have been waiting for but it may have made the next massive earthquake more likely. Their warning and Professor McCloskey’s call to governments and non-governmental organisations to take urgent preparatory action to save lives rather than waiting until disaster strikes, received wide media coverage internationally.

“The Padang earthquake, the Haiti disaster and now the tragedies in Chile and Turkey underline the importance of preparation. There are many things that can be done to reduce the impact of earthquakes. Many of these are low-tech methods that have been tried and tested.”

Professor McCloskey is Head of the Geophysics Research Group, within the Environmental Sciences Research Institute. He and his group rapidly analysed the M9.2 earthquake that triggered the Indian Ocean 2004 Boxing Day tsunami and alerted the world to the threat of another large quake in the Sumatra region of the Indian Ocean 11 days before it struck.

“All the indicators are pointing in the same direction for western Sumatra. In this case there is complete agreement that it will be very strong, probably bigger than magnitude 8.5, dwarfing the energy release in the Haitian quake. We also cannot say for sure what size the tsunami will be but it has the potential to be very destructive – maybe even worse than 2004.

“We must work urgently to prepare for this earthquake if we are not to witness again the awful scenes of children dying for want of a few stitches or a cast for a broken leg. The prospect of more children lying on hospital floors with no pain relief and without any medical help at all is truly horrific. How many lives could we save if the international community were prepared properly for the next catastrophe?

“It is an international disgrace that we appear not to have made the smallest progress in preparation. If we want to claim to be civilised we need to ensure that we never see these scenes again. Let’s make our motto: ‘We will do better next time’.”
GO GREEN, ULSTER URGES RURAL FIRMS

Rural businesses are being encouraged to exploit renewable energy sources whilst reducing costs and growing their company with the help of University experts.

Researchers from the Ulster Business School are taking part in a European-wide project investigating the challenges facing rural areas and their dependency on fossil fuels.

Dr Norry McBride, Derek Bond and Dr Elaine Ramsey will be working with small to medium-sized businesses in rural areas across Northern Ireland over the next three years to help them develop innovative renewable energy solutions which are available locally.

“The devastating effect that global warming is having on our environment means that all European countries will have to reduce their dependency on imported fuel and make greater commitments to the use of renewable energy sources that generate fewer greenhouse gas emissions,” explains Dr McBride.

“Like many other European regions, rural communities in Northern Ireland are currently facing significant challenges as a result of their dependence on fossil fuels.

“Through this Micro Energy to Rural Enterprise Project we will investigate and evaluate the opportunities that will enable rural businesses to generate renewable energy using waste products on a scale that is viable and economically feasible.”

Child Poverty in Northern Ireland

The number of families in Northern Ireland living in persistent poverty is more than double that in Great Britain, according to new research by leading child poverty experts, Social Policy lecturer, Goretti Horgan and Marina Monteith from Save the Children (NI).

Their report, *What can we do to tackle child poverty in Northern Ireland* found that persistent poverty in Northern Ireland (21% before housing costs) is more than double that in Great Britain (9%). The report explores some of the challenges facing the Northern Ireland Assembly as it tries to meet its target of halving childhood poverty by 2010 and eradicating it completely by 2020.

According to Goretti Horgan, the legacy of the Troubles is very apparent with the highest levels of persistent poverty in areas like West Belfast, Bgeoiside, Brandywell and Creggan – all of which were very affected by the conflict.

Almost three quarters of children in persistent poverty live in a small number of wards with a high concentration of child poverty. The authors are concerned that young people growing up today in the most disadvantaged areas are living in areas where the conflict was at its height and the ripple effect is still being felt.

Ms Horgan continues:

“Qualitative research shows that there is a layer of young people growing up in persistent poverty in these areas who are socially excluded – even where social deprivation is at the highest level.

“These young people are most vulnerable and at risk of falling prey to paramilitary organisations, drug pushers and petty criminals. There is an urgent need to help them by reducing income poverty and material deprivation in these areas.”

Honorary Graduates

Daniel Libeskind was the first recipient of the new Doctor of Fine Art (DFA) on 11 November 2009 at the Belfast campus.

Dr Gerry Burns, former Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of the University Council, was awarded the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws in December 2009.

Professor Roy Spence, former Pro-Chancellor, was awarded the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws in December 2009.
Celebrating 160 Years of Art and Design in Belfast

Two new books celebrating 160 years of the School of Art and Design were published recently - A School of Design for Belfast 1849-1960 by Mike Catto and The School of Art and Design 1960 – 2009 by Liam Kelly.

Ulster lecturer and broadcaster Mike Catto's book outlines the history of the famous School of Design – the founding school of the University of Ulster – from its humble beginnings in three rooms in Belfast in 1849 to the early 1960s when it became the autonomous and province-wide Ulster College of Art and Design.

“The format of the book, which is lavishly illustrated throughout, looks at the development of the school from its inception as the Government School of Design to its position by 1960 as one of the most modern and pre-eminent centres for art, design and craft in the United Kingdom,” said Mike.

“There were only seven headmasters over those 111 years, and the book shows how each of those heads shaped the policies and practices of the school. From Claude Lorraine Nursey in 1849 to James Warwick who became the first Dean of Arts at the Ulster College in the Northern Ireland Polytechnic in 1971, the headmasters had enormous influence on both teaching within the school and with local manufacturers, especially in the linen and printing trades.”

He added:

“Significantly, from the early years of the 20th century until the 1960s the school also included courses in architecture. Under the headmastership of Ivor Beaumont – himself an architect and designer – the school became well known for the integration of all the arts with architecture. Now that the University has re-introduced architecture into its degree programme the pattern has come full circle and this book clearly reveals how these artists, designers, craftspeople and architects have all helped shape our educational and our physical environment.”

The book was launched at a special graduation ceremony in November 2009 as world renowned architect Daniel Libeskind received an honorary degree in recognition of outstanding services to global architecture and design.

The School of Art and Design 1960 – 2009

Professor of Irish Visual Culture, Liam Kelly, brings the story up to date, outlining developments from the 1960s to the present day in The School of Art and Design 1960 – 2009.

Professor Kelly’s book was launched at the Ormeau Baths Gallery during a series of events hosted by the University to recognise the 160th anniversary including a retrospective exhibition featuring work from acclaimed artists connected with the School.

Professor Ian Montgomery, Dean of the Faculty of Art, Design and the Built Environment said:

“For 160 years the School of Art and Design has reflected the changes and growth of Northern Ireland’s culture.

“During the difficult times of the late 20th century the School acted as a crucial lifeline for artists and designers in Northern Ireland.

“Over the past 40 years in particular, students and staff at the York Street campus have made a major contribution to the cultural life of the region in fine arts, applied arts, design and more recently through collaborative work in the innovative new School of Architecture and Design.”

Professor Kelly added:

“This publication is an account of the Art College and how it became the School of Art and Design. It is the tale of two buildings and the absorption of a formally independent college into the university system, the resulting changes in teaching and learning, and the establishment of art and design as a credible research discipline.”

The School of Art and Design 1960 - 2009 by Professor Liam Kelly and A School of Design for Belfast 1849 - 1960 by Mike Catto are both available from the Alumni Relations Office, price £15.

Padraig Coyle talks with Mike Catto about his new book, A School of Design for Belfast. To listen or download go to: http://news.ulster.ac.uk/podcasts/CattoBook.mp3
Health Research at Ulster

Staff across the University are making a substantial contribution to international healthcare research. Research Groups covering Neuroscience, Vision Science, Nursing, Diabetes and Biomedical Sciences are working to develop new treatments for diseases and improve patient care.

Scientists in the Diabetes Research Group are working with NUI Galway, HSE West in the Republic of Ireland and the Western Health and Social Care Trust in Northern Ireland to create a collaborative cross-border partnership in diabetes related research. The new Atlantic Alliance for Cooperation on Research into Diabetes (Atlantic-ACORD) initiative brings together patients, clinicians and researchers to develop innovative solutions to problems related to the growing problem of diabetes. Over 65,000 adults and 1,000 children in Northern Ireland are receiving treatment for diabetes, and every year 4,000 new cases are diagnosed.

Participants include dieticians, podiatrists, diabetes specialist nurses, IT specialists and psychologists. The study themes cover some of the key needs for patients in the region and will form the initial focus of further collaborative research proposals.

Recent research has shown that diabetes is a risk factor for developing Alzheimer’s Disease, the most common cause of dementia in the UK. Ulster’s Diabetes Research Group (DRG) has successfully developed a range of novel drugs designed to control type 2 diabetes, and the DRG is collaborating with the Neuroscience Research Group to investigate this link.

Dr Christian Holscher, who heads up the Neuroscience Research Group, has been awarded an Invest Northern Ireland Proof of Concept grant to investigate the properties of these novel drugs for the treatment of Alzheimer’s and other neurological disorders, and the University currently has two patents pending worldwide. This groundbreaking research could lead to a major breakthrough in the treatment of patients suffering from these diseases.

Researchers from the School of Biomedical Sciences are undertaking groundbreaking DNA research to help in the treatment and prevention of diseases. They are examining the atomic structures of DNA knots using a method called Nuclear Magnetic Resonance spectroscopy in conjunction with teams from the Institute for Integrated Cell-Material Sciences from Kyoto University in Japan and the National Institute of Chemistry from Slovenia.

One of the aims of this type of research is to find the cause behind, and offer solutions to, the best possible way of treating the diseases ranging from Alzheimer’s and stroke, to autism, wound healing and limb formation.

Meanwhile, the Institute of Nursing Research has begun work on a four-year EU funded study into continence care in nursing homes. The project is a partnership with the Royal College of Nursing Research Institute at the University of Warwick, Manchester Business School, Fontys University in the Netherlands, the Karolinska Institute in Sweden, University College Cork, University of Alberta in Canada and the University of Adelaide in Australia.

The aim of the partnership is to translate research into real patient care.

Research from the Vision Science Research Group has revealed that children in Northern Ireland are up to three times more likely to be long-sighted than children living in other parts of the world.

Over 1000 children from different backgrounds and different sectors of the community took part in the study over a three year period. The team is now revisiting the children to see how their eyes have changed for the second phase of the Northern Ireland Childhood Errors Refraction Study.

The study is being carried out in collaboration with the Aston Eye Study in Birmingham and is funded by the UK College of Optometrists.

New Global Markets for Health Technology Spin-out

A University healthcare technology spin-out company, Intelesens, is set to expand into new global markets after receiving CE regulatory approval for its life-saving wireless health monitor product, Vitalsens.

CE marking is a mandatory European approval for medical devices to indicate conformity with the essential requirements set out in European Directives. This milestone opens up extensive new markets in Europe and South-East Asia to the Belfast firm, whose products build on sensor technologies developed by the company’s founders at the University.

The Vitalsens device is made up of a disposable electrode patch and a reusable clip-on transmitter, and offers a low-cost technology solution to help in the management of care for both chronically ill patients at home, as well as monitoring the health of both in-patients and out-patients attending hospital.

Intelesens Chief Executive Michael Caulfield said:

“Data relating to the wearer’s health, including heart rate, ecg, temperature and levels of activity are measured in the chest area and transmitted via Bluetooth to software residing on a pc or laptop in the wearer’s home or in a hospital ward. This vital health information can then be accessed by medical professionals either locally or remotely, and appropriate treatments delivered rapidly.

“The CE accreditation is an important step in the growth of the company.

“The next step is to gain US Food and Drug Administration approval for the product. That will open up the enormous US market to us, taking our business – built on technology developed in Northern Ireland – to a whole new level.”
University Scoops Top UK Award

“The University has picked up two prestigious accolades for excellence at the Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP) awards ceremony in London.

At the gala ceremony, Ulster’s Partnership between the School of Health Sciences and healthcare firm James Leckey Design Ltd won the top prize - the Best KTP in the UK Award. The University Associate was Ulster graduate Clare Wright, BSc Hons Occupational Therapy 1994. Clare is an experienced occupational therapist who gained a Masters in Clinical Research in 2008 while working as a Student Associate on the project and who now works for James Leckey Design as a Clinical Research Manager.

A second award was made to University Associate Eamon Morgan who picked up the Business Leader of Tomorrow Award for his current KTP with Foyle Food Group Limited.

After the awards the judges said the partnership with James Leckey Design was “the most rounded Partnership that clearly demonstrated an effective relationship between the company and the University. It embodies everything that the KTP stands for”.

The Partnership, which had already made history by being the first ever Partnership award to be made to an Occupational Therapist in the UK, blended Ulster’s occupational therapy skills with the firm’s expertise in designing mobility aids for children with disabilities.

Dr Alison Porter-Armstrong, Senior Lecturer in Rehabilitation Sciences and academic lead on the project, said:

“We are absolutely thrilled at winning the award. The accolade reflects the University vision of being known for excellence, innovation and regional engagement. This award encompasses all three elements.”

Caroline McCabe, KTP Manager explained:

“In KTPs, Associates are supervised by specialist academics while they work with firms on industrial and commercial projects. The University has developed a long term mutually beneficial relationship with the company and we look forward to working with many more organisations in the future.”

Tim Brundle, Director of Innovation said:

“IT is wonderful to see that the company and academic partnership with Ulster has gained recognition for the important work that they do. I would like to thank the sponsors, including Invest Northern Ireland and AEA PLC.”

KTP is funded by the Technology Strategy Board and other government organisations, including Invest NI.

For further information please contact Caroline McCabe, telephone 028 7137 5236 or email c.mccabe@ulster.ac.uk.

SPIN-OUT COMPANY WINS TOP BUSINESS AWARD

Sophia Search – a thriving technology business - was crowned the best high growth company among firms from all regions of the Republic and Northern Ireland.

Chief Executive Dr David Patterson and co-founder Dr Vladimir Dobrynin took home the €100,000 prize from the awards ceremony held in Dublin.

Dr Patterson, who is Senior Lecturer in Computer Science, said:

“Winning the competition is a tremendous boost for our business.

“Being selected as overall high growth winner will bring excellent validation and credibility to our business plan and put us on a new platform with investors.”
Director of Innovation Tim Brundle said:

“This is the highest accolade for a technology company in Ireland, and comes with a prize of €100,000 on top of the €25,000 already received from the regional heats. I am very proud of what Sophia Search has achieved.”

Sophia Search was set up in 2007 and is based across two continents – the Northern Ireland Science Park in Belfast and St Petersburg, Russia.

Dr Patterson and Dr Dobrynin have developed ground-breaking semantic search technology which enables companies and organisations to intelligently search their ever increasing volumes of documents and unstructured information, whether it resides internally or externally to the organisation.

Seedcorn, the largest business competition on the island with a €360,000 prize fund, aims to stimulate new start-up activity, accelerate commercial development and create more opportunities for private equity investment.

A total of 225 entries to the competition were received, a 30% increase on last year’s total and the largest number of entries since the competition began. Eight companies made it through to the finals based on the quality of their business plan and an investment pitch to an independent panel of judges, including leading entrepreneurs, venture capitalists and private investors.

The event was attended by An Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment Mary Coughlan TD, who said:

“These winning companies typify the island’s entrepreneurial spirit, using their ideas and vision to develop a product or service with innovative and commercially viable technology to break new ground in a growing market.”

From left: David Patterson, Sophia Search; Liam Nellis, InterTradeIreland and Alistair Kerr, Sophia Search.

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**Innovators Triumph at £25k Awards**

**A University team has walked away with the overall winner’s prize at the Northern Ireland Science Park (NISP) Connect’s £25k Awards.**

Tactility Factory, founded by academic Trish Belford and former Ulster Professor Ruth Morrow edged out nine rival competitors to pick up the £10,000 prize with their patented technology designed to combine textile design with hard building materials such as concrete.

The team’s versatile, durable concept could have wide-ranging implications for all types of building construction, and received particular credit from the judges for combining Northern Ireland’s long-standing heritage in textiles with cutting-edge building product design.

Trish Belford said:

“We are extremely pleased to have been named winner of this year’s £25k Awards. The assessment process has been testing but ultimately extremely rewarding.

“Competing for this award benefited our business thinking and has given us great insight into the potential of our business on a global scale. This award has greatly boosted our prospects to commercialise our product and go to market. In addition to this, the icing on the cake is receiving a significant financial prize which will provide vital capital at this time enabling us to take advantage of the opportunities that are now presenting themselves.”

There was further success for the University as TrapCop, which allows steam traps to be monitored non-intrusively, and SDW, a digital watermarking technique, won awards in the CleanTech and Hi-Tech categories respectively.

The judging panel included Sinclair Stockman, ex-Chief Scientist of BT, and Damien Callaghan of Intel Capital.

The awards, sponsored by Bank of Ireland and Invest Northern Ireland, were presented at a gala ceremony in the newly refurbished Titanic’s Dock and Pump-House at the NISP.

Steve Orr, Director of NISP Connect, said that the awards have again uncovered local talent with innovative ideas and inspiring ambitions.

“The aim of the awards is to discover intellectual property concepts which can offer measurable impact on not only the local but global economy and that is exactly what we have achieved with the winners, Tactility Factory, and all the other finalists,” he said.

“The quality of entrants this year was exceptional and in particular the judges were impressed with Tactility Factory’s unique leveraging of one of Northern Ireland’s oldest industrial heritages – textiles – into a whole new and exciting building product arena. It already seems that this idea has great global potential with interest already emerging within the Middle East regarding its potential application in the construction of mosques.

“This is undoubtedly a very exciting time for the company and I would like to congratulate them and all our finalists. It really is a case of ‘watch this space’ with all these finalists and I wish them every success in the future,” he concluded.

To find out how we can help your business, contact the Office of Innovation, telephone 028 9036 8019, email enquiry@ulster.ac.uk or http://oi.ulster.ac.uk
Alumni Fund Awards for Academic Excellence

Six students were presented with Alumni Fund Awards for Academic Excellence at a ceremony on the Coleraine campus in November 2009. The awards are made to the undergraduate student with the highest average mark in each faculty at the end of their first year.

The Awards are for £400 (half of which is in the form of book tokens).

The students who received the awards were:

**Eamon Durey**: BA Hons Creative Technologies
**Jill Watson**: BDes Hons 3D Design
**Shweta Agarwal**: BSc Hons Biomedical Engineering
**Roslyn Cooke**: BSc Hons Biomedical Sciences
**Kristen Whitta**: BSc Hons Communication, Advertising and Marketing
**Rachael McMullan**: BSc Hons Accounting

International student Shweta Agarwal, a second year Biomedical Engineering student at the Jordanstown campus, is one of six recipients of the Alumni Fund Awards for Academic Excellence 2009. Shweta was the top overall student in the Faculty of Computing and Engineering in her first year.

Originally from the historic town of Jhansi – which is famous for Queen Rani Laxmi Bai and her sacrifice in the first War of Independence of India – Shweta is the third member of her family to study at the University, following her brother Shantanu and sister Sonal. She says her family, and particularly her father, have been very supportive of her studies and always encouraged her.

She spoke to the Alumni Relations Office about her experience so far:

**How did your family hear about the University of Ulster?**
My brother Shantanu was looking for a university to do a Master of Business. He looked on The Times website, where Ulster rated second for student satisfaction. My family had no connection to Northern Ireland before my brother came here.

**Why did you choose to leave India and come here?**
India is a developing country. When I was looking for a course in Biomedical Engineering in India, only a few colleges offered it and they were new courses. For me Jordanstown has the perfect balance between the country and the city. The campus has everything in one place. There is the peace and quiet necessary for study, and it is by the sea. The sports centre was a big draw. And my brother was here to guide me.

**What is most difficult about being an international student here?**
There is a different culture and environment. I don’t believe language changes a person, but it does highlight their weaknesses and strengths. It can be hard to express yourself clearly and there are difficulties with understanding. Also my course has a placement year but I can’t apply for all placements as I am not an EU student.

**Do you find it hard to fit in? Are you treated differently to local students?**
I used to find it hard to fit in as I am the only international student in my class. My weakness was my language – I was slow to understand conversations and found it hard to join in. I needed to focus on my strength which is my academic ability. My success has given me confidence. I don’t think I am treated differently to local students. I used to get lost all the time, but people here were very helpful, and I was given good guidance.

**What do you miss most about India?**
I miss my family and Indian food – we use a lot of spices in our cooking. I have a large family and I feel connected to all of them. My family gives me the encouragement to work hard. I speak to my father every day and I go home for my holidays – I went home three times last year.

You received the Alumni Fund Excellence Award for being the top student in the Faculty of Computing and Engineering in your first year. Do you think being an international student contributed to this?

I feel that as an international student I am pushed to work harder. I have had to focus on my strength, my academic ability. The main purpose for me to be here is education, so I have to work hard. Winning the award and academic success means it is worthwhile.

**Would you recommend your choices to other international students?**
Yes. There are fewer Indian students in Northern Ireland so the culture seems more blended. The location is perfect for me and the environment is good. The Faculty has been very helpful.

I would like to work in genetic engineering, maybe research, do a PhD. I can use my education to give something to India.

**What would you like to change about your life here?**
I went to boarding school in India, and although I missed my family, my friends became like family to me. I would like to bring them all here with me.
Commonwealth Lifesaving Championships 2009

The Opportunities Fund helped student Catherine Browne to compete as part of the Northern Ireland team at the Commonwealth Lifesaving Championships in Edmonton, Canada, last year.

The 21 demanding events required a unique combination of speed-swimming, underwater swimming, negotiating obstacles – together with considerable lifesaving technical skills, knowledge of first aid and initiative in managing disaster scenarios.

This was the third time Northern Ireland had competed in the championships, competing against teams from Australia, Canada, South Africa, England, Wales, Scotland, Hong Kong and New Zealand.

Catherine won one of the two bronze medals the team brought home, in the rope throw event. She also competed in a number of event finals, not only in team events but individual events as well. As well as winning a bronze medal she also achieved 11th place in the 200 metres obstacle race. She said that the support and encouragement from the team at the side of the pool throughout the race was really heartening and will always be a fond memory.

Catherine would like to thank the supporters of the Alumni Fund, which helped with her travel costs.

Alumni Fund

The Alumni Fund supports the annual Academic Excellence Awards, the Alumni Fund Sports Scholarships, the Opportunities Fund, Scholarships for Students from the Developing World and is used to support the Libraries.

The Alumni Fund enables donations from alumni, staff and former staff of Ulster to enhance the experience and create opportunities for current and future students. If you would like to support the fund you can use the donation form on the reverse of the carrier sheet or make a donation in one of the following ways:

Cheque: made payable to the ‘University of Ulster Foundation’. (USA Donors - cheques should be made payable to the ‘The American Friends of the University of Ulster’).

Credit card: donations can be made over the telephone by calling the Alumni Relations Office on 028 9036 8350 or at http://alumni.ulster.ac.uk

Direct Debit: we can send you a form or you can download one from http://alumni.ulster.ac.uk
Just £10.83 a month for three years, with Gift Aid, is worth £500 to us.

By using Gift Aid, your gift will be increased by the Inland Revenue by 28p for every £1 you give. If you are a higher rate taxpayer you can also claim back 20p in every £1. This means that a donation of £100 from you is worth £128 to us, and if you are a higher rate taxpayer only costs you £75. All you need to do is tick the Gift Aid box on the Donation Form. Further details of Gift Aid are on our website. (USA Donors – Donations to the American Friends are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law).

We welcome every gift, regardless of size. When put together all gifts will make a huge difference to our students now and in the future.

Alumni Fund Sports Scholar

This year’s Alumni Fund Sports Scholar is final year BSc Hons Sport and Exercise Science student Neamh Woods from Omagh.

Neamh has played Gaelic football for over 11 years and in that time she has established herself as one of the top players in Ireland. Having worked her way up through club and County Tyrone age group teams, the pinnacle of her career to date has been her captaining the Ulster Seniors to Inter Provincial glory and being awarded a Senior Ireland All Star Award.

Neamh is a key member of the ladies Gaelic football team at Jordanstown on and off the pitch. She has been integral in the club winning every possible major University title over the last two years and has now taken on the role of Club Secretary. She has won two Irish University All Star Awards and in her spare time she also manages to play some netball. Not one to do anything by half she has recently returned from the Cooke Islands where she was part of the Northern Ireland netball team that finished eighth in the World Youth Championships.

We believe Neamh is a very worthy winner of this year’s Alumni Fund Sports Scholarship Award.
Last year the University celebrated the 160th anniversary of its School of Art and Design, one of the oldest such schools in Ireland and the UK. Since its foundation in 1849, the School has contributed significantly to the creative and artistic life of Northern Ireland and beyond.

The exhibition which ran from 3 December 2009 to 31 January 2010 at the Ormeau Baths Gallery in Belfast was the highlight of a year-long series of events organised to mark this milestone anniversary, and to recognise the history and successes of the School, its alumni and staff. The Exhibition reflected the wide variety of artistic disciplines which have flourished under the institution and on 20 January 2010, the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Richard Barnett held a reception at the gallery.

Guests were welcomed by Professor Deirdre Heenan, Dean of Academic Development at Magee. Highly-esteemed book conservator and bookbinding historian Professor Nicholas Pickwoad spoke on the national significance of the collection. It is a unique historical resource despite little having been known about it until recent years – it is a Cinderella of the library world.

For many donors and supporters of the project this was their first visit to the studio to see how their help has made the project a reality. The conservation team welcomes visits by schools, special interest groups and the wider public. Please contact the conservation studio to arrange a tour on 028 7135 0791.

Fundraising efforts are continuing in order to raise the final target of £55,000. Further details on the project and how to donate can be found at: www.derryraphoelibrary.org

For information on current fundraising priorities and how to donate to Ulster please visit www.ulster.ac.uk/development or contact the Development Office on 028 7032 3208 email: de.caufield@ulster.ac.uk.

We look forward to hearing from you.
North American Events

University staff recently held a series of meetings and events in North America. Receptions for alumni and friends of the University were held in Ottawa, Boston and Washington DC. Unfortunately the planned event in New York had to be cancelled due to severe weather but will be rescheduled for later in the year.

His Excellency Mr Anthony Cary CMG was our host at Earnscliffe, the Residence of the British High Commissioner to Canada, while the Boston event was at the Residence of British Consul General to New England Dr Phil Budden. Both made us feel very welcome, and we are very grateful to them for allowing us to hold our events in their homes.

The final event was in the plush surroundings of the National Press Club in Washington DC which over its 100 year history has hosted Presidents, Prime Ministers, Royalty, entertainers and business leaders and been a base to the United States’ leading journalists.

Alumni at all events were briefed on the University’s exciting plans for the development of its Belfast city centre campus and the expansion of the Magee campus. They were also briefed on the achievements of the University, including the recent UK Research Assessment Exercise which saw Ulster ranked in the top third of all universities – up 18 places and just six places behind QUB.
alumni events and reunions

Tour of Belfast City Hall

In October 2009 Belfast City Hall reopened after renovations lasting two years. A number of graduates went on a tour of the City Hall in November 2009.

Irish Alumni New Year’s Party

A number of Ulster graduates attended the annual Irish Alumni New Year’s Party in the Irish Club in London on 28 January 2010. This event is open to all former students of colleges and universities across the island of Ireland.

Reunion for Alumni in Bavaria

Thursday 27 May 2010

There will be a reunion for Ulster Alumni living in Bavaria, to be held in Kempten on Thursday 27 May 2010.

Around 400 alumni live in Bavaria, due in part to the links between the University of Ulster’s Faculty of Computing and Engineering and educational establishments in Kempten, Augsburg and Gießen, as well as business and humanities graduates.

160 Years of the School of Art and Design

The School of Art and Design celebrated its 160th anniversary in 2009. As part of the celebrations, a retrospective exhibition was held in the Ormeau Baths Gallery, with graduates from the School being invited to a private tour and reunion. Past and present staff came along, as well as over 250 graduates – some of whom had graduated in June along with others who graduated over 50 years ago.

The response to this reunion was overwhelming, and unfortunately we were unable to accommodate all who wished to attend. Another reunion will take place in June this year during the Ulster Festival of Art and Design. Further details will be available closer to the time.

Arboretum Tour

Saturday 5 June 2010

The Coleraine campus is home to the University arboretum with over 90,000 trees on the campus. Professor Brian Rushton, Professor of Botany at the campus will lead a tour of the arboretum on Saturday 5 June. Come along to find out more about this unique site.
Seventh Alumni Golf Challenge

Wednesday 9 June 2010

The seventh annual University of Ulster Alumni Golf Challenge will be held on Wednesday 9 June 2010 at Galgorm Castle Golf and Country Club. This popular event is organised by the University of Ulster Alumni Association, supported by the University's Golf Bursars, and is open to graduates, students, staff and friends of the university.

Tee times are from 12 noon – 14:00.

There is a special price of £120 for a fourball for Ulster golf club members and Ulster graduates to include golf, meal and loads of prizes! Corporate rates are available by contacting Keith Thompson Tel: 028 9036 6721

The competition is an individual and a team event (Stableford format).

Should auld acquaintance be forgot and n’er brought to mind

This year will see the 10th anniversary of the 1999-2000 MSc Biotechnology class at Coleraine.

Graduates from this class are invited to a reunion which will be held in Coleraine from Monday 20 September to Saturday 25 September 2010. Since this class contained a sizeable number of students from Greece, we are also extending the invitation to other international students from other disciplines who attended the Coleraine campus around this period.

As well as celebrating a common experience, the reunion will also be a chance to share important lessons learned in the past ten years from life, love and the universe. The week will be filled with events, overnight trips, some games, some socializing, some dancing, a chance to meet former lecturers and maybe a few motivational speeches.

We would love to see everybody there. If you have any suggestions for the event, would like to help participate in its organisation or recount your experiences in the last ten years in a semi-formal setting or are just thinking about coming along then contact the Alumni Relations Office, alumni@ulster.ac.uk so that we can gauge the possible attendance numbers. Facebook page http://www.facebook.com/event.php?id=298053768961&ref=ts

Reunion for Graduates of Magee College

20 and 21 August 2010

Former students who studied at Magee College before 1971 are invited to a reunion at Magee on 20 and 21 August 2010. Come along to see the changes on campus and get back in touch with old friends.

The weekend will include a reception on Friday evening, a talk and tour of Magee and dinner in the Great Hall on the Saturday.

20 Year Class Reunion

BA Hons Catering Administration 1986-90 (Block 15, Jordanstown)

Alumni from this course are invited to contact Owen Crilly at classof1990block15@googlemail.com about a possible reunion event in late May/early June.

Information on all our events and reunions, both past and future, in Northern Ireland or elsewhere, is listed on http://alumni.ulster.ac.uk or from the Alumni Relations Office on 028 9036 8350 email alumni@ulster.ac.uk

Alumni Association AGM

Monday 10 May 2010 at 7.00pm in the Boardroom, Jordanstown

All graduates and members of the University’s academic and academic-related staff are invited to attend.

For further information and an agenda please telephone
Alumni Relations Office on 028 9036 8350
Ulster graduate Dr Roberta Blackman-Woods, MP for Durham, hosted an informal reception for alumni and friends of the University in the Strangers Dining Room at the House of Commons in early March 2010. Roberta has strong links with the University, having graduated at the Coleraine campus with a BSc Hons in Social Sciences in 1979 and a DPhil in Social Administration and Policy in 1989. She is also a former lecturer in Social Sciences at Coleraine and met her husband, Tim Blackman when he was lecturing there.

Alumni and staff were joined for the occasion by a number of parliamentarians including former Ulster Vice-Chancellor Professor Lord Trevor Smith of the Liberal Democrats, the Reverend Ian Paisley MP and Baroness Paisley of the DUP, Lord Laird and Lord Rogan of the Ulster Unionists and Lord Glentoran of the Conservatives.

Information on all our events and reunions, both past and future, in Northern Ireland or elsewhere, is listed on http://alumni.ulster.ac.uk or from the Alumni Relations Office on 028 9036 8350, email alumni@ulster.ac.uk
Richard Moore, BA Hons Social Administration, 1983

Richard Moore was blinded by a rubber bullet as a ten-year-old schoolboy but he has never allowed blindness to stop him from getting on with his life. Now aged 48, he is happily married to Rita (née Page) and the couple have two daughters Naoimh and Enya. First and foremost a family man, Richard is also a successful businessman, writer, musician, recording artist, radio presenter, founder and chief executive of the successful international humanitarian organisation, Children in Crossfire and last but by no means least, an alumnus of the University of Ulster.

As Richard talks about his life’s experiences to date, his self-deprecating manner makes it easy to forget that he is totally blind. He credits his ability for being able to turn such a life changing and traumatic event into something positive to his parents, Liam and Florrie, and says their example of forgiveness, coupled with the support of his family, neighbours and wider community allowed him to move on.

“To me blindness has been a positive experience. It made me look at life differently and has taken me on a journey that for the most part has been very enjoyable. It has enriched my life, teaching me to focus on what I can do, rather than worry about what I can’t do.”

The second youngest of 12 children, Richard grew up in Derry and was the first in his family to go to university.

“Like many of their generation my parents believed that getting a trade would secure a better future. My older brothers were all doing well as qualified tradesmen and if I hadn’t been blinded, I might have followed the same path.”

Always wanting the best for Richard, his parents considered sending him to a school for the blind but much to his relief, they decided he had already been through enough.

“I had to learn to read and write all over again. It was tough having to learn Braille and typing but thanks to the support of all the teachers and other pupils at Rosemount Primary School and later St Joseph’s Secondary School, I managed.”

Going to university could have been a difficult transition but a combination of factors made it relatively easy.

“Rita and I started dating in 1979, the same year Rita went to Coleraine to study History and Education. The following year, I got an offer to study Social Administration and by happy coincidence another good friend of mine Michael Doherty - who taught me the guitar – decided to go to ‘uni’ as a mature student and was offered a place on the same course.”

Since Richard and Rita had just formed the Long Tower Folk Group – which this year celebrates its 30th anniversary – they decided to travel between Derry and Coleraine.

“Rita drove so that was the lifts sorted and Michael was in the same class, so getting about campus between lectures was sorted,” says Richard pragmatically.

All three graduated in 1983: Rita is now Vice Principal of St Mary’s High School in Limavady and Michael is Director of the Peace and Reconciliation Group in Derry.

Although Richard was delighted to have a tape recorder, courtesy of the RNIB, to record lectures, technology and the level of support were basic by today’s standards. The only concessions to his blindness were that he sat exams in a separate room; an examiner read the questions aloud; he had a manual typewriter to type out the answers; and got an extra 15 minutes for every hour of the exam.

“I developed my own coping mechanisms and systems. Lecturers did what they could to help and other students were always friendly, approachable and very accommodating. I really enjoyed being at Coleraine and never felt out of place. I was just another student but when I got my degree, I felt I’d proved my parents and the wider community right for all their support and faith in me.”

After graduation, Richard forged a successful career as a businessman and musician but as he became increasingly involved in fundraising activities, he came to realise that his day job didn’t give him the same buzz as charity work.

In 1996 he launched Children in Crossfire to help children who were caught in the crossfire of the grinding cycle of poverty and hunger. The charity now works in collaboration with local organisations in Ethiopia, Gambia and Tanzania, to identify sustainable development opportunities, which in turn will help create a better future for the local community.

While building up Children in Crossfire, Richard also embarked on a personal odyssey to find out more about the soldier who fired the rubber bullet which blinded him. His meeting and subsequent friendship with Charles has been well documented.

“Most people accepted and respected my decision to meet Charles but it wasn’t about making statements. It was a personal journey and something I had to do. Forgiveness is a gift to yourself, not to others,” he says.

When His Holiness the Dalai Lama was in Derry to mark the 10th anniversary of Children in Crossfire, he described Richard as his hero saying ‘I preach forgiveness. Richard lives it’.

Since their first meeting in 2007, Charles has visited Derry and stayed at Richard’s home. In May this year, the two men plan to travel to meet the Dalai Lama in India where he lives in exile.

“How I do things is my way of dealing with blindness and while I don’t want to minimise the disability or the effect that it has had on my life, it has given me many amazing opportunities and allowed me to meet inspirational people at home and abroad.”

In 2007 Richard was the subject of a major BBC television documentary, ‘Blind Vision’. His autobiography, Can I Give Him My Eyes? has just been republished by Hachette Books Ireland.

www.childrenincrossfire.org
Brian McLaughlin
BEd Sport and Leisure Studies, 1981

Brian McLaughlin has arguably one of the most high profile and important jobs in Irish sport. The Ulster graduate has recently landed his dream job as rugby’s Ulster senior coach. However, although names including Brian O’Driscoll, Tommy Bowe and Eddie O’Sullivan are familiar to him, he still fondly remembers his roots at the Ulster Polytechnic.

Since graduating in 1981 in Physical Education, Brian’s teaching career has taken him from Kilkeel High School to Wallace High School and in 1992, to the head of department in Royal Belfast Academical Institution (RBAI). Whilst enjoying a successful playing career himself alongside Ireland stars Philip Matthews and Nigel Carr at Ards, Brian is of course most recognisable for his outstanding record at schools cup level particularly at RBAI Boys where he coached the 1st XV squad to five famous Ulster schools cup victories.

Following coaching spells across some of Ulster’s most high profile clubs, in September 2005 Brian took up the role of specialist skills coach with Ireland, under Coach Eddie O’Sullivan, and helped the team to win the Triple Crown in both 2006 and 2007. Indeed, due to his impressive record it seemed inevitable that in June 2009 the former Ards player would be appointed as Ulster’s new coach.

Although it has been nearly 30 years since Brian’s days in the lecture theatre, his current role never takes him too far from Jordanstown’s shores.

“The campus hasn’t changed much since my day, for example the mall is still the same, but the new facilities down at the sports centre are outstanding. The area of expertise, the sports institute and the 3G pitch are the reason the Ulster team train down here.”

Indeed, Brian looks back at his time at the University with happy memories.

“During my time here I had many memorable days with my class colleagues and lecturers, including Walter Bleakley, Ann Curran and John Kerr, there were lots of great characters about. The staff, Hillary O’Neill and others, prepared us really well for PE teaching careers and I got a really well rounded education. However, amongst my fondest memories are the traditional mothers and fathers (ma’s and da’s) nights we used to have in the Sport and Physical Education department, those were great times. I still bump into a few of my old class mates on the PE circuit or elsewhere.”

Outside rugby Brian is a devoted husband and father who enjoys nothing more than spending time with his wife and children. He also has a fondness for watching and playing the occasional tennis match with his son but humbly suggests he is ‘a bit old now’.

Brian’s coaching career has enabled him to meet and work with some of Ireland’s most gifted rugby players, who he also counts as his heroes.

“Brian O’Driscoll, is one of my sporting heroes, I have worked with him from under 21 to senior level and have nothing but admiration for him, he is an outstanding sportsman who is very level headed. Belfast born Nigel Carr is also a sporting hero of mine. He was a fantastic player who I played alongside at Ards but unfortunately his career was cut short due to injuries sustained in an IRA bomb explosion. Nigel and I remain great pals. Outside sport I would have to say my wife Judith is my hero.”

Brian is currently in his first of a two year contract at Ulster and the Newtownards man says that it has always been an ambition.

“I have always aspired to coach my province and I have been very fortunate to be able to do that. Of course it is a challenge; it’s a test of knowledge, man management skills and everything you require as a teacher, but at a level where you are working with adults. From my personal point of view, it is a fresh challenge and one which I am really enjoying.”

The interview was conducted by Helen McConnell, BSc Hons Sports Studies with DIS 2009.

Photo credit: John Dickson, www.dicksondigital.com
Ulster Alumna wins BMJ Award

Patients and carers in the UK are at last able to share their stories of healthcare through digital storytelling – a new way of telling a story in words and pictures so that it can be shared over the internet. People whose voices are not often heard are delighted to share their experiences to help others.

All this has been made possible by the Patient Voices Programme, directed by Ulster alumna Pip Hardy, MSc Lifelong Learning 2007, which has recently won the prestigious British Medical Journal (BMJ) award for ‘Excellence in Healthcare Education’, which recognises an individual or team who has demonstrated outstanding leadership and/or innovation in healthcare education and performance improvement. The programme was also shortlisted in the ‘Health Communicator of the Year’ category.

I was really pleased to discover that Ulster offered the MSc in Lifelong Learning via elearning. Initially my intention was to expand my knowledge of lifelong learning in part by becoming an elearning student, to give me greater insight into what people who are studying by elearning really need in terms of well-designed study programmes. I was really lucky to have good support from my supervisor and also from other students – we developed a strong community of learning, even though we never met face to face, until graduation day!”

Growing interest in the new Patient Voices Programme soon led Pip to focus her studies on the development and delivery of the digital stories. Her dissertation reflects one of the few research studies ever carried out into the uses of digital storytelling – and the only known study looking specifically at how digital storytelling can be used to improve quality and safety in healthcare. Pip commented:

“Doing the research gave me the opportunity to demonstrate the real value of the growing collection of stories. Interviews and focus groups with people in universities and in various parts of the NHS revealed the value of the stories in healthcare education and quality improvement programmes. Although the research has not yet been published in an academic journal, it receives a number of hits on the website every month and we see it cited in a number of places. I think that piece of work really helped to give the Programme credibility and a degree of authority. And now, after a couple of years’ break, I’m starting a PhD to look more closely at the impact of the digital stories.”

Nominating the Programme, Valerie James, Independent Consultant and Honorary Senior Fellow at St George’s, London and Kingston Universities said:

“By offering people the opportunity to tell, hear and share personal stories of birth and death, health and illness, care or the lack of it, Pilgrim Projects hoped to develop a sense of community with the values of humanity and compassion taking precedence over the ‘tyranny of the urgent’ or the need to accomplish more with less.”

The awards ceremony, hosted by Tony Hawks, was held at the London Hilton in Park Lane on 10th March 2010.

Annapurna Trek

Four friends who met at the then New University of Ulster in the 70s, have gone their separate ways, but have stayed in touch over the years – more or less.

They are four 50 somethings with 10 children and one grandchild between them. They work in community and youth projects in Belfast, Bradford and North Wales and all share a commitment to helping people and especially young people reach their true potential.

The four are Chuck Richardson, BSc Hons Professional Development in Community Youth Work 1994; Rowan Davison, BA Hons History 1973; Hugh Bryson, BSc Hons Social Administration 1977 and Kieran Duff, BA Hons Education (English) 1976. It was Chuck’s idea initially but it only took a few pints to persuade the other three to go trekking in the Himalayas.

In October 2009 they flew to Kathmandu and then by bus to Pokhara where they set off for the Annapurna Sanctuary with a guide and a porter. They trekked for ten days. Along the way they caught glimpses of daily life, children walking miles to school, women winnowing rice and millet or washing clothes. The landscape changed from rice terraces to bamboo forest to moorland as they neared the Annapurna Base Camp at 13,500 ft surrounded by some of the highest mountains in the world, including Annapurna South and the sacred Machhapuchhare (The Fishtail). The friends sponsored the Child Welfare Scheme (CWS) and were impressed by the projects they visited in Pokhara supporting street children. “Trip of a lifetime”, they said, “Until the next one!”

If you would like to support the charity go to http://www.justgiving.com/Annapurna4trek

The Patient Voices Programme is delivered by Pilgrim Projects, an education consultancy based in Cambridge that specialises in healthcare quality improvement. Established as a social enterprise in late 2003, the Programme aims to promote greater understanding by facilitating the telling and sharing of the stories of all stakeholders in healthcare - patients, carers, clinicians, managers and policy makers. Shortly after setting up the programme, Pip began her MSc at Ulster:

“I’d been wanting to do some postgraduate work in lifelong learning, but there was nowhere near where I live.

The four have Chuck Richardson, BSc Hons Professional Development in Community Youth Work 1994; Rowan Davison, BA Hons History 1973; Hugh Bryson, BSc Hons Social Administration 1977 and Kieran Duff, BA Hons Education (English) 1976. It was Chuck’s idea initially but it only took a few pints to persuade the other three to go trekking in the Himalayas.

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From left: Rowan Davison, Chuck Richardson, Hugh Bryson, Kieran Duff.
“As a result of seeing my website, Maurice Buckley, the President of the Ireland Chamber of Commerce, got in touch and invited me to exhibit my paintings at their annual Celtic Ball, held each October in the Waldorf Astoria Hotel in New York”, said George.

“Shona is well placed to take up the challenge of leading the operation, having worked in leadership roles in the cultural sector in Northern Ireland for 20 years. In 2007 she was the NI recipient of a prestigious NESTA cultural leadership award. The premise of the award was to place people from science, technology and the arts sectors in the UK with outstanding leaders from around the world. Shona chose to be placed with Naveen Kishore at the Seagull Foundation for the Arts in Calcutta. She spent six months living and working in the cultural sector in India.

Since 2002 she has been the Director of her own company Rubyblue Consultancy, specialising in cultural collaborations from concept through strategic planning, project development and management, fundraising and advocacy, including managing a multi-million pound special funding initiative (Paul Hamlyn Foundation) for Northern Ireland from 2003-2007.

Prior to this Shona was Chief Executive of Imagine Belfast 2008 and delivered a city-wide consultation, and the final Belfast bid. Belfast's campaign to be European Capital of Culture 2008 was a city-wide dialogue and provocation that culminated in the formation of a cultural strategy for the city. Shona led a major consultation exercise involving Belfast's multiple stakeholders, politicians, artists, community and church leaders, and the city's citizens.

Shona also spent six years as Chief Executive of Cinemagic, Northern Ireland's International Film Festival for young people, was Director of the Foyle Film Festival 1996-99; and Head of Exhibition at the Northern Ireland Film Council.

“After leaving my undergraduate studies in my country, Mexico, I decided to travel overseas and find a recognised university to study a postgraduate programme. Since I did not have the economic resources to do it by myself I requested support from public institutions but I failed. I did not give up and fortunately I found the right option to achieve my goal, which was my university. Thanks to the funding that I received I could travel to Northern Ireland and start my MSc Communication, Advertising and Public Relations.

“It is important to highlight that during my postgraduate studies I experienced one of the most incredible periods of my life there as a student and the most important thing is that I acquired an invaluable knowledge about Communication, Advertising and Public Relations which has been the key to achieve my job objectives.

“After completing my postgraduate studies at Ulster I returned to México and
today I work at the Universidad Autónoma de Tamaulipas, the main public university in my province, where I teach advertising modules for graduate and undergraduate communication sciences programmes, at the same time I teach public relations modules at La Salle University Victoria Campus on the Communication Sciences undergraduate programme. I am also responsible for the Communication and Public Information Department of the Supreme Court of Justice of Tamaulipas where I am in charge of a magazine, press releases, radio and TV production, photograph coverage and the design of different graphic templates for institutional campaigns.

“Finally I combine all these activities with one of my passions which is radio. I produce radio commercials as a freelance by recording my own voice in my own studio for different advertising campaigns, both institutional and commercial.

"I want to say hi to all my ex-classmates and ask them to keep in contact by MSN". comunicologo2005@hotmail.com

Pat Loughrey
BA Hons Contemporary History 1976

Distinguished alumnus Pat Loughrey has been appointed as 12th Warden of Goldsmiths, University of London.

Currently serving as a Visiting Professor in the School of Media, Film and Journalism at Coleraine, Pat was for nine years the Director of BBC Nations and Regions, leading a staff of 6,500 based in more than 50 centres across the UK.

While a student at Ulster, he read for a BA in Contemporary History and in 1997 received the First Trust Bank/University of Ulster Distinguished Graduate Award.

A native of Donegal, Pat began his career as a language teacher and freelance broadcaster before being appointed as a radio and then television producer in BBC Northern Ireland. He subsequently became Head of Educational Broadcasting.

In 1991 he was appointed Head of Programmes, and in 1995 Controller of BBC Northern Ireland. He took up his post of Director of Nations and Regions in 2000.

Belfast College of Technology after what he always claimed was the only successful job interview he ever attended. Thereafter his career was shaped by the changing identity of the Tech as it became the Ulster College and then the Ulster Polytechnic before the creation of the University of Ulster in 1984.

Tony was a vital member of the Polytechnic’s successful Combined Humanities programme team both for his teaching but particularly for his administrative skill and patience which often proved crucial at examination boards. He also served as a trade union official and as a member of the College’s Board of Governors and he was heavily involved in the negotiations and planning for the University at the time of the merger.

His love of the United States was kindled by touring many of them adventurously by Greyhound bus as the recipient of the Sir Thomas and Lady Dixon Travelling Scholarship in 1966 and was reinvigorated by his time at Indiana University South Bend in 1990-91. It is unsurprising therefore that Tony’s great contribution to the University was his unswerving championing of American Studies. Both as an enthusiastic teacher and a tireless facilitator of countless exchanges with American universities he enriched the lives of many students of all disciplines from both sides of the Atlantic.

Tony acted as an officer of various organisations furthering transatlantic studies and continues to serve on the committees of the British Universities Transatlantic Exchange Association and the Irish Association for American Studies. He will be greatly missed as a teacher, administrator and wise counsellor. He and Mary will continue to live in Belfast where their retirement projects are both backward and forward looking – they plan to trace their family trees and enjoy their granddaughter.
Professor Welch

The summer of 2009 saw the retirement of one the University's longest-serving professors.

Robert Welch was Professor of English at Ulster for exactly a quarter of a century. A native of Cork, he was educated at UCC and Leeds, and he taught at Leeds and Ife, Nigeria, before arriving at Coleraine, in 1984, to lead the Department of English, Media and Theatre Studies in the newly-created University of Ulster; from 2000 to 2008, he served as the Dean of the Faculty of Arts.

Professor Welch’s main area of academic specialism is Irish Literature in English: he is the author of a number of monographs, including Irish Poetry from Moore to Yeats (1980), A History of Verse Translation from the Irish, 1789-1897 (1988), Changing States: Transformation in Modern Irish Writing (1992), and The Abbey Theatre, 1889-1999: Form and Pressure (1999); he is also the editor of The Oxford Companion to Irish Literature (1996) and of numerous collections of essays, and one of the general editors of The Oxford History of the Irish Book (2006-).

Apart from his literary criticism, Professor Welch is a respected poet, novelist, and playwright, writing in both English and Irish; he has published a number of collections of poetry – and Irish; he has published a number of collections of essays, and one of the general editors of The Oxford History of the Irish Book (2006-).

Professor Welch remains at the University as Professor Emeritus, working on a number of new projects and continuing to share his expertise with his colleagues and students as readily as he has done over the last twenty-five years. Ad multos annos!

Dr Raymond Mullan OBE
MSc Education Management 1988, DUniv 2006

Dr Raymond Mullan OBE, who has taken up an appointment as a Civil Service Commissioner for Northern Ireland, has a long association with the University.

Now retired after a long and distinguished career in further education, Dr Mullan added to his Economics degree by completing his Masters in Education Management at Jordanstown in 1988. In 2006 he was awarded the honorary degree of Doctor of the University (DUniv) in recognition of his distinction in promoting access to further and higher education, having been awarded an OBE in the 2000 New Year’s Honours for his services to education in Northern Ireland.

As Interim Director and Chief Executive of Belfast Metropolitan College during 2008/09, Dr Mullan was involved in the College’s innovative development proposals for the Titanic Quarter. Prior to that he was the Director and Chief Executive of Newry and Kilkeel College of Further Education, which was an Associate College of Ulster and is now part of the Southern Regional College.

“One of the greatest gifts you can give someone is the opportunity to develop themselves but you need to make sure that the necessary support is in place so that they can not only aspire but achieve. We did this at Newry and Kilkeel College by developing a wide variety of access and degree programmes.”

He is chair of Greenshoots-Newry Ltd, an innovation and incubation company supporting fledgling business, which was formed by Newry and Kilkeel College in conjunction with Ulster. He is also a Commissioner of the Northern Ireland Judicial Appointments Commission and is a non-executive Director of the Southern Health and Social Care Trust whilst remaining a member of Newry’s Chamber of Commerce and Trade.

Dr Mullan is one of six Civil Service Commissioners selected through open competition. Commissioners have a statutory responsibility to ensure that selection for appointments to the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) are made on merit, on the basis of fair and open competition. They also hear appeals by civil servants under the NICS Code of Ethics.

He adds that the University’s proactive approach to widening access to education was in line with his own thinking.

"One of the things I enjoyed most about working in the further education sector is that because it is constantly changing, there was no time to get bored as every day brought new challenges,” says Dr Mullan.

He signed on as a part-time student for the three-year Masters programme when he was Head of Business Studies at Newry and Kilkeel College. Although he admits that the academic content and rigour of the course was at times challenging whilst holding down a full-time job, it gave him an opportunity to reflect on the changing role of educators.

“It was also an opportunity to do research and consider the application of theory to practice so that any decisions taken subsequently were better informed.”

Dr Mullan, who played a key role in the development of the Newry and Kilkeel College’s successful access and industrial links programmes, says he adopted a phenomenological approach to leadership, teaching and learning.

“On many occasions I drew on what I had learnt during the Masters programme and found that this helped inform what I was doing.”
New Year Honours 2010

Two senior University figures were recognised in the New Year Honours list. Professor Denise McAulster, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning) becomes a CBE, as does Dr Gerard O’Hare, Chairman of the University of Ulster Foundation.

Professor McAulster is recognised for services to Higher Education in Northern Ireland. Dr O’Hare is honoured for services to Higher Education and to regeneration in Northern Ireland.

Professor McAulster became Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning) in September 2005, having previously held positions as Head of School, School of Public Policy, Economics and Law and Dean of the Faculties of Business and Management and Social Sciences and Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Quality Assurance and Enhancement).

She is also Professor of Health Policy and her research interests and expertise include economic appraisal and evaluation, the economics of contracting and the role of the user in health policy evaluation. Her research projects include work on attitudes to euthanasia and the costs of pharmacological care of the elderly.

She has held a number of public appointments including: membership of the Ministerial Advisory Board, Water Service (NI), the National Board for Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting, interim chair ERINI, membership of the Governing Body of BIFHE and a Board Member of the Northern Ireland Public Sector Enterprises Ltd (NI-CO), Department of Trade and Investment; she is currently chair of the Examinations Board, PSNI and Ulster Educational Partnerships Ltd.

Accolade for Ulster Business Dean

Dean of the Ulster Business School Professor Marie McHugh, will be Chair of the British Academy of Management (BAM) - the leading society for business academics across the UK - this year.

Commenting on her new post, Professor McHugh (DPhil Behavioural Sciences 1997) said:

“I feel very honoured and delighted to become Chair of a highly influential Academy that plays such a major role in developing capability and supporting the delivery of world-class management and business research.

“This role underpins the research, teaching and learning, and knowledge transfer objectives of the Ulster Business School, a faculty that has a very strong profile regionally and nationally and focuses on providing quality education and research that is relevant and which meets market needs.

“I am a longstanding member of the BAM Council, more recently I have had responsibility for the Academy’s nationwide training and development agenda. This is very much focused on building management research capacity across the UK and as part of this I have links with the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) Capacity Building Steering Group.”

Professor McHugh’s involvement in the Academy has focused on building management research capacity and as a member of BAM Executive she has furthered this agenda with the ESRC.

Her role at the Academy supports the research agenda within the Ulster Business School and the strong performance of the Business and Management Research Institute in the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise (RAE), where the quality of 85% of the research submitted was viewed, at minimum, as ‘internationally’ recognised in terms of ‘originality’, ‘significance’ and ‘rigour’.

This prestigious appointment is very opportune, given the exciting developments within the Ulster Business School in terms of its contribution to the development of the Regional Economy.
Five New Professors Appointed to Magee

The University has appointed five new professors to its Magee campus.

All are senior academics with a record of achievement in teaching and research across the University. Each has been based at the campus for several years.

Paddy Gray
BSc Hons Social Sciences 1979
Paddy Gray has been appointed Professor of Housing. He has been a lecturer at Ulster since 1987 and is an expert on housing policy and housing management in the UK and Republic. Currently Vice-President of the Chartered Institute of Housing for the UK and Hong Kong, he will be the first person from Ireland and first academic to become its President in June.

Mary McColgan, Head of School of Sociology and Applied Social Studies, becomes Professor of Social Work. Her research interests include family support and child protection within statutory social services.

Dr Paul Moore,
BA Hons Combined Humanities 1975
Dr Paul Moore, Head of School of Creative Arts, has been appointed Professor of Creative Technologies. He joined the University in 1999 and has been active in the development of the creative arts/industries in the University. His research is focused on the creative industries and ways in which theory and practice can be brought together in training and education. His own practice is in the area of sound art.

He is the Ofcom Content Board member for Northern Ireland and has most recently been appointed as a member of the Digital Britain Consortium and Chair of the NI Digital Participation Hub. A freelance broadcaster with BBC Radio Ulster, he has written and presented documentaries for BBC national radio.

Dr Brandon Hamber, Professor of Peace and Conflict Resolution, is Director of INCORE, the Magee-based Conflict Resolution Institute, which is a joint project of Ulster and the UN University. He is a conflict transformation researcher and practitioner who has worked in South Africa, Northern Ireland, Liberia, Mozambique, the Basque Country and Sierra Leone. He has written extensively on the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the psychological implications of political violence, trauma and the process of transition and reconciliation in South Africa, Northern Ireland and other regions.

Dr Mark Shevlin
BSc Hons Applied Psychology 1992
Dr Mark Shevlin, Reader in Psychology, has been appointed Professor of Psychology. He has lectured at Ulster for 11 years. His research has been in the areas of trauma, post-traumatic stress disorder and psychosis. He recently received an award from the prestigious Economic and Social Research Council to provide statistical training for researchers and postgraduates in latent variable modelling across Northern Ireland for the next three years.

Fellowship Honour for Leading Political Scientist

One of Ireland’s best known political analysts, Professor Paul Arthur, has received a rare accolade for enlightening students at home and abroad and aiding the quest for peace.

The Political Studies Association of Ireland (PSAI), the leading forum for promoting the study of politics both in and out of Ireland, has elected Professor Arthur a Fellow in recognition of outstanding service to the PSAI and, in particular, his promotion of political studies.

Professor Arthur, who is based at the Magee campus, is an internationally recognised authority on Northern Ireland politics, Anglo-Irish relations and Irish America. He is Professor of Politics and was Director of the Graduate Programme in Peace and Conflict Studies from 1994 until last year.

His writings in influential papers such as the New York Times, the Times and Irish Times and frequent broadcasts as a political analyst with Ulster Television and other major outlets helped establish him as an informed and even-handed commentator on the ‘Troubles’ and peace process.

PSAI members include leading academics in universities across Ireland and the UK. It is only the second Fellowship that the PSAI has awarded.

The Fellowship scheme was instituted in 2007 to mark the 25th anniversary of the Association. The first recipient was Professor Tom Garvin of University College Dublin.

Professor Arthur said:

“Acknowledgment by one’s peers makes this a very special honour. I am very grateful to the PSAI for electing me a Fellow and particularly honoured to be following in the footsteps of my friend and colleague, Tom Garvin.”

He was proposed for the honour by Executive Committee member Dr Sandra Buchanan, of INCORE, and the proposal was supported by Professor Marianne Elliott, Director of the Institute of Irish Studies at the University of Liverpool.

Professor Elliott described him as ‘that unusual of academic figures who has, in addition to his teaching and research, played a significant role in bringing political adversaries together and, in the process, has gained the respect of all political parties in Ireland, north and south, as well as wider afield, particularly in North America’.

As such, his reputation has extended far beyond Ireland. He is regularly invited to advise on other conflict zones and speak at international peace conferences. He is particularly sought after in the United States to help develop peace studies programmes and used his recent Fulbright scholarship at Stanford University to advise universities in California, the Dakotas and Oregon.
The First Trust Bank/University of Ulster Distinguished Graduate Award 2009-10 was awarded to John McMullan MBE, Chief Executive of the Bryson Charitable Group, during the graduation ceremonies at Jordanstown in December 2009.

John is a graduate of Ulster three times, having been awarded a Masters in Business Administration in 1993, a BA Hons Business Studies in 1991 and an HNC Business and Finance in 1987.

He is responsible for performance and development of all Group Business Units and Companies, the Group financial performance and the development and implementation of strategy direction as agreed with the Group Board.

John served as the Northern Ireland representative on the national Landfill Tax Credit Forum, and ENTRUST (the regulator of the Landfill Communities Fund) on the operation of the scheme, as well as serving as Chairman of the Visiting Committee for Hydebank Wood Young Offenders’ Centre and Chairman of the Northern Ireland Boards of Visitors and Visiting Committee of Prisons.

John is also Vice-Chair and Hon Treasurer of Belfast Healthy Cities, Hon Treasurer Belfast Hills partnership, Chairs the Visiting Professor’s Panel on Sustainability at the University of Ulster, Chairs the DoE’s Northern Ireland Climate Change Impact Partnership, holds board positions within Bryson Recycling Ltd, Lagan Watersports Ltd, North City Training Ltd (Chairman), Work West Ltd and is a member of DFP’s (CPD) Social Economy Enterprise Working Group. He was a member of the ministerial (DSD) Taskforce on rescourcing the Voluntary and Community sector and The Minister’s Fuel Poverty Taskforce.

He was appointed by the Minister at the Department for Social Development as Chairman of the Northern Ireland Fuel Poverty Advisory Group until 2009 and by the Minister of State at the Department of Public Enterprise (Republic of Ireland) as a board member of the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (Sustainable Energy Ireland).

John was elected a Life Fellow of the Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce (RSA) in 2007; and in 2009 was elected to the RSA Fellowship Council representing Ireland. He was awarded an MBE in the 1998 Birthday Honours list.

The award is made each year to an alumnus/alumna of the University ‘in recognition of outstanding achievement in their chosen field’.

John was presented with a trophy which was been designed and made by Ulster graduate Helen Moore, BA Hons Fine and Applied Arts 2009. Helen is currently a student at the Royal College of Art in London.

Marketing Award for Business Professor

Pauric McGowan, Professor of Entrepreneurship and Business Development in the Ulster Business School has been awarded a Fellowship from the Marketing Institute of Ireland.

Professor McGowan received the honour in recognition of his contribution to the marketing profession and to the work of the Institute itself in Northern Ireland.

Professor McGowan headed the Northern Ireland Centre for Entrepreneurship (NICENT) until May 2009, with responsibility for promoting the enterprise agenda within higher education. He currently lectures in the Department of Marketing, Entrepreneurship and Strategy, specialising in strategic marketing in entrepreneurial firms, and researches in the area of entrepreneurial learning.

He has been actively engaged with business development and business networks for over 25 years.
Jiemin Scoops Chinese Women’s Awards

International Officer Jiemin Tomita has been presented with a prestigious award which recognises the invaluable contribution made by Chinese women from all corners of the UK. Jiemin, Country Manager for China and Hong Kong, was the only candidate to receive the award for her ‘Contribution to Public Life’.

Jiemin received a Mu-Lan Award from Cherie Booth QC and Mei Sim Lai OBE at a ceremony in the House of Lords.

She said:

“It was a great privilege and honour to receive the Mu-Lan Award and meet all these wonderful women at the presentation ceremony.”

She was nominated by Shek Yung Lee OBE, former chairman of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce and former chairman of the Chinese Welfare Association and Danny Wong MBE, chairman of both the Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Chinese Welfare Association.

In her role at Ulster, Jiemin is responsible for recruitment and other partnership links with students and academic institutions in China, Hong Kong, Singapore and Taiwan.

In 2009 she received two accolades for her work – the University’s Community Partnership Award and Outstanding Employee Award from the Chinese Diversity Business Award for Excellence.

The Mu-Lan Award is non-party political and impartially judged by a distinguished panel including Cherie Booth QC, Lady Marguerite Woolf, Mei Sim Lai OBE DL and Alice Yu from London Spectrum Radio.

There are five Mu-Lan awards: Community Woman of the Year, Woman Volunteer of the Year, Contribution to Public Life, Female Benefactor of the Year, and Female Young Achiever of the Year.

Third Time Lucky as Sue Returns to Ulster

25 years on and back at Ulster for the third time, Sue Ward talks about her time at Jordanstown and how the intervening years have set her up perfectly for her new role as Head of International Sales and Marketing at the University.

I find it quite incredible to think it will be 25 years this summer since I first graduated from Ulster. My years as a Sports Studies student seem a lifetime ago, although it was lovely to come back and find some of the people who made such a positive impression on me are still here.

After Ulster I headed off to Loughborough University to complete a PGCE and then spent nine great years teaching PE in Leicester. Everything changed when just after we got married in 1996 my new Scottish husband was offered a job in Belfast. I decided to take a year off from teaching to go back to University to do something completely different. It was the MA in Marketing at Ulster that appealed to me most.

I really enjoyed my year back at Jordanstown. As an undergraduate I had always been a very average student. At 30 I was like a sponge – I thrived as a mature student. I finished my Masters in Marketing with a distinction and a one year contract with the Chartered Institute of Marketing. After this I went to FG Wilson, where I held both Marketing and Change Management roles. From there I moved to the Northern Ireland Tourist Board as Director of Marketing. Both of these posts gave me international experience and contacts that are standing me in good stead now.

And so to the present. I arrived back at Ulster last summer, this time as Head of International Sales and Marketing. My role is about promoting the University in the international marketplace, overseas recruitment and the internationalisation of Ulster.

In a tough market economy and a global marketplace, the students of today can only benefit from a more international experience. From my perspective this is not just about what our international students gain from us but about what we, as a university, choose to learn from our international visitors. The job market is tough for today’s graduates. International dimensions to learning, work experience and life can only serve to strengthen job prospects and broaden personal outlooks. We have much to learn and more to gain.
The University dance outreach team Satellite, in partnership with artists from the University resident dance company Assault Events, are currently delivering a groundbreaking new project, Feedback, to FE Colleges that looks at ways in which social media can help enhance and assist creativity.

Performing arts students from Northern Regional College and South West College have been engaged in a series of music, dance and creative technology workshops since February and are exploring ways of using the social networking site Facebook as a virtual studio environment to support the collaborative creation of a piece of performance.

Sandie Fisher, Lecturer in Dance and Feedback Project Manager said:

“This is an exciting and innovative project that encourages young people to be creative by using social networking sites where they’re used to meeting up and sharing music, video, photos and thoughts. Through their participation in the Feedback project the students are exploring alternative ways of using Facebook that allow them to collaborate and develop creative connections thus widening their access to and increase participation, in creative arts activity.”

Working alongside Sandie is Sophy Smith, Researcher at the Institute of Creative Technologies at De Montfort University Leicester and together they will use this pilot project to research the potential use of online social media as a virtual studio environment for making performance work.

Feedback culminates in June with a ‘Creative Think Tank’ day at the Foyle Arts Building, Magee campus, when all the participating students will come together to share and develop their experience and create more work they can share online. This will then be followed by the launch of an online Facebook archive exhibition.

This project has been supported by the University of Ulster Access Agreement Fund.

The Little Box of Wonders

Staff and students from the School of Creative Arts are currently making final preparations for a very special production to be presented as part of Belfast Children’s Festival. Created by staff and students in Drama, Dance and Music, The Little Box of Wonders is an originally devised performance which has been developed throughout the spring through a series of multi-disciplinary workshops with local school children and visiting artists. Dr Tom Maguire, senior lecturer in Drama, said:

“The idea behind the project has been to explore what happens when you start with an opened box and add theatre, dance, live music and a lot of imagination! The project has started with a series of workshops led by our own drama students in two local primary schools. This process of working closely with the target age-group has provided our students with an array of initial material which they are now editing and developing into a 30-minute professional performance. This development stage is being supported with the input of two leading theatre practitioners.

“We were delighted to be invited by Young at Art to perform The Little Box of Wonders as part of Belfast Children’s Festival which is renowned for producing high quality performances for young people. This is a wonderful opportunity for our students to see a creative project through from the very outset of its development to a final professional presentation.”

The Little Box of Wonders will be presented as part of Belfast Children’s Festival from 27 to 29 May 2010. For further details of performances please log on to www.belfastchildrensfestival.com.

Additional performances of the production for invited school groups will be staged in the Foyle Arts Building, Magee campus on 24 May 2010. This project has been supported by the University of Ulster Access Agreement Fund.
Ulster Festival of Art and Design

Monday 7 June - Saturday 19 June 2010, Belfast campus

The Faculty of Art, Design and the Built Environment has traditionally mounted work by its graduating students in an ‘End of Year Show’. Whilst this has proven to be a very successful event over the years, it became evident that it could offer a more significant contribution to Northern Ireland’s artistic excellence including Belfast’s cultural hub the Cathedral Quarter, its communities and its visitors.

Hence, the Ulster Festival of Art and Design was created in 2008, the only festival of its type in Ireland. It complements the University’s successful and highly visible degree shows, which attract significant audiences. In its short lifespan, the Festival has built a strong following. Its programme includes talks, workshops, screenings, performances, a fashion show, residencies, collaborations and exhibitions all related to art and design – encompassing a broad range of disciplines including photography, ceramics, architecture, fashion, painting, product design, visual communication, textile art, etc.

Some of the highlights over the past two years have included visits by Wayne Hemingway, founder of Red or Dead; international designer, Peter Anderson; fashion designer, Peter O’Brien; Barbara Dawson, Director of the Hugh Lane Gallery, Dublin; Bruno Maag, graphic designer; Jay Osgerby, product designer; Pete Davies, photographer and Fritz Maierhofer, jeweller.

The Festival places great emphasis on producing events of the highest quality, attracting artists and designers of international repute and continuing to assert its reputation for excellence in creativity and innovation.

www.ulsterfestival.com

Empty Spaces Project

In the autumn of last year a number of organisations and individuals met to discuss the idea of making creative use of empty retail and commercial properties in central Belfast.

Following the Arts Council England initiative called Art in Empty Spaces, a scheme to help artists and arts organisations turn vacant high street shops into vibrant artistic places, the Cultural Development Support Scheme granted assistance for a project to bring University projects into unoccupied sites.

Since September 2009, students from Architecture and Visual Communications were involved with their wider community investigating a range of tools that could be employed to educate architects and designers on understanding urban issues beyond the studio.

As a result, students and staff screened an interpretive documentary film with architectural, graphic and photographic work at a number of empty shop units in the Haymarket Arcade (between Royal Avenue and Gresham Street, Belfast) in February this year.

Entitled “What’s Wrong with This Place?” the exhibits were often surprisingly poignant and beautiful observations about the notion of place that move beyond the obvious to explore the people, spaces, history and culture of an area that once formed the heart of Belfast.

One of the on-going objectives of the initiative is to use culture as an important element in revitalising town centres and high streets in the belief that culture should be used not just as a quick fix in a time of crisis, but as a vital element of the high streets of the future. It is hoped that further spaces in central Belfast will be used for other projects by Ulster students in the near future, helping to bring their creativity to a large public audience whilst also promoting art as a natural bed-fellow to shopping and an invaluable aspect of place-making.

A similar initiative is also planned for Derry which is aiming to be up-and-running later this year.
October saw the visit of two inspirational Olympians to the Jordanstown campus – with Olympic silver medalists Colin Jackson CBE (110m hurdles) and Leon Taylor (synchronised diving).

Colin Jackson, who picked up his Olympic medal at the 1988 Seoul games, toured the campus’ multi-million pound sports facilities and met staff and students, handing on some helpful advice to the Athletics Club.

On the tour, the two times World champion and four times European champion, met Michael McKillop, who won gold at the 2008 Paralympics in Beijing, and also works at the Jordanstown sports centre, and praised the University’s attitude to sport.

When Leon Taylor visited the campus, he also gave it a ringing endorsement, saying the University is more than capable of hosting athletes for the London 2012 Games.

The Jordanstown campus has been designated as a pre-Olympic and Paralympic training camp for the Games in two years time.

Leon, who is a BT Ambassador for London 2012, said:

“Comparing the facilities to the Sheffield Institute of Sport where I trained, this is a fantastic facility and because it’s newer you’ve learnt from what’s going well across the water and made improvements. It is an amazing facility, which is being well used, and this should be a fantastic place for anyone looking for a pre-Olympic training camp.”

Leon won his silver medal in the synchronized diving event at the Olympic Games in Athens in 2004. It was Great Britain’s first Olympic medal in diving for 44 years.

Black Tie Ball

The Ulster Sports Academy held its first annual black tie fundraising ball at the Ramada Hotel Belfast, with special guest Sir Steve Redgrave CBE.

The five times Olympic gold medal winning rower joined the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure Nelson McCausland MLA, and Dame Mary Peters DBE, DL, to lend their support to the vision of the Academy to make Ulster the leading third level institution for sport on the island of Ireland.

Welcoming people from the world of business and sport, Vice-Chancellor Professor Richard Barnett said:

“Sir Steve and Dame Mary have demonstrated excellence in sport is what the University is all about. Our partnership with Sport NI has allowed our young people the opportunity to compete, train and succeed in sport.

“Sport is incredibly important to the University of Ulster. Sport is there to help our young people and attract people from disadvantaged backgrounds to further education and I am passionate about sport at Ulster.”

Speaking at the gala event the Minister said:

“The University has made a huge contribution to sport in Northern Ireland and must be congratulated on their commitment to continue in its dedication to sport.

“The University’s partnership with Sport NI with the Sports Institute Northern Ireland based at the wonderful facilities at Jordanstown is a great benefit to athletes looking forward to the 2012 Olympics and beyond.”

Guest of honour Sir Steve Redgrave said:

“Support for sport is extremely important and the theme of today was ‘be inspired’. The best advice I can give in terms of being inspired is to do the best you can all the time. The best preparation, the best training and the best attitude can help you succeed in sport, in business or whatever your discipline may be. If you give it all you’ve got then you can achieve your dreams.”

Sir Steve has been described as ‘the world’s greatest Olympian’ having won five consecutive gold medals between the Los Angeles Olympics in 1984 and the Sydney Olympics in 2000. The rowing star also picked up nine World Championships golds and three Commonwealth Games gold medals in an illustrious career.
Sports and Golf Scholars

Thirty outstanding University sportsmen and women have been honoured for their sporting achievements.

The awards are designed to help students who excel in sport to carry on their studies while achieving the highest level in their sporting discipline.

Ulster Rugby captain and Irish Grand Slam winner Rory Best was guest of honour at the special awards ceremony.

Lending his support to the programme, Rory said:

“It’s brilliant to see that Ulster is recognising excellence in the sporting field and are doing their bit to help them along to also get an education that is vital.

“It’s good to see so many sponsors involved including Lucozade Sport and Kukri.”

As part of the scholars programme, participants are assigned a member of staff as a mentor, to help the student achieve balance between their academic and sporting lives.

At the award ceremony Vice-Chancellor, Professor Richard Barnett said:

“My congratulations to all those who are today receiving scholarship awards.

“We are the leading University for sport on the island of Ireland, but we are not content with that, and over the next few years we intend to secure that position.

The 13 performance scholars include some of Ireland’s top-level athletes such as Olympian James McIlroy, sprinter Amy Foster, world handball champion Dara Daly and Paralympic swimmers Stephen Campbell and Hannah Clarke.

James also picked up a Coach Scholarship along with Northern Ireland under-17 and under-21 coach Conor Marlin.

There were also 14 International Scholarships awarded, which included four Belfast Giants Ice Hockey stars from the United States and Canada and three field hockey internationals from South Africa, France and India, who helped the Jordanstown hockey team to all-Ireland victory in the intervarsity competition.

Tyreone Gaelic football star Neamh Woods was awarded a scholarship from the Alumni Fund. Senior international swimmer Conor Leane was presented with a Commonwealth Games Scholarship as he strives to pick up a medal at this year’s games in India.

Ulster is also backing some of the top golfers on the island of Ireland with academic scholarship awards for six of its students.

Minister for Employment and Learning, Sir Reg Empey, was on hand to present the recipients with their awards.

Golf is one of the University’s focus sports and it is dedicated to its development and putting structures in place with the top golfing organisations.

Ulster students have already shown the benefits of the scholarship scheme as last season they finished up winning the Irish Colleges League, the Irish Intervarsity title, the British Home Nations, and taking the team title in the European Universities competition.

The University has also enlisted the assistance of Bill Donald, Director of Golf at the K-Club, to help develop a strategy to make Ulster an all-island leader in golf.

Sir Reg Empey with Golf Scholars.

The University experienced some top-flight soccer coaching as community coaches from Manchester United FC and Liverpool FC visited for training sessions.

Liverpool FC community coaches visited the Jordanstown campus to train school children in the Merseyside mould, while the men from Old Trafford helped open a state-of-the-art floodlit outdoor soccer and hockey training pitch at Magee.

The £250,000 rubber crumb surface is the first of its kind in Ireland that can be used for both sports. The third generation (3G) pitch’s soft texture helps prevent sports injuries and is especially good for children.

At Jordanstown over 160 school children linked up with the representatives from Liverpool FC.

The group also brought with them the crowning glory of European soccer – the Champions League trophy, which Liverpool FC were awarded to keep following their fifth European win in 2005.
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