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As I reflect on my second year as Chair of Council, I have been greatly encouraged by the first year of the implementation of our strategic plan, Five & Fifty. This University is now taking confident steps in delivering the very best in teaching and research excellence, stretching its global reach and building upon its considerable civic impact.

Ulster University is strongly associated with the prospects of the many other sectors who depend upon our teaching quality, our pioneering research and the power and impact of our leaders and critical thinkers in diverse disciplines and fields. Be that the skills for business and industry, the provision of vital professional specialisms for health and social care locally, or the research that changes lives, Ulster University and the work we do is vital to Northern Ireland’s promise, potential and future development.

Integrating to build the brightest and best future, investments in our physical estate are both enriching campus life and ensuring that the University is a vibrant asset in its community. The £263 million state-of-the-art Belfast campus is reinvigorating the northern edge of the city and redefining the city centre. It marks a new era for the University and is crucial to Belfast’s ambitions for a world-class “smart city” centre in which to live, work and learn. When complete it will bring together the diverse talents of artists, scientists, engineers and business entrepreneurs in a city location. A campus in, and of, the city; it will offer enhanced opportunity for partnership and collaboration with residential, commercial, cultural and social neighbours. The rich and proud creative heart of the campus launched a new commercial platform this year for emerging talent with the opening of UNIQUE, a student-led art and design shop. Overlooking the thirling Cathedral Quarter, it is a fitting reminder of Ulster University’s artistic pedigree and origins.

On the Coleraine campus, our Chancellor Dr James Nesbitt opened the new £5.1 million sports complex, this regional development centre for sporting excellence in the area is accessible to everyone from elite athletes to staff, students and local clubs. The campus also saw the launch of Northern Ireland’s first Enterprise Zone, a valuable proposition to attract inward investment and champion local growth and innovation.

Our ambitions for the Magee campus reached a milestone in autumn of 2017 with the completion of a four storey teaching block. Opening to students in January 2018, it offers a new heart in the heart of the campus. Our commitment to building healthy communities is also progressing with our plans for a Graduate Entry Medical School in the North West. The proposal has garnered strong medical, community, business, academic and political support, addressing as it does the skills and workforce challenges faced by our health care sector.

At the core of research, teaching and university life, are, of course, talented and ambitious students, supported and nurtured by skilled and committed staff – both academic and professional. From medicine and nursing to intelligent systems and the Irish language, the breadth of our staff achievements in the past year showcases the positive impact on our students and the extent of our credentials in diverse disciplines. Alumni continue to make their mark locally and globally in an equally diverse range of subjects, with high points in the past year in music and art reinvigorating our role at the heart of the flourishing creative industries.

Our sustained commitment to widening access and opportunity continues to support students to overcome personal challenges and to ensure that all students who are most able can confidently succeed in carving out high value and rewarding careers through access to our courses. They demonstrate the positive impact this institution is having on our society.

As we invest in the surroundings in which success will be supported to thrive, it is our people and their successes that set Ulster University to the fore in the wider learning opportunities. Alongside this, we continue to maximise our ability to drive industry partnerships and deliver economic and societal impact through research and innovation. From the launch of our Agri-food Research and Development Centre, which will improve health; to the world-leading position of the important Business Development Centre, which will improve economic development; to Northern Ireland’s first agri-food industry, to Northern Ireland’s first data analytics research institute that brings businesses, government and research excellence together at our Magee campus, our focus on research, innovation and industry engagement continues.

A new Legal Innovation Centre positions us as a key player in the legal services sector and reinforces our position as the top institution in the UK for Law research impact. A £2 million Health Technology Hub further enhances our international reputation for the development of life-saving, life-changing technology.

Throughout the year, our research continued to focus on delivering informed analysis of key issues. Research that continues to inform public debate and influences social policy. From the first findings of Northern Ireland’s Health and Wellbeing Study which are helping to shape the future of veteran support services, to the most in-depth study ever conducted into public attitudes towards abortion, I am proud of the increasingly significant and influential role our researchers are playing in areas that are both locally relevant and globally significant.
2016/17 Highlights

1. Ulster University presented a Life Stories event with Ryan Farquhar, Irish motorcycle road racing’s most successful ever rider. Pictured here with Professor Paul Moore.

2. Ulster University launches Legal Innovation Centre. Pictured (l-r) are Andrew Brammer, Allen & Overy; Vice-Chancellor Professor Paddy Nixon; Jason Marty, Baker McKenzie and Professor Jonathan Askin, Brooklyn Law School.

3. Ulster hosted the Irish Netball Intervarsities in February with our talented netball athletes winning the competition for the third year running.

4. Ulster University recognised and rewarded successful industry partnerships and pioneering research at our inaugural Impact Excellence Awards, compèred by Paul Clark MBE.

5. Lidl Northern Ireland awarded highly-skilled Ulster University students the opportunity to kick-start their management career with a £20,000 bursary.

6. Celebrating Biology Week; BSc Hons Biology student Stephanie Ashfield-Beattie with Year 7 pupils Kyle, Millie and Amelia from DH Christie Memorial Primary School.

7. Ulster staff, students and alumni raised over £15,000 through events such as the Belfast City Marathon and four campus cycle for student mental health initiative, Mind Your Mood.

8. Ulster proudly hosted the AHUA 2017 Spring Conference, a landmark UK higher education conference.

9. Ulster University makes debut appearance on University Challenge – Captain Iain Jack with Cathal McIldaid, Catherine Ritchie and Matthew Milliken, and host Jeremy Paxman.

10. Sarah O’Neill, an inspirational young mum from Belfast, graduated with first class honours, less than two years after she donated part of her liver to save her baby son’s life.
At Ulster University we believe that excellence in education encompasses not just the academic rigour of our wide-ranging degree courses, but also the entire student experience.

We have a national and international reputation for teaching excellence and continue to build on this by creating exciting new courses that meet the needs of employers and the aspirations of students.

The quality, talent and dedication of Ulster University staff underpin the student experience which is further enhanced by a wide range of initiatives. This ensures we provide the best physical and social environment and deliver the personal welfare support that students need to develop into world-class graduates.

We are an outward-looking university that is committed to widening access to education. We have built strong partnerships across industry, which creates exceptional opportunities for our students.
Pioneering courses

Ulster University is known as a leader and innovator in education, creating tailored courses that meet the needs of our fast-changing world. In 2017 three such courses produced their first cohort of graduates.

The University’s cutting-edge degree in personalised medicine, BSc (Hons) Stratified Medicine, based at the Clinical Translational Research and Innovation Centre at Altnagelvin Hospital, teaches new approaches to managing chronic diseases such as arthritis, Alzheimer’s disease, diabetes, cardiovascular disease and cancer.

The course, which was the first of its kind in the UK and Ireland, focuses on the development of new technologies and systems to predict disease, select the best treatment, and reduce side effects for individual patients.

The new stratified medicine graduates will apply their skills to bringing the world of medicine a step closer to providing the right treatment, for the right person, at the right time.

The Centre for Renewable Energy (CERE) at the University’s Magee campus also produced its first graduates. CERE offers a range of degrees in engineering covering all aspects of renewable energy, mechanical and manufacturing, and electrical and electronic engineering. The degrees are industry relevant and equip students with highly sought after skills.

In the Arts, the BSc (Hons) in Cinematic Arts delivered its first graduates in 2017. Introduced in 2014, the course brings storytelling to the modern age by considering output to all screens.

In collaboration with Aston University, Birmingham City University and University of London, the University secured £420,000 from the Higher Education Funding Council for England’s (HEFCE) Catalyst Fund. It will use the funding to enhance the graduate attainment levels and employability prospects of students from under-represented groups by delivering initiatives including the Global Ambassadors Scheme, BSc (Hons) Engineering degrees to take part in international work or study.

The University will also enhance its delivery of accredited employability modules that provide students with practical support in relation to their personal and professional development.

Science Shop

Engaging with the community through the University’s Science Shop initiative continues to deliver extensive benefits to both students and community groups alike. During the year, 782 students undertook projects with 69 community groups across a range of disciplines from sports coaching to creative arts.

As part of its drive to widen access to education the University also delivered its Ulster Ambassadors programme through which students present their life story in a school. The aim is to raise aspirations and, in particular, encourage young females to consider studying STEM subjects at university level.

Placement power

Through the University’s strong partnerships with businesses across all sectors, our students can benefit from excellent placement opportunities. Among the long list of businesses that recognise the value of Ulster University placement students is Lidl Northern Ireland, which launched a bursary package worth over £20,000 in 2017.

Students who are successful in their bursary application will get a paid work placement, their university fees funded for the year, access to a senior management mentoring programme and the opportunity to gain first-hand experience in all areas of the retail sector.

In addition, high performers will be offered a part-time job during their final year and have the opportunity to get their final year fees fully paid.

The bursary is an exceptional opportunity for Ulster University students to develop their skills, and equally is an opportunity for Lidl to benefit from the talents of our top-class students.

Ulster University is recognised in the Top 10 UK Universities for widening access to higher education

Continuous innovation

The University continued to innovate this year announcing a new Agri-food Business Development Centre and the Island of Ireland’s first ever football coaching degree.

The Agri-Food Business Development Centre aims to improve the competitive position of Northern Ireland’s important agri-food industry by offering specialist teaching and evidence-informed research on agri-food business and engaging with industry and policy-makers.

The new international centre of excellence will deliver its support using its links with local and international stakeholders such as CAFRE, St. Joseph’s College of Food Marketing, in Philadelphia, the Centres for Competitiveness and Entrepreneurship at Rabson and Harvard and IDM Nations University, in Sri Lanka.

Underpinning its reputation as one of the leading universities for sport, Ulster University teamed up with the Irish Football Association to announce plans to create a unique football coaching degree.

The BSc (Hons) Football Coaching and Business Management degree will be delivered on a part-time basis at the National Football Stadium at Windsor Park. The innovative degree will allow students to combine theory and practice with the completion of professional UEFA coaching qualifications along with an undergraduate degree.

Transforming lives

Ulster University aims to transform lives and is recognised in the Top 10 UK Universities for widening access to higher education. Building on this, the University announced during the year that it is to scale up employability initiatives to tackle barriers to success for the black and minority ethnic students, those from lower socio-economic backgrounds, as well as disabled, mature and part-time students.

As part of its drive to widen access to education the University also delivered its Ulster Ambassadors programme through which students present their life story in a school.

The Science Shop pairs skilled students with groups who are seeking specific expertise, enabling students to apply their knowledge in real-world situations as part of their degree coursework and giving community and voluntary groups access to University knowledge and information resources.

Schools engagement

Inspiring the next generation of students is an important aim of the University, which actively engages with schools throughout the year through its Schools Partnership programme. A range of activities were delivered in the areas of numeracy, art and design, technology, business, ICT, robotics and cyber safety.

These activities, which included Tutoring in Schools, a Dragons’ Den style business challenge, an apps workshop and a Formula 1 kit car challenge, enabled schoolchildren to develop their STEM skills in a fun environment while also giving Ulster University students invaluable hands-on experience that increases their employability prospects.

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Professor Mark Durkin (right) announces Ulster University Business School’s new Agri-food Business Development Centre with Visiting Professor Tracy Hamilton and Mike Johnson at Balmoral Show

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The University is now ranked 37th in the world and 5th in the UK for teaching and research excellence in nursing.

International standing
The University’s international standing was further enhanced when, in the QS World University Rankings by Subject 2017, it was ranked among the world’s elite institutions in nursing and in the top 20 in the UK for four subjects.

The University is now ranked 37th in the world and 5th in the UK for teaching and research excellence in nursing and in the top 20 for architecture/built environment, agriculture/forestry and sports-related subjects.

Further accolades were received at the Education Awards 2017 in Dublin where Ulster University’s School of Education picked up two awards.

The Postgraduate Diploma and MSc in Library & Information Management – accredited by the Chartered Institute for Library and Information Professionals – came out top in the ‘Best Use of Educational Technology’ category and also picked up plaudits in the ‘Overall Excellence in Education’ category.

The innovative postgraduate diploma provides an academic foundation for professional practice and is delivered through online webinar-style classes and discussion forums.

Ulster University was also shortlisted in four additional categories: Best Online Learning Experience; School of Geography & Environmental Sciences; Best Education Outreach Award; May Programme – School of Geography & Environmental Sciences; Business Collaboration Award: Ulster University Business School and Dextree NI; Best Library: Foort Coleraine Life & Health Sciences Library.

Making an impact
In May, the University held its inaugural Impact Excellence Awards, which celebrated the transformational impact its students, graduates and research are having on societies and economies across the globe, and acknowledged the commitment of the University’s local and international industry partners.

Sponsored by NIJobsFinder.co.uk, the Awards recognised the University’s research collaborations and placement partners in the private, public and not-for-profit sectors.

BBC, Kainos, Titanic Foundation Ltd, Citi and the Belfast Health & Social Care Trust were among the placement employers who were acknowledged by Ulster University for their role in supporting the next generation of highly skilled, industry-ready graduates.

Intelesens Ltd, HeartSine Technologies, International North West 200, Jubilee Australia and AXV Ltd received awards for research collaborations with the University that span human rights breaches and employment, connected health, new product development for the automotive market and digital development of the manufacturing and tourism sectors.

Growing student satisfaction
Ulster University’s focus on delivering an excellent student experience was highlighted at the Times Higher Education Awards 2016 where it won the Most Improved Student Experience award.

The award was determined from the results of a student survey, which took into account 21 different features of university life including course structure, lecture quality, social life, campus environment, industry connections and sports facilities.

Ulster University saw a rise of 37 places in the rankings reflecting the University’s commitment to providing a transformative educational experience and nurturing a vibrant student community that prepares graduates to make a positive impact on global societies.

The University also saw its Student Union staff honoured at the NUS Awards 2017. UUSU won the Officer Team of the Year award and obtained Good Green Impact status.

Ulster University won the Most Improved Student Experience award at the THE Awards 2016

Careering ahead
In 2016 the University launched a new online portal offering advice and guidance to young people aspiring for careers in the thriving sports industry, including everything from psychology, coaching and teaching to sports law, journalism and nutrition.

The Careers In portal provides tailored support for users depending on what stage they are at on their career journey, from schoolchildren and university students through to those who have graduated. Users can also explore a series of career journeys of successful sports graduates who offer insight into the steps they took to land their dream jobs.

The University also continued to encourage schoolchildren to explore and consider STEM-related careers, so vital for the development of the Northern Ireland economy. As part of the University’s schools outreach initiative the University delivered a CSI workshop giving schoolchildren from Mercy College the opportunity to put their investigation skills to the test.

Medical milestones
Building on its longstanding history of world-leading medical and health-related teaching, Ulster University has taken further steps to help meet the growing need for more doctors and nurses in Northern Ireland.

Its proposal to develop a medical school in the North West is currently being considered by the Department of Health, and in December 2016 the University submitted an application for accreditation to the General Medical Council (GMC). The GMC accreditation process can be lengthy and the University is keen to be in a position to welcome the first intake of Ulster University medical students in 2019.

The medical school proposal includes a graduate entry focus, and aims to provide broader access to medical training and address the skills and workforce challenges faced by the health care sector.

The University also opened a new Nursing and Midwifery Council competence test centre at Magee campus to meet growing demands for overseas nurses and midwives who wish to work in the UK.

It is one of only three such centres in the UK and delivers the objective structured clinical examination (OSCE), which tests applicants’ skills, knowledge and behaviours in a simulated practice environment.

The new test centre will help ensure that the hundreds of nurses and midwives who apply to work in the UK each year can gain professional registration and are fit to practice in the UK at the required standard.
This year, Ulster University launched its five-year Research & Impact Strategy. It aims to empower Ulster University staff to undertake interdisciplinary research in a supportive environment and to produce internationally excellent and world-leading outputs, with transformative impact. It supports Ulster’s vision to deliver globally significant research with local relevance and to make a positive contribution to society as a whole. This is an ambitious strategy with ambitious targets, which will help increase our research activity, providing the opportunity to transform lives, to drive innovation, to stimulate creativity and culture, and to inform and shape policy.

The strategy is already beginning to show results. In the past year, the University has secured a record number of research grant awards and has undertaken research which has resulted in breakthroughs in cancer treatment. We also established four spin-out companies, launched NI’s first data analytics institute and created a Health Technology Hub.
University researchers continue to lead the global battle against pancreatic cancer

Supporting innovation

In 2017 the University completed its 500th Innovation Voucher project working with Limavady artisan business, The Gourmet Mallow Company, which makes hand-crafted, specialty marshmallows. Ulster University’s state-of-the-art food and consumer testing suite provided specialist expertise to enable the company to analyse calorie count and extend the shelf life of its products.

Ulster University also continues to commercialise its research through spin-out companies – during the past year, four new spin-out companies were created.

Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTPs) continue to play a significant role in establishing local companies as global players and industry leaders through open innovation collaborations with Ulster’s researchers.

The University has a current portfolio of 18 KTPs worth £2.5m and a healthy pipeline of new applicants. In its portfolio are companies that have benefitted from multiple KTPs such as James Lockay Design Ltd, which designs and manufactures positioning equipment for children and young people with special needs. Now on its third KTP the company is aiming to integrate existing and emerging technologies in sensors, data analysis and visualisation into new products.

Likewise, equipment manufacturer Rapid International Ltd has used multiple KTPs to develop new products, introduce computer-aided manufacturing linked to computer-aided design and is currently developing a next generation concrete reclaimer.

Building healthy communities

During the year the University further enhanced its world-leading track record in medical and health-related research with breakthroughs in cancer treatment and a significant investment in new healthcare technology development.

In a world first, Ulster University scientists at the forefront of the battle against prostate cancer, the most common cancer among men in Northern Ireland, discovered a new combined treatment that could effectively prevent tumour growth, spread and patient relapse.

The cancer researchers found that combining an existing hormone therapy, known as androgen deprivation, with a new drug called OCT1002 can improve treatment effectiveness. It works by targeting more resistant cancer cells and preventing malignancy and spread.

The research built on Ulster University’s breakthrough discovery earlier in 2016, that low oxygen levels in prostate cancer tumours are responsible for triggering genetic changes. Those changes accelerate the growth of new cancer cells and can cause patients to relapse within two years of starting the traditional hormone therapy treatment.

The combined therapy may offer a completely new way to treat prostate cancer, increasing the amount of time that hormone therapy works for. The next step is to consider a move to clinical trials so that the combined therapy can be tested, with the ultimate aim of developing tailored treatments for individual prostate cancer patients globally.

The three-year Ulster University study was supported by Prostate Cancer UK through a £213,000 grant from the Movember Foundation.

University researchers also continue to lead the global battle against pancreatic cancer, the fourth most common cause of cancer-related deaths globally.

In 2015 Ulster University scientists identified a new therapy that can selectively target pancreatic cancer tumours using microbubble technology combined with harmless sound waves. A new study, announced in 2017, will investigate if the microbubble technology can provide a similar boost alongside traditional radiotherapy treatments.

Radiotherapy is a very effective way of controlling cancer symptoms but it is limited by poor oxygen supply. The study will examine if the University’s microbubble technology can improve tumour oxygen levels, making the radiotherapy treatment more effective.

The study, led by Ulster University, is being undertaken in partnership with the University of Oxford and is funded with €180,000 from the national charity Pancreatic Cancer Research Fund.

With little progress having been made in pancreatic cancer survival rates over the last 40 years, it is hoped that this innovative research will deliver significant benefits to patients.

To further strengthen its ability to carry out pioneering health-related research, the University announced, in May 2017, a £2m investment in a new Health Technology Hub, which centralises core expertise to support rapid development of new healthcare technology with strong input from clinicians.

£2m investment in a new Health Technology Hub

Located within the Nanotechnology & Integrated Bioengineering Centre in the School of Engineering at Ulster University, the Hub can access expertise from leading programmes such as the BioDevices Lab, the Civil & Environmental Engineering Centre, the Biomedical Engineering Centre, the Centre for Advanced Cardiovascular Research and the Centre for Advanced Health Innovation.

As one of the top ten universities in the UK for world-leading research in biomedical engineering, Ulster University is at the forefront of multi-disciplinary research in nanotechnology, advanced materials, integrated smart sensors, smart computing algorithms and data analytics to provide new technology that is already changing patients’ care pathways.

By bringing together knowledge and expertise, the new Health Technology Hub further enhances the University’s ability to carry out pioneering research which could result in life-changing and life-saving technology and make a global impact on healthcare costs.

Dr Amy Burns (left) with owners of The Gourmet Mallow Company, Yolande and Alan Shannon

World-leading scientist in electromaterials, Professor Gordon Wallace (left) with Ulster University’s Professor Jim McLaughlin launching the new Health Technology Research Hub
Ulster University's research expertise in data analytics research in the University across a range of sectors from personalised medicine to financial technology. Ulster University is partnering with Catalyst Inc. to engage with the wider community and create an entrepreneurial eco-system. Letterkenny Institute of Technology is supporting skills development and delivery of increased research capacity on a cross-border basis.

Through the Lab, the University aims to maximise its industry partnerships and academic collaborations to deliver economic and societal impact with pioneering solutions. One of the key priorities will be to ensure that the Lab leverages the potential of open government data, enabling the research to inform public policy and transform the lives of our citizens.

**Influencing social policy**

Ulster University’s research plays an increasing central role in influencing policy-making. In 2016, the Supreme Court of Northern Ireland ruled that Northern Ireland women are not entitled to free NI’s abortion in England. The University’s researchers will continue to conduct research across the abortion issue and future decision-making on this very emotive topic.

**Navigating BREXIT**

Ulster University took the lead in helping to build a Brexit ready local business economy, by launching a three-stage programme of activity which aims to create practical solutions, and support for businesses in Northern Ireland. The programme, led by Ulster University Business School, began with the launch of an online Brexit Business Toolkit to identify businesses’ perceptions of Brexit. It took into consideration sector size, sector and geographical location, with particular reference to border proximity. It also sought to identify key risks and perceived opportunities associated with Brexit.

After the results of the survey were analysed, a roundtable event took place in June 2017 to discuss the findings. Collaborative discussion with invited businesses identified practical outcomes from the survey to form a Business Toolkit for Brexit which will be used to shape policy and positively influence practice.

A series of workshops were held focusing on the technological innovations to facilitate legal process improvement, and so promote greater economic efficiency and improved access to justice. It will also give students and lawyers the opportunity to familiarise themselves with different types of legal technology software provided by the University’s academic partners, Clio and Caselines.

Technology plays an increasingly central role in legal services. The Centre will undertake research on technological innovations to facilitate legal process improvement, and so promote greater economic efficiency and improved access to justice. The Centre, a collaboration between the School of Law and the School of Computing and Intelligent Systems, is the first of its kind in the UK and was established with support from leading global law firm Allen & Overy and Baker McKenzie.

The Centre will undertake research on legal services. The Centre was launched in March 2017, and was established with support from leading global law firms Allen & Overy and Baker McKenzie.

The report also identified a need for specialist support in public health services and called for a formally recognised body to better guide policy and support key agencies working to support veterans in Northern Ireland.

The research received £750,000 funding over three years from the Forces in Mind Trust. During the year, University researchers also carried out the most in-depth survey of public attitudes to abortion ever conducted in Northern Ireland and presented key findings three years from the Forces in Mind Trust.

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Ulster University is resolutely focused on the needs of our students – past, present and future. We aim to provide an exceptional student-centred learning environment and are committed to the ongoing enhancement of our physical estate to deliver high-quality facilities for students, staff and the community.

On every campus, investments in the University’s physical estate are creating new and improved facilities. During 2017 we reached a number of key milestones in our exciting campus development programmes.
Belfast

In line with Belfast’s vision of being a ‘smart city’, Ulster University is transforming higher education in the heart of Belfast with an investment of £263m to create a dynamic state-of-the-art teaching, learning and research environment. Due for completion in 2019, the campus will provide a space for academia, industry and local communities to collaborate and thrive.

£263m investment into dynamic state-of-the-art teaching, learning and research environment

The first phase of the landmark campus development opened its doors in October 2015 and provides a progressive practice-based learning and teaching environment.

Next generation learning spaces, student hubs and shared spaces increase collaboration across disciplines and nurture the creative talent of the future.

The construction of phase two of the transformation is well underway and the new buildings are now clearly visible above street-level. The emerging new campus is a visible symbol of regeneration, breathing new life into the northern end of Belfast and catalysing further investment and new opportunities for businesses and local communities.

When complete, the campus will be a world-class centre for research and innovation. It will provide further collaborative opportunities for students, staff, neighbours and partner organisations by bringing together the diverse talents of artists, scientists, engineers, and business entrepreneurs on one site.

Nurturing potential

Our infrastructural development programme provides opportunities for enhancing our student offer. During the year, we launched an innovative physical and educational project – the opening of a student-led arts and design shop, UNIQUE, in one of the commercial units on the Belfast campus.

In its conception, the shop is an example of fruitful collaboration between students, staff and the University more broadly. Students from interior design led, as part of a student competition, the design of the interior of the shop; The Arts and Culture Society, staff from the Belfast School of Art, together with the Students’ Union, steered the development of the project, with support from the Research & Impact department, as a pump-prime funder for the redevelopment of the space; and students on the MBA programme advised on the development of the business case.

The shop is home to the emerging talent of arts students, but also an innovative gateway for the public, connecting the University with the city and Belfast’s vibrant artistic community. It effectively changes the face of the Academy Street entrance to the campus and ensures a valuable shop front for our students. Visitors now have the opportunity to view and purchase bespoke pieces crafted by students and alumni, from an array of art and design disciplines.

Coleraine

Sporting triumph

The turn of the year saw Ulster University Chancellor, Dr James Nesbitt, officially open our new £1.5 million state-of-the-art sports complex at the University’s Coleraine campus.

Located at the north end of the estate, adjacent to eight pitches (including one 3G pitch) the complex serves as a regional development centre for sport in the area and bolsters the University’s commitment to sport at all levels, from recreational users to competitive athletes.

The modern facility boasts eight multi-sport indoor courts, a fitness studio for daily classes; sauna and steam room; a fitness suite with a wide range of cardio and resistance training equipment and a dedicated strength and conditioning suite.

Funded by the Department for the Economy, this regional centre of sporting excellence is accessible by everyone, from elite athletes and local clubs to students and staff. The investment underpins the University’s commitment to civic leadership and the development of healthy communities.

During 2017 the complex hosted training camps for professional teams, including the Super Cup II teams. It was awarded official training venue status for the UEFA Women’s U19 European Championship and was used by the Northern Ireland women’s team. It also hosted major competitions including the Irish Netball Intervarsity competition.

Taking advantage of its unique location on the River Bann, the new complex will help to enhance access to and participation in a wide range of sports, including everything from golf and rowing to Gaelic football and surfing.

Breaking new ground

In March, the Provost of the Coleraine campus and the Mayor of Causeway Coast and Glens Borough, signed the contract to develop Northern Ireland’s first Enterprise Zone, paving the way for the University to work with a wide range of partners to champion increased local growth and innovation.

Based on Ulster University land, the public private sector partnership initiative was formally launched at the campus in June. Known as Atlantic Link, it presents a significant economic development opportunity for the North Coast, facilitating collaboration between the Council and University to create a unique and valuable proposition that will attract FDI to the region.

The initial 20-acre site, part of the overall 40-acre designation, is now formally welcoming interest from tenants who will benefit from enhanced...
An £11m, two-year construction project to expand teaching provision at the Magee campus was completed in autumn 2017 and will be open for teaching in early 2018.

GEMS proposal progressing

During 2017 our plans for a Graduate Entry Medical School (GEMS) continued to develop, following the initial submission of our application for accreditation to the General Medical Council.

The proposal – which has drawn strong support from medical, business, academic, community and political stakeholders – aims to provide broader access to medical training and address the skills and workforce challenges faced by the health care sector, mainly in the North West, but also across Northern Ireland as a whole.

As we progress this flagship project, our focus is on strengthening the health and social care workforce and responding to the changing health needs of the population across Northern Ireland. Significantly, our proposal will also see an investment in dedicated ‘state-of-the-science’ infrastructure designed specifically to enhance the experience of our students and staff.

State-of-the-art teaching facilities for more than 4,300 undergraduate and postgraduate students

Ulster University Annual Review 2016/17

Building the Future 24/25
Helping our students to reach their full potential, bring their talents to the attention of the world and engaging positively with the community is important in developing the leaders of the future and building a prosperous and confident Northern Ireland.
Showcasing creative talent

Each year Ulster University’s End of Year shows celebrate the outstanding work of graduating students and the University’s leading role in fostering creative excellence, participation and innovation.

Across cinematic arts, music, drama and design, media, film and journalism, the creative talents of the students are put on show through performances, film screenings, exhibitions, installations, photo imaging and interactive media.

The flagship Graduate Fashion Show once again took place in St. Anne’s Cathedral, Belfast showcasing the work of 28 emerging designers to a capacity crowd of 600. Considered to be one of the premier graduate shows nationally, it is an invaluable opportunity to put our student designers on the fashion map.

Over 90 media, film and journalism students launched their careers by showcasing their short films, photo imaging and interactive media work at the University’s Coleraine campus.

The central role that excellent design plays in everything from product development and 3D digital content and product design, animation, graphics, interactive design, film, and interactive media.

Over 28 emerging designers, installations, photo imaging and interactive media.

The Foyle Arts Building, on Magee campus, was the venue for the drama students to stage a selection of performances and research presentations while music students displayed their vocal and instrumental virtuosity in lunchtime and evening concerts in Derry~Londonderry.

Community engagement

Ulster University’s positive and wide-ranging engagement with the local community is at the heart of its ethos of ‘inclusivity.

During the year the University launched a new art exhibition to showcase young talent from schools across North Belfast, and to inspire young people to take their education and creativity to the next level. Painting, sculpture and ceramic works of year 13 and 14 pupils from seven schools were showcased at the exhibition.

The University also took centre stage on Culture Night 2016 when its Belfast campus hosted a wide range of events as part of the city’s largest cultural celebration. Highlights from the night included The Museum of Tactile Art led by leading charity Blind Children UK, a live experimental drum performance from Ulster University graduate John Macormac and story-writing workshops.

At Christmas, Ulster University’s choir delivered its carol concert in the spectacular surroundings of Clonard Monastery in Belfast, delivering its carol concert in the spectacular surroundings of Clonard Monastery in Belfast, Inspiring the talent and enthusiasm into the community to welcome the festive season.

Mental health initiatives

With a recent National Union of Students report highlighting that eight out of ten students in UK universities experience some form of mental health issue, Ulster University launched two pioneering mental health initiatives during the year to improve the emotional wellbeing of students and tackle the social stigmas associated with seeking support.

Mind Your Mood, managed by Student Support, is an innovative, student-led campaign that launched in partnership with leading mental health charities Action Mental Health and Aware NI. During the year, Action Mental Health delivered Mindset workshops across Ulster University’s four campuses, providing a platform for discussion on mental health challenges and offering advice on enhancing emotional wellbeing. Under the direction of the Development and Alumni relations team, over 220 staff, students, alumni and friends joined forces to raise funds to support Mind Your Mood in a major fundraising campaign for the charity through a series of events in early May – including the Belfast City Marathon, a Four Campus Cycle and a football tournament – leading to £35,000 being raised.

The second initiative was a sport-based mental health programme rolled out in partnership with leading charity, State of Mind Ireland.

The programme used sport as a setting for communicating healthy lifestyle messages around mental health, substance misuse and risk-taking behaviours. It involved group discussion on mental fitness, the practice of mindfulness and practical steps to enhance physical activity. It also used athletes as mental health ambassadors to reduce the stigma attached to mental health issues.

The sports-based programme built on Ulster University’s world-leading research in sport and exercise science, which recently delivered a review of best-practice mental health and wellbeing interventions in sport for Sport Northern Ireland.

Ulster University Annual Review 2016/17

Over 220 staff, students, alumni and friends joined forces to raise £35,000 to support Mind Your Mood, a student-led mental health campaign.
2016/17 saw an increase in donations to the University’s work, boosting philanthropy’s impact across the institution.

Philanthropic support

Philanthropic gifts are increasingly important in enabling the University to enhance the student learning experience as well as our research impact. 2016/17 saw an increase in the number of individuals and corporates donating to the University’s work, increasing philanthropy’s impact across the institution. Thanks to the generosity of alumni, staff, friends and our corporate supporters, we were able to award more scholarships than ever before. These scholarships directly enhance our students’ experience at Ulster, rewarding scholastic achievement and aspiration, supporting entrepreneurship and innovation. They provide opportunities for students to travel in support of their studies and for those challenged by difficult financial or personal circumstances.

The fourth annual Ulster University Scholarships and Awards Ceremony celebrated the achievements and ambitions of those who have received support.

Guests at the ceremony included awarders, their families, staff, donors and alumni as well as corporate supporters of scholarships and awards. These included KPMG, Allen & Overy, SSE Antrim, Nexthink Laboratories, Department of Justice, Subway Ireland and Santander Universities. Santander Universities has provided significant funding to enhance opportunities for student mobility and to support internships, work placements and entrepreneurship.

Additionally the University has received donations from the Rotary Club of Londonderry and AFL-CIO, a USA based federation of unions representing 15.5 million working men and women, to support both local and international students studying the process of peace-building and enable them to share the lessons learnt locally on a

Sporting success

Ulster University offers over 70 sports clubs, covering both team and individual pursuits, involving over 1,900 students. These students currently hold 35 individual and team titles including European and world titles. In 2016/17 our golfers came second in the European Universities Championships and Jordan Sloan was selected to represent Ireland in swimming at the World University Games.

During the year, we hosted a number of intervarsities at our world-class facilities including hockey, cricket, canoeing and netball competitions. The netball interarsity was played in the new state-of-the-art Coleraine indoor sports facility and Ulster University won for the third year in a row.

Over 50 Ulster University students across 14 sports were awarded Performance Sport Scholarships in 2016/17. The scholarships provide funding towards the course fees of high performing athletes for one year and students benefit from flexible study options as well as specialist sports performance services.

During the year, Ulster University also became the official Northern Ireland partner of the Irish Football Association’s Girls’ and Women’s Football Academy and was awarded official training venue status for the UEFA Women’s U19 European Championship.

The Football Academy will provide players with extra coaching and fitness training and will use some of the best coaches and sports scientists in Northern Ireland and beyond. Through the scheme, the University hopes to encourage players to stay at home to develop their game as well as receiving education here.

Further support for sportswomen came in the form of funding from the Department of Communities and Sport NI enabling the University to deliver an initiative as part of a Women in Sport Leadership programme.

Community engagement through sport

Through our Sports Outreach programme we use the abilities and enthusiasm of our students to reach young people in schools and communities at greatest disadvantage. By delivering stimulating and fulfilling research-informed sport and physical activity programmes, students get the opportunity for continuous development of workplace readiness and lifelong skills while at the same time encouraging learning, influencing behaviour and presenting the possibility of a brighter, healthier future to children and young people.

During 2016/17, the Sports Outreach programme delivered 8,867 sport and physical activity sessions creating 106,315 participation opportunities for children and young people in disadvantaged areas. This work took place in 134 schools and involved 80 student volunteers.

Some 600 young people benefitted from the Junior Elks Camps, which were held across the Coleraine, Jordanstown and Magee campuses. The young people get the opportunity to take part in multi skill, multi sport and sport specific camps delivered by six members of Sports Services staff, six members of USU Sport and over 30 specially recruited coaches.

The Harry Gregg Foundation continued to help students from the North Coast area develop their skills both on and off the football pitch announcing £10,000 of sports scholarships. The programme attracts around 1,000 players aged 8–12 and 2,000 spectators each week to the Coleraine campus. The scholarships will support the development of over 20 new student coaches.

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Sporting chance

As part of the University’s commitment to the development of sport in the region it announced a £1 million investment in a major sports programme over the next three years.

The aim is to help sport to thrive at all levels in Northern Ireland, from elite athletes and university teams to local schools and community clubs.

The University will fund over £300,000 worth of scholarships and has created nine new sports development officer posts to drive forward participation and performance in hockey, athletics, rugby, basketball, football, cricket, golf and Gaelic games, both at Ulster University and in the community.

New partnerships with a number of sporting national governing bodies will also be formed.

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The Sports Outreach programme delivered 8,867 sport and physical activity sessions.

Pictured (l-r) Sam Kelly; Dr Nigel Dobson, Ulster University; Chloe McGlade; Alfie Wylie, IFA and Teresa Burns.

The three players are part of the IFA Performance Academy and in receipt of Ulster University sports scholarships.
Global Engagement

Engaging with our international community through the creation of mutually beneficial partnerships, impactful research and through student and staff exchange is central to Ulster University’s aim of delivering academic excellence and embedding Northern Ireland as a place of importance on the world stage. With ambitious targets and our commitment to global engagement at the very heart of our institutional objectives, we have witnessed a revitalisation of our internationalisation activity, and already we have seen our global engagement activity thrive.
This year, our international student community grew by 20% and we welcomed students from 107 nations.

Global access and experiences

Ulster degrees are now more accessible than ever before, with new pathways and programmes and an extended range of scholarship support for the most able international students.

This year, our international student community grew by 20%. We welcomed students from 107 nations, all of whom make a substantive contribution to not only the academic and cultural richness of our University, but also to the learning experience and global outlook of our local students.

Our local students are themselves recognising the value of international experiences – evidenced by the fact that during 2016/17, our Erasmus outward mobility grew by 38%. As an institution, we too have committed to supporting these aspirations and to extending the range and scale of international experiences for all our students, irrespective of background. We currently have 12 Study Abroad partners based in Brazil, China, India and the USA, and 24 Student Exchange partners based in Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Hong Kong, Taiwan and the USA. We have Erasmus+ partnerships with 179 institutions across Europe and the programme continues to be immensely popular with 244 students taking part last year.

Our managed study programmes in China and the USA alone enabled 54 Ulster students to become immersed in histories, languages and cultures other than their own; an experience that many described as transformational.

Among the many students taking advantage of wider international opportunities last year was language and linguistics undergraduate Nicole Tougher who spent time in Laos. She spent a week living at the Elephant Conservation Centre in Sayaboury, Luang Prabang, learning about responsible tourism and elephant conservation, and a week exploring and learning about Lao culture. Nicole described the trip as a challenging but life changing experience that boosted her confidence and gave her an entirely new outlook on life. Through our new Global Ambassador Scheme, students like Nicole are able to use their experiences to earn the EDGE award and gain valuable recognition for all that they have achieved.

Ten students also took part in the first Experience Nashville trip which gave them a two-week cultural immersion in Nashville, Tennessee and the opportunity to engage with a range of academics, employers and social enterprises in the not-for-profit sector. The programme focused on learning about the history of Nashville and Tennessee, with a specific focus on the Civil Rights Movement, the economic growth in the city and the opportunities and challenges inherent in one of the fastest growing cities in the USA.

Global dialogue

In addition to our outreach activity, Ulster’s campuses and staff also played host to an extended range of conferences, dialogues and events, during which a wide range of societal issues and challenges were discussed.

Following the visit of the President of Colombia, Juan Manuel Santos, in November 2016, the University hosted key Colombian academics, politicians and business communities for a conference during which the experiences of societies building peace and transforming from conflict was shared. Delegates included the EU Special Envoy to the Colombian Peace Process and civil society representatives, who worked together with leaders and practitioners to deliver in-depth analysis of a wide range of topics including changes in policing post-ceasefire, legacy and gender issues, human security, compromise, healing, collaboration on economic investment and the attitudinal changes required to build sustainable peace.

The University further strengthened its international research links after a delegation from Korea Conformity Laboratories travelled to Northern Ireland to extend its Memorandum of Understanding with the University. Since 2008, our School of the Built Environment has partnered with the leading testing and certification organisation in Korea, jointly securing over £1.5 million for pioneering research into fire safety engineering.

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Global Engagement

Global Engagement
Ulster University's strategic engagement with China is evident in almost every aspect of our internationalisation activity.

Global Impact: spotlight on China

Ulster University’s strategic engagement with China is evident in almost every aspect of our internationalisation activity. Through our formal partnerships with 20 Chinese universities; our wide range of research links and affiliations; our sports and cultural outreach and through the many students who have studied at Ulster and who have joined our network of Ulster Alumni around the world.

Research collaborations

A two-year joint project between Ulster University and Tsinghua University in Beijing kicked off in April with the aim of producing a new solution based on mobile phone technology, to reduce the risk of people developing a chronic health condition.

Developing partnerships

The School of Nursing is working in partnership with Nanjing University of Chinese Medicine to provide undergraduate and postgraduate education for nursing students. A new International Nursing Studies pathway is being developed within the BSc (Hons) Health and Wellbeing programme at Magee and the first cohort of 20 students from China will undertake this study from 2018/19. On completion of their licensing examinations in China, the students will return to undertake the MSc Nursing at Magee. Opportunities for student and staff exchanges are also being progressed with some activities contributing to EDGE awards (given for completing developmental extra-curricular activities) for home students.

During the year the Minister Counsellor for Science and Technology from the Chinese Embassy in the UK, Mr Sunan Jiang, visited Ulster University where he presented the China Sciences Innovation Strategy and highlighted a number of opportunities for future collaboration between China and the UK in the fields of science and innovation.

There were a number of other visits by Chinese officials during the year including six visitors from Beijing Orient Institute of Measurement and Test who undertook a three-week research exchange and training in our Centre for Sustainable Technologies, School of the Built Environment. Following visits from Anyang Normal University and Shaanxi University of Science and Technology, two Memoranda of Understanding were signed.

Over 18,000 pupils from 153 schools have registered with CUII and almost 3,000 pupils sat a Chinese proficiency test during the year.

Ulster University’s Confucius Institute hosted Chinese New Year celebrations

Chinese summer school

The School of Education welcomed 14 University English language teachers from Hebei GEO University in China, one of Ulster’s partner universities, for a month-long Continuing Professional Development summer school.

The aim was to improve the participants’ teaching skills, and in particular to help them develop a more effective way to teach their learners English and to make them fluent English speakers with appropriate cultural understanding. It was an opportunity for the Hebei English teachers to learn cutting-edge English language teaching techniques from the School’s education experts and to try them out in a series of microteaching sessions. Topics covered included teaching young learners, drama, active learning, digital literacy, cultural adjustment, language assessment and ICT in language learning.

Chinese New Year

Ulster University was proud to host the Guangzhou Art Troupe to celebrate the Chinese New Year and mark the Year of the Rooster at a special event held at The MAC in Belfast.

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Chinese New Year

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The diversity of our staff and student body is one of the great strengths of the University, enriching the experience of all and creating a positive and outward-looking community. The exceptional accomplishments of many within that community were recognised during the year and though they are too numerous to be fully detailed, some of the most notable are highlighted.
Ulster University's people power

The quality and achievements of Ulster's teaching and research staff were highlighted in a number of awards and accomplishments during the year.

Victor Gault, Professor of Experimental Medicine, was awarded the RD Lawrence Lecture Award and presented the RD Lawrence Lecture at the 2017 Diabetes UK Professional Conference. Ulster University scooped a number of awards at the Royal College of Nursing Northern Ireland Nurse of the Year Awards 2017. Neal Cook, Reader in the School of Nursing, won the Nursing Research Award for leading research aimed at enhancing the practice learning element of a pre-registration nursing curriculum.

Sarah Penney, Teaching Fellow in the School of Nursing, won the Learning in Practice Award, sponsored by the Open University. Sarah was nominated for her leadership of the 'My Home Life' programme which provides support to care home managers to improve the quality of life for patients and residents. An award to celebrate outstanding achievement in nursing, sponsored by the Northern Ireland Practice and Education Council, was presented to Professor Tanya McCance, Director of the Institute of Nursing and Health Research for her exceptional contribution to nursing research.

Marking his outstanding contribution to the field of microscopy across both the life and physical sciences, Vyvyan Howard, Professor of Bioimaging, was awarded the prestigious Royal Microscopical Society (RMS) President's Medal, first launched in 2014. Professor Howard, Emeritus Professor at Ulster University, has served as both the Honorary Treasurer and President of the RMS, as well as holding the post of general editor of the 'Journal of Microscopy' from 1986–1991.

Ulster University picked up two key prizes in the 18th annual Northern Ireland Healthcare Awards. Researchers from the Northern Ireland Connected Health Innovation Centre won the award for the ‘Most Innovative Use of an E-Health Solution to Improve Patient Care and Safety’ and Ulster University pharmacy student, Oliver McKee picked up the Pharmacy Student Leadership Award.

Three Ulster University researchers – Dr Bryan Gardiner, School of Computing and Intelligent Systems and Drs Jessica Leigh Doyle and Thomas Hansen, Transitional Justice Institute – were awarded prestigious 2017 Charlemont Award grants for their research projects.

Professor Scott Kelso, Visiting Professor at the Intelligent Systems Research Centre and native of DERiQ–Londonderg, was admitted to The Royal Irish Academy, Ireland's leading body of experts in sciences and humanities. Taking up key positions were Dr Robert Eadele, academic lead for civil engineering and MSc Infrastructure Engineering course director, who was appointed Chair of Engineers Ireland Northern Region and Dr Halli Comer, lecturer in Irish and member of the Research Institute for Irish and Celtic Studies. Dr Comer was elected as President of Conradh na Gaeilge – a social and cultural organisation which promotes the Irish language in Ireland and worldwide.

Positive impact

The fourth annual Students’ Union Learning and Teaching awards took place to celebrate the 340 staff and student representatives – nominated by the student body – who had made the most positive and influential impact on their learning experience at Ulster University. Dr Liz Doherty won the Inspirational Teacher of the Year Award 2017.

Student success

The achievements of a number of students and alumni were also recognised during the year.

BSc Hons Environmental Health student Sarah Jane Hunter won a Waste Industry Safety and Health (WISH) NI Ambassador Award for her work on health and safety best practice in vehicle visibility. The Vice-President of SoundCloud, Sonia Flynn, was named First Trust Bank/Ulster University Distinguished Graduate of the Year. Sonya graduated from Ulster University in 1997 with a BA in Applied Languages. She is responsible for the global expansion of SoundCloud, the world's largest music and audio platform, which already has over 172 million monthly listeners. Two of the University’s art graduates won international acclaim during the year.

Adding to his many other awards, Ulster University graduate and renowned artist, illustrator and writer Oliver Jeffers, won a prestigious accolade as part of the British Council’s Alumni Awards. Mohammed Sami Al Amili (Sami), who graduated in 2016 with a degree in Fine Art was Global Winner of the Visual Art and Design category at the prestigious 2016 Undergraduate Awards, the world’s largest awards recognising undergraduate excellence across the sciences, humanities, business and creative arts. Born in Iraq, Sami created a collection of acrylic artworks that was inspired by his experience of Iraq’s turbulent history. Several students overcame challenging personal circumstances to achieve their degrees, and their success served as an inspiration to the Ulster University community.

Hollie George, who graduated with a BSc Sociology & Criminology, was in foster care for most of her life leaving her with some confidence issues, but she received a wide range of advice and support through Ulster’s Widening Access and Participation programme. The programme helps those who are currently underrepresented in higher education to gain access to higher education and go on to secure high-value careers. Hollie has now secured a position with PwC.

Inspiring People
Welcoming friends

The University was pleased to welcome a number of alumni and friends during the year to share their personal stories and professional insights.

Among these was Sir Richard Needham, Britain’s longest serving minister in Northern Ireland. Sir Richard, who was the driving force behind many local regeneration schemes including Laganside and Foyleside, delivered the 2016 Civic Lecture at the Belfast campus. His lecture, entitled “Tale of two cities: Belfast and Bristol. Past, Present and Smart Future”, drew parallels between the old port city and Bristol.

The annual Chancellor’s lecture was delivered by Ulster University honorary graduate Dr Christopher Moran, a successful entrepreneur and Chair of Co-operation Ireland.

Dr Christopher Moran

The latest in Ulster University’s Life Stories series, which shines a spotlight on the successful careers of the University’s alumni and friends, put record-breaking road racer Ryan Farquhar in the hot seat. Ryan has amassed an impressive 846 race wins and podium placings since 1995, making him Irish motorcycle road racing’s most successful rider ever. He shared the highs and lows of his sporting career in an inspiring interview at the Riverside Theatre.

Dr James Nesbitt, Chancellor and Professor Paddy Nixon, Vice-Chancellor

The University was pleased to welcome a number of alumni and friends during the year to share their personal stories and professional insights.

In our honorary degree awards the University recognised the contribution, talent and integrity of leading minds from the worlds of arts, politics, engineering, sport, business and the community.

The honorary degree of Doctor of Science (DSc) was conferred on Wendy Blundell, Director of UK Regions of the Institution of Civil Engineers, in recognition of her distinguished career in civil engineering and her positive influence as an exceptional role model for young women.

Professors Peter Sachs

In recognition of her outstanding contribution to Ulster University and to the business community in Northern Ireland, former honorary treasurer of the University, Rosemary Peters-Gallagher received the honorary degree of Doctor of Science (DSc).

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Financial Review

Despite the challenging political and economic environment in which the University operated, particularly with the absence of the Executive during the year and uncertainty around the consequences of Brexit, it is pleasing that the University has been able to operate in line with the approved finance strategy targets for the last 12 months with a reported surplus of £14.4m against a deficit in the previous year of £2.8m. In particular this reflects the impact of the cost reduction programme that had been completed in the previous year as well as an increase in government grant funding and an increase in earnings through external research projects which is in line with the targets set through the University’s new “Five & Fifty” Strategic plan.
Financial statements

The financial statements comprise the financial results of the University consolidated with the results of its subsidiary company. The University is an independent educational charity whose legal status is derived from a Royal Charter granted in 1984. The distinctiveness of the University within the higher education sector places it within a small group of institutions that are research-engaged and business-focused with significant commercialisation of research and major knowledge transfer relationships. It has a focus on contributing to economic, social and cultural development in Northern Ireland and its global standing.

Future financial health

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financial Sustainability Indicators</th>
<th>2017 Actual</th>
<th>2016 Actual</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Surplus/(deficit) for the year as a % of total income</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>This indicates the level of return necessary for investment in capital.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earnings before Interest, Tax, Depreciation and Amortisation (EBITDA)</td>
<td>£32.9m</td>
<td>£19.9m</td>
<td>This is a measure of operating surplus excluding accounting adjustments and finance charges. It is a good indicator of financial capability to service debt and/or capital expenditure from internally generated cash.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liquidity ratio</td>
<td>239 days</td>
<td>250 days</td>
<td>This measures our ability to fund short term cash requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current assets to current liabilities</td>
<td>3.6:1</td>
<td>3.8:1</td>
<td>An indicator of financial strength to meet short term liabilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Income from Non-Government sources</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>23.3%</td>
<td>This measures the diversification of income sources.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary of financial position

Key Performance Indicators from the financial statements.

Long term borrowing indicators

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year Ended 31 July</th>
<th>2017 Actual</th>
<th>2016 Actual</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total income £m</td>
<td>203.2</td>
<td>188.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash generated by operating activities in £m</td>
<td>26.8</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EBITDA £m</td>
<td>32.9</td>
<td>19.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net assets £m</td>
<td>2773</td>
<td>259.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The following tables provide further information on the University’s financial statements.

**Where the money comes from - £203m**
- 43.9% Funding Body Grants
- 36.9% Tuition Fees and Education Contracts
- 11.1% Research Grants and Contracts
- 5.9% Investment Income, Donations and Endowments
- 1.1% Other Income

**How the University spends the money - £190m**
- 18% Academic Departments
- 12% Research Grants and Contracts
- 10% Services for Students
- 9% Staff and Student Facilities
- 8% Premises
- 6% Residences and Catering
- 6% Running the University
- 6% Other

The underlying financial strength of the University is demonstrated by the financial worth which is shown below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financial worth of the University £m</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excluding Pension</td>
<td>319</td>
<td>323</td>
<td>329</td>
<td>334</td>
<td>330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pension Liability</td>
<td>-62</td>
<td>-63</td>
<td>-64</td>
<td>-61</td>
<td>-67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The net cash inflow from operating activities for the year was £26.8m (2016: £10.3m), interest paid totalled £0.8m (2016: £0.8m), and interest received totalled £0.9m (2016 £1.3m). The main movement in cash is the impact of net capital expenditure during the year of £33.8m of which £21m relates to the Belfast development. Throughout the year the University operated with a cash surplus and in line with its banking covenants. All treasury decisions are undertaken within the framework of the University’s treasury policy. The underlying principle of this policy is that the University operates a low risk approach in managing its investments and liquidity. All funds are placed with counter parties whose underlying credit rating is monitored against minimum criteria.

Endowment assets at the year end were £9.0m and are managed by Rathbones Investment Management.

During the year £40.1m was spent on acquiring fixed assets against which £6.3m of capital grants were received. The table below shows the impact of this capital investment on our cash balances.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cash movement and capital expenditure 2012/13 to 2016/17</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Net Cash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Treasury, borrowings and investments**

Net cash decreased by £6.4m during the year. The movement in funds is summarised below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2017 £m</th>
<th>2016 £m</th>
<th>Change £m</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Investments and short term deposits</td>
<td>107.2</td>
<td>106.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash at bank and in hand</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>24.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bank loans</td>
<td>(77.3)</td>
<td>(77.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net cash</td>
<td>47.2</td>
<td>53.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Council Composition

Ex-Officio Members

Pro-Chancellors
Mr J Hunter

Vice-Chancellor
Professor P Nixon

Honorary Treasurer
Mr D Clements

President of the Students’ Union
Mr C Mackey

Appointed Members
Eight persons not being members of staff or students of the University
Mr A Langan
Mr P Lobban
Ms M McKee
Dr P McNaney
Mrs J Pyper
Mrs H Quigley
Sir Robert Salisbury
Dr J Stuart

Elected Members
Two members of Academic Staff
Professor M Stringer
Dr K Burnett

One member of Academic-Related Staff
Mrs H Bingham

One member of Non-Academic Staff
Mrs L McKeown

Audit Committee Composition
Members appointed by the Council
Mr A Langan (Chair)
Mrs H Bingham
Dr K Burnett
Ms M McKee
Mrs J Pyper
Mrs H Quigley

Council Committee

Governance, Nominations and Remuneration Committee Composition

Chairman of Council
Mr J Hunter

Vice-Chancellor
Professor P Nixon

Honorary Treasurer
Mr D Clements

Council members
Mr A Langan
Dr J Stuart

Independent members
Ms K Erwin
Dame Geraldine Keegan
Professor D Licence

Statement of Primary Responsibilities
The University has also adopted a statement of primary responsibilities which is available for download at:
https://ulster.ac.uk/
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This publication is available in alternative formats on request from the Marketing and Communications Department.