Introduction from the Provost

This year, 2017, was the 425th anniversary of the University since our founding by charter from Elizabeth the First in 1592. To commemorate we brought out a book, *Trinity 425*, of photos of the campus taken by students, staff and graduates, and we held a 425 Symposium in September. Six historians gave addresses, looking at key historical periods, and I myself gave the final address on Trinity in its fifth century - which began in 1992 and will end in 2092.

It was a great event, opened by An Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar, T.D. The significance was lost on no one that, in this historic 425th year, we have, for the first time ever, a Trinity graduate as Taoiseach. In other respects too, 2017 was a good year of achievement and consolidation.

It began excellently in January with our becoming a member of LERU, the League of European Research Universities, a powerful EU research and education policy group of Europe’s top 20 universities. We explain what membership will mean for Trinity and Ireland in Chapter 5, *Trinity joins LERU*.

Trinity was accepted to LERU thanks to our success in education, research and innovation, and we received further endorsement of this during the year – in September we learnt that we have gone up in all the major rankings, the beginning of the reversal of the decline that set in in 2009, and that for the third year running, private equity and venture-focused research firm, Pitchbook has rated us Europe’s Number 1 university for educating entrepreneurs. In Chapter 6, *Innovation and Enterprise*, we look at some of the great innovation being carried out by staff and students on campus.

And this academic year, 2016-17, the first cohort of students completed their Foundation Year in Lady Margaret Hall (LMH) in Oxford as a result of a partnership between LMH and Trinity, with LMH adapting the Trinity Access Programme (TAP) Foundation Course to the context of Oxford University. The Trinity Access Programmes are about combatting inequality of educational opportunity, and Trinity is proud to be spearheading access in the wider international environment – we are also partnering with the NGO, College for Every Student, in the US. In Chapter 9, *Opening Access to Education*, we talk about these initiatives.

Work is underway on the new €80 million Trinity Business School, designed by Scott Tallon Walker architects, which will be completed end 2018. The Printing House Square project, on the former Oisín House site, comprising 250 new student bedrooms along with a new health unit, disability services and sports facilities has been designed by McCullough Mulvin architects, with project completion envisaged for August 2019. You can read about these and our other key capital development projects in Chapter 10, *Developing the Campus*.

Education, Research and Public Engagement are at the heart of everything we do. That’s education in its broader sense – what happens inside and outside the lecture room and library. In Chapter 8, *The Student Experience* and
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Chapter 11, Trinity Sport - Raising Our Game, we focus on the huge range of extracurricular activities on campus, and the opportunities they give our students to develop skills like leadership, team work, volunteering, public speaking, fund raising and personal exploration.

We interview three new professors – in Creative Technologies, Cognitive Neuroscience, and Poetry – and hear about their exciting research. And in Chapter 4, Research Case Studies, 12 of our researchers across our three faculties detail some of their research projects – from the sustainability potential of ICT-mediated urban food-sharing, to the recovery, representation and analysis of marginalized identities in theatre and performance; from ‘ethnopharmacology’, the use of natural or traditional medicines, to the phenomenon of ‘post-truth’ (where objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief).

As in previous years, public lectures, symposia and talks, and exhibitions, films and performances were some of the key ways in which Trinity delivered on our commitment to ‘engage wider society’. We talk about some of these in Chapter 7, Public Engagement. Some of my favourite events, from a very competitive field, include the Trinity Creative Challenge, now in its second year, and ‘the Reformation at 500’, an initiative of our Confederal School of Religions, Peace Studies and Theology together with the Lutheran Church in Ireland, to mark the quincentenary of the Reformation - it included a symposium and a travelling exhibition, the ‘Reformation Roadshow’, an initiative of the German government and Lutheran Church which visited 67 places in nineteen European countries.

And not forgetting the great programme of events marking the 50th anniversary of the Berkeley Library. It’s hard for many of us to believe the Berkeley – always the enfant terrible among Trinity buildings – is fifty. It looks as fresh and iconic as when it was built in 1967 following a fundraising drive, and is a reminder to us all to be daring, resolute and adventurous, not just in our buildings, but in all our initiatives.

My thanks to the whole community - staff, students and alumni - for another wonderful Trinity year.

Dr Patrick Prendergast
Provost & President
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