

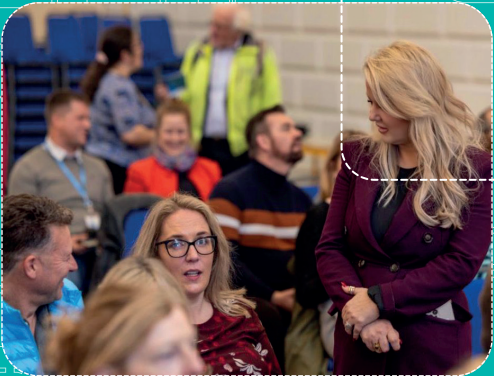
# Civic Engagement For Societal Impact

ACTION PLAN 2024 - 2026



Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath  
Trinity College Dublin

Ollscoil Átha Cliath | The University of Dublin



# contents

02 Introduction: What is a Civically Engaged University?

03 Advancing Civic Engagement for Societal Impact

04 Our Vision

06 Action Plan Development Team

07 Rapid Response Group

08 Plan Development Process

10 Emerging Themes

11 Engagement & Innovation Dimensions

12 Prioritisation Criteria

13 Action Plan: Tier 1 - 3 Activities

20 Concluding Thoughts





# Introduction: What is a Civically Engaged University?

Trinity College Dublin (Trinity) is deeply committed to academic excellence that benefits not only Ireland but also the European Union and our international community. Within our institutional guiding documents, we recognise that engagement with society is woven into the very fabric of university life. It is our responsibility to harness our collective expertise, engage profoundly with our diverse publics, and expand our local and global impact.

As a civically engaged university, Trinity actively strives to fulfil its social responsibilities by advancing knowledge for the public good. We not only prepare our students and support our staff in becoming active members of society, but also leverage our expertise and resources to address challenges and deliver societal benefits.

In 2022, Professor Jo-Hanna Ivers was appointed as Trinity's first Associate Dean for Civic Engagement and Societal Impact. Under her leadership, this Action Planning process was initiated to encourage conversations on the necessary supports for Civic Engagement and Societal Impact to thrive. This inclusive process engaged the University community and resulted in a prioritised set of actions to be implemented between 2024 and 2026.

**Through this Plan, Trinity aims to advance the societal impact from its civic engagement efforts by:**

- Promoting public dialogue and debate, welcoming diverse voices and perspectives;
- Nurturing mutually beneficial partnerships and collaborations across various sectors;
- Engaging with policymakers to inform public policy debates and advocate for evidence-based decision-making;
- Contributing to the well-being of individuals and communities, supporting the achievement of civic engagement goals;
- Advancing responsible practices in our operations, exemplifying environmental stewardship and ethical behaviours;
- Supporting, celebrating, and rewarding quality approaches to engagement and impact; and
- Recognising participation as an essential component in addressing social inequalities and fostering social cohesion.

“ We are a force  
for good in  
the world ”





## Advancing Civic Engagement for Societal Impact

Civic engagement, at Trinity, refers to the active involvement of our students, faculty, staff, and alumni in their communities to address societal issues, promote democratic values, and foster positive social change. This commitment to civic responsibility and the cultivation of associated knowledge, skills, and attitudes enriches the academic experience, delivers impactful research and scholarship, and fosters collective action for the public good.

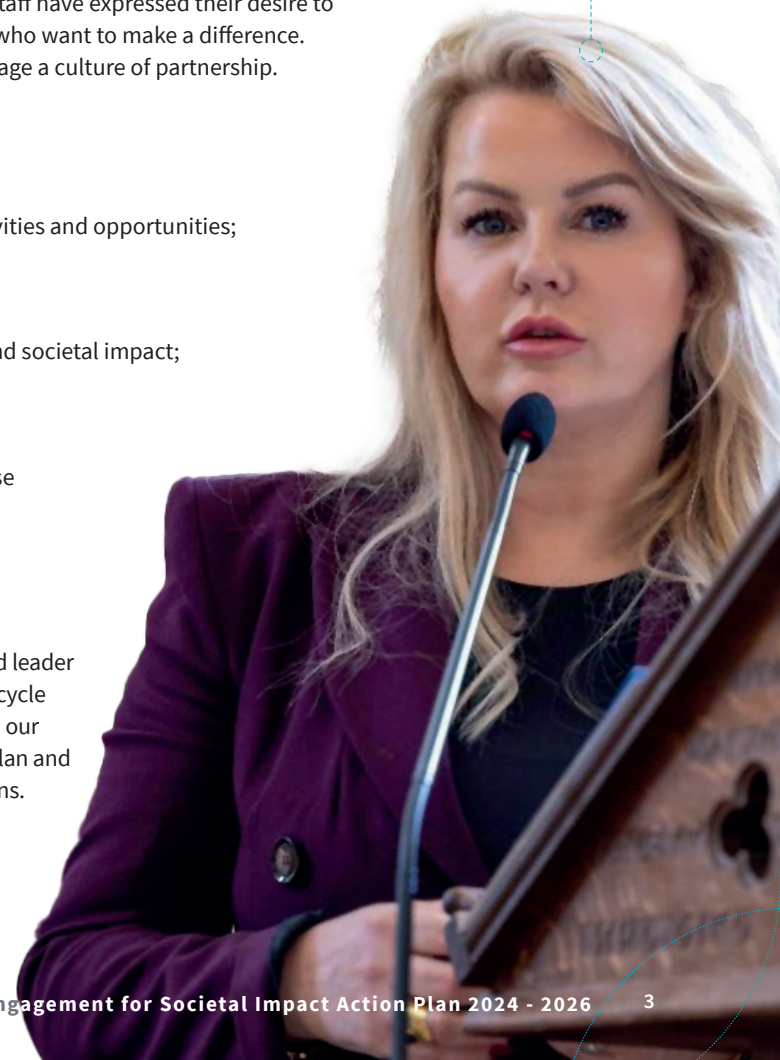
I am delighted to share this ambitious Civic Engagement for Societal Impact (CESI) Action Plan which is a testament to the incredible work undertaken to create a more civically engaged university with positive impact. Across Trinity, students and staff have expressed their desire to celebrate existing achievements in civic engagement and advance an ecosystem that further enables those who want to make a difference. This Action Plan is a tangible way to do just that. It identifies the resources and supports required to encourage a culture of partnership. It emphasises collective knowledge and expertise to generate innovative solutions for societal impact.

### Implementing this Plan will achieve the following outcomes:

- We have greater awareness of Trinity's civic engagement champions, activities and opportunities;
- We have identified institutional barriers to civic engagement and made commitments to addressing them;
- We promote, reward, and celebrate good practices in civic engagement and societal impact;
- We have the resources to welcome and empower community partners, offering meaningful opportunities;
- We have a more supportive university community which seeks to maximise the impact from engagement efforts; and
- Trinity is living its mission as a recognised leader in civic engagement, mobilising knowledge for the public good.

“...encourage  
a culture of  
partnership”

This Action Plan lays the groundwork for Trinity to be a better neighbour, an engaged partner and a determined leader advancing Sustainable Development Goals. It focuses our efforts as we prepare for our next strategic planning cycle and encourages delivery of research, teaching, learning and extracurricular initiatives that positively impact on our students, our partners, our island and the world. I look forward to collaborating on the delivery of this Action Plan and further engaging across and beyond the University to further refine and achieve our civic engagement ambitions.



# Our Vision

## TAKING STEPS TOWARDS THE FUTURE WE ENVISION

At Trinity, we are united by a powerful vision of education and research that transcends classrooms and labs. Our University shines as a beacon of intellectual excellence, inspired innovation, and unwavering social responsibility. Trinity is renowned as an extraordinary place, where students, faculty, staff, and a diverse range of individuals and communities come together in their shared pursuit of knowledge. We are committed to delving deeply into the urgent challenges of our time, engaging in dialogue, and fostering understanding. Through collaborative enquiry, we strive to bring about positive changes that shape a better future for all.



### Empowered Students:



We firmly believe in the transformative power of our students. Equipped with essential skills and resources, our students are primed to become active leaders within their communities. Through immersive experiences, internships, and service-learning programs, we nurture a strong sense of social responsibility and provide opportunities to collaborate with community organisations. Engaging in real-world projects and initiatives for the betterment of society, our students develop their ability to address complex societal issues while building crucial networks.

### Recognised Faculty and Staff:



Our distinguished faculty are esteemed experts in their respective fields, dedicated to sharing their expertise through teaching and research. This culture of continuous learning and innovation propels us to the fore of knowledge creation and dissemination. Our staff equally exemplify leadership in their commitment to collaboration, ensuring inclusivity and promoting innovative and efficient workflows. By delivering the necessary supports, resources, and opportunities, we nurture a culture that drives social progress and empowers the communities we serve.

### Meaningful Collaborations and Partnerships:



Collaborations and partnerships are vital to a civically engaged university. At Trinity, we forge robust relationships with local, national, and global stakeholders, including government agencies, non-profit organisations, businesses, and community groups. Nurturing extensive networks, we harness collective expertise and resources to address information needs, promote social justice, and advance SDGs. These collaborations are based on mutual benefit, enriching our students and the communities we engage with.

### Multifaceted Approaches:



To confront contemporary societal challenges and bridge gaps in understanding, we embrace interdisciplinary approaches in education and research. Liberating ourselves from traditional silos, we incorporate unique perspectives and methodologies, resulting in innovative solutions to complex problems. Our curriculum ensures that civic engagement is integrated across all faculties, encouraging every student to develop a deep understanding of social issues and actively contributing to their resolution.

### Community-Engaged Research and Scholarship:



Our research and scholarship are driven by a steadfast commitment to advancing knowledge for the betterment of society. Engaged research is at the heart of our endeavours, directly addressing the aspirations of our communities. Through participatory and collaborative research methodologies, we co-create knowledge and develop an evidence-base relevant across sectors. Our research advances understanding and is mobilised in many ways to enhance the overall well-being of individuals and society.

### Ethical Leadership for Societal Impact:



We nurture ethical leaders and global citizens who embrace integrity, empathy, and accountability. Our educational approach promotes critical thinking, ethics, logic, and intercultural competence, equipping our students to thrive in a diverse and interconnected world. By championing inclusive and equitable practices within and beyond our university, we inspire our graduates to advocate for justice and equality in their personal and professional lives.

### Civic Engagement as a Sustained Commitment:



Efforts are aimed at cultivating lifelong learning, encouraging civic participation, and providing opportunities to mobilise knowledge through our students, faculty, staff and alumni. By developing strong networks and continuous learning opportunities, we support our graduates and attract ambitious learners in their ongoing efforts to create positive change and societal benefit.

This Action Plan delivers strategies aimed at raising awareness about activities and champions, providing supports to overcome institutional barriers and encourage good practices, and assisting colleagues in maximising the impact from their efforts.





# Action Plan Development Team

The following individuals facilitated the development of this Action Plan. The team wishes to acknowledge the Provost's Office, Office of the Dean of Research, Professor Wolfgang Schmitt, Dr Giovanna Lima, Gillian Roddie and Dr Ruth Doherty who provided support during Plan development.



**Professor  
Jo-Hanna Ivers**

Associate Dean of  
Civic Engagement  
& Societal Impact

**Michael Foley**

Programme Manager  
PPI Ignite Office,  
School of Nursing  
& Midwifery

**Simone  
Cameron-Coen**

Student Welfare  
& Support Officer  
School of Medicine

**Sarah Bowman**

Director of Strategic  
Engagement & Impact  
Assessment,  
Dean of  
Research Office

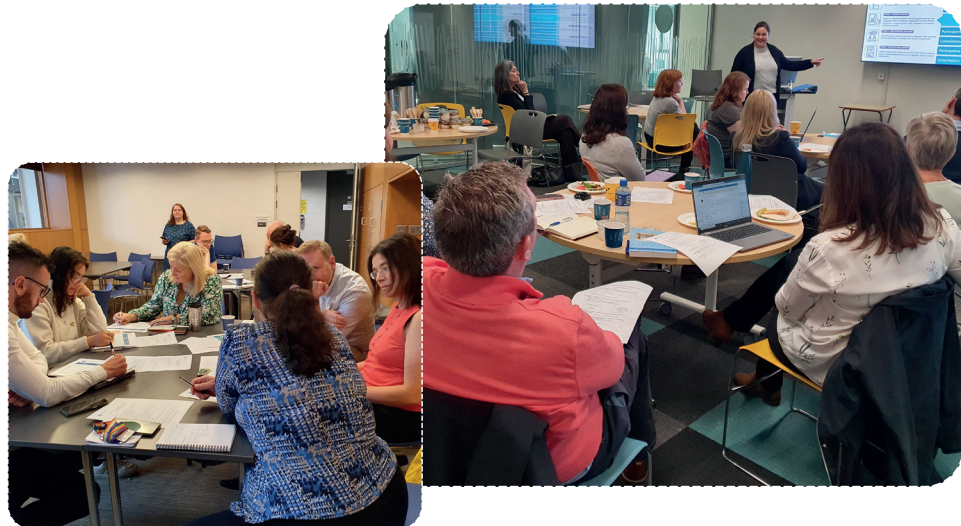
**Mary Colclough**

Engagement  
& Enterprise Manager,  
Unit 18 Trinity East

# Rapid Response Group

The following individuals informed the development of this Action Plan, providing guidance and feedback, as well as identifying commitments to advance civic engagement and societal impact:

- **Anita McCluskey** Unit 18 Advisory Group Representative
- **Dr Andrew O’Connell** Senior Programme Manager for Engagement, Provost’s Office
- **Catherine O’Mahony** Media Relations Officer, Public Affairs and Communications
- **Dr David Shepherd** Senior Lecturer
- **Gabriella Fullum** Student Union President
- **Katie O’Connor** STEM Administrator
- **Ken Finnegan** Chief Executive Officer, Tangent
- **Kevin Naughton** Public Affairs Advisor
- **Lena Doherty** FHS Administrator
- **Prof Brian Broderick** Associate Dean of Research
- **Prof Catherine McCabe** Dean of Students
- **Prof Jane Stout** Vice President for Biodiversity & Climate Action
- **Prof Lorraine Leeson** Associate Vice Provost for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- **Prof Martine Smith** Dean of Graduate Studies
- **Prof Neville Cox** Registrar
- **Prof Stephen Smith** Senior Tutor
- **Sally-Anne Fisher** Acting Director, Public Affairs and Communications
- **Shane Collins** Director, Provost’s Office
- **Tom Molloy** Director Communications & Public Affairs
- **Valerie Smith** AHSS Administrator



# Plan Development Process

## ACTION PLAN DEVELOPMENT OCCURRED OVER FOUR PHASES:

### Discovery Phase:

From January to September 2022, the Project Team was appointed by Prof Jo-Hanna Ivers and aimed to understand the civic engagement and societal impact context for Trinity by interviewing colleagues from Trinity, University College Cork, University of Limerick, Dublin City University, Royal College of Surgeons, ReThink Ireland, Campus Engage and the Irish Universities Association.

### Development Phase:

In September 2022, the Project Team confirmed the Rapid Response Group membership, plan development process and timeline, as well as engagement and communications channels.

### Deployment Phase:

Between October and December 2022, the Project Team executed the project's engagement plan, advancing our understanding of Trinity's current activities, as well as opportunities to collaborate and develop engagement and innovation efforts.

**Design Phase:** In Autumn 2023, the Project Team advanced the Draft Civic Engagement & Social Innovation Action Plan for review by the Rapid Response Group and other key advisors. The Plan was shared for Trinity-wide consultation on the Civic Engagement website, with finalisation and launch of the Plan in November 2023.





## THE FOLLOWING PROCESS WAS USED TO DEVELOP THIS ACTION PLAN:

### COMMUNITY OUTREACH

- Civic Engagement web page updates
- Trinity Events Calendar postings
- Electronic notice board postings
- Tweets @TCDVolunteer: 3,768 impressions
- Email Invitations: 24 School Administrators  
3 Faculty Administrators  
80 Stakeholders
- Eventbrite registration

### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- 6 Conversation Cafés across campuses:
  1. Russell Building, Tallaght University Hospital
  2. MISA, St James's Hospital
  3. Unit 18 Advisory Group, Trinity East
  4. Undergraduate Student Committees, O'Reilly Institute
  5. Tangent Space, School of Business and
  6. Zoom "What We Heard" event
- 162 people were engaged through cafés and committee presentations
- 3 Rapid Response Group Meetings engaged 20 members
- 991 comments were received:
  - 199 Barriers
  - 198 Enablers
  - 266 Champions
  - 328 Activities

### PLAN DEVELOPMENT

- 18 Team Meetings
- Data Entry
- Prioritisation Criteria Confirmed
- Data Coding and Prioritisation
- Thematic Analysis
- Draft and Final Plan Preparation



# Emerging Themes

During the consultation, the following key themes emerged which were presented at the final Conversation Café and third Rapid Response Group meeting to confirm community input.

These themes then informed the development of the Plan’s prioritisation criteria:

- Better engage champions and key stakeholders, including internal and external individuals and entities;
- Where possible, leverage existing activities and events;
- Integrate into existing agendas, plans and policy initiatives;
- Provide enabling structures and supports to overcome institutional barriers;
- Offer more inclusionary approaches to encourage greater diversity;
- Highlight expertise and experience, capturing and sharing what we’re doing well;
- Deliver training and other supports to advance good practices;
- Ensure activities are recognised and valued in promotions and other recognitions; and
- Provide resourcing and funding to address unstable, unpredictable funding and for succession efforts.

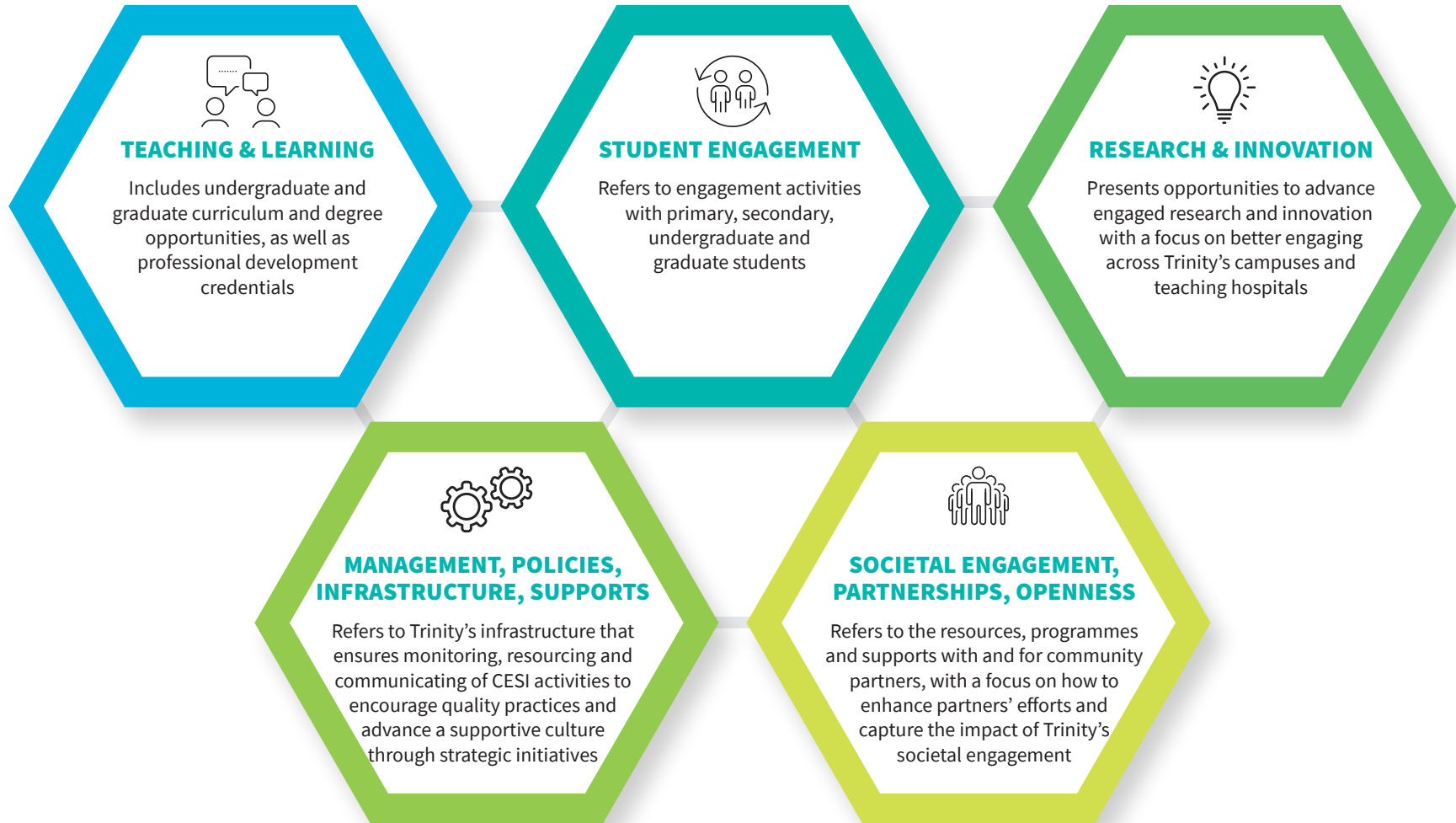


“ Think big,  
branch out ”



# Engagement & Impact Dimensions

Inspired by the Erasmus+ Project, Towards a European Framework for Community Engagement in Higher Education, the Project Team identified five engagement dimensions to ensure Action Plan activities span Trinity's key activities. All opportunities presented in this Action Plan are aligned by their engagement and innovation dimension.





# Prioritisation Criteria

Once tagged by their Engagement and Innovation Dimension, opportunities were assessed based on level of readiness, outcome alignment, and values alignment, reflecting the key themes that had emerged through the consultation. Projects could receive a maximum score of 16 points. Those projects which received a score of 10 or higher were reviewed by the Project Team, thematically organised, and prioritised for inclusion in the Action Plan. The following pages present opportunities and actions to guide the CESI Office between 2024 and 2026.

**Tier 1 Actions** will be completed during the Action Planning Timeframe (January 2024 - December 2026). **Tier 2 Actions** will begin but are likely to be completed beyond the Action Planning Timeframe. **Tier 3 Actions** represent the ambitions that emerged during the consultation and the CESI Office will seek opportunities to advance these, but likely beyond the Plan's timeline.

## PROJECT READINESS

- Actionable Strategy
- Timeline Alignment
- Level of Funding Required
- Level of Human Support Required
- Facilities Required
- Input Required from CESI Office

## OUTCOME ALIGNMENT

- Fulfils University Obligation or Commitment
- Highlights Trinity's Experience & Expertise
- Increases Numbers Reached
- Encourages Diversity & Inclusion
- Benefits External Stakeholders & Advances Trinity's Public Good

## VALUES ALIGNMENT

- Overcomes Institutional Barriers
- Ensures CESI Activities are Valued & Recognised
- Improves Understanding of CESI Good Practices
- Delivers Enabling Structures & Supports for Quality CESI
- Leverages Existing Activities & Events



**ACTION PLAN:  
CIVIC ENGAGEMENT FOR SOCIETAL IMPACT**

Tier 01  
**Activities**  
2024 - 2026

**RAISE AWARENESS ON ACTIVITIES, CHAMPIONS & OPPORTUNITIES**

**Task**  
**01**

- 1.1** Advance the Civic Engagement & Societal Impact (CESI) calendar for a consistent in-person presence
- 1.2** Develop the CESI website to increase visibility and raise awareness
- 1.3** Create an image portfolio of Trinity's CESI activities
- 1.4** Develop five (5) CESI case studies per annum (one per dimension)
- 1.5** Host a student intern to develop a social media strategy to engage students
- 1.6** Advance a CESI social media campaign, in collaboration with Trinity Communications Office, for a consistent online presence and to share Trinity's CESI stories
- 1.7** Deliver the CESI biennial survey for the University and prepare a state-of-the-union report for the Provost's Office
- 1.8** Deliver Trinity's CESI Annual Report



**BUILD CAPACITY TO ADVANCE QUALITY APPROACHES TO CIVIC ENGAGEMENT**

**Task**  
**02**

- 2.1** Host two (2) engaged research / PPI workshops per annum
- 2.2** Host one (1) engaged research event per annum
- 2.3** Host one (1) visiting lecturer event per annum
- 2.4** Host external speaker events and information exchanges (for the community and by the community) to include international leaders and innovators
- 2.5** Create a library of CESI methods with good practices
- 2.6** Host two (2) engaged teaching and learning workshops per annum

Tier 01  
**Activities**  
2024 - 2026

**OVERCOME INSTITUTIONAL BARRIERS**

**Task**  
**03**

- 3.1**    **Develop a Guidance Document: Trinity Community-Friendly Spaces and Terms of Use**
- 3.2**    **Utilise RSS to advance the CESI database to recognise champions**
- 3.3**    **Develop a Guidance Document: How to Capture Trinity's CESI Activity**
- 3.4**    **Develop a Guidance Document: Fair Budgeting for CESI Efforts**

**Task**  
**04**

**PROVIDE RESOURCING FOR CIVIC ENGAGEMENT & SOCIETAL IMPACT TO THRIVE**

- 4.1**    **Submit two (2) funding proposals per annum**
- 4.2**    **Enable access to key assets for partners (e.g., grounds, venues) aligned with Task 3.1**

Tier 01  
**Activities**  
2024 - 2026

**RECOGNISE, REWARD & VALUE GOOD PRACTICES**

**Task**  
**05**

**5.1** Host the annual CESI awards and ceremony

**Task**  
**06**

**SUPPORT COLLEAGUES & EXISTING ACTIVITIES TO EXTEND IMPACT**

**6.1** Engage members of the public during key events (e.g., EU Researchers Night, Culture Night, etc.)

**6.2** Provide support for partners' events (e.g., Science Week, Young Innovators, etc.)

**6.3** Engage students during their key events (e.g., Trinity Week, Freshers Week, etc.)



Tier 02  
**Actions**  
2024 - 2026

**Tier**  
**02**

Not wanting to lose the ambition of the consultation process, **Tier 2 Actions** are included in this Action Plan, but are likely to begin and/or be achieved beyond the Action Planning Timeframe (2024 - 2026). The CESI Office will seek opportunities to advance these actions, however, Tier 1 activities remain the priority.

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>Host a Student Ambassador each term to embed CESI in the student experience</b>
<b>ACTION</b>	<b>Provide content to encourage acknowledgment of CESI activities by the Board, Provost, Deans, etc.</b>
<b>ACTION</b>	<b>Develop a Guidance Document: Advancing Formal Recognition of CESI in University Promotions</b>
<b>ACTION</b>	<b>Serve in Advisory Roles: Integrating CESI into the University's Next Strategic Plan &amp; Communications Strategy</b>

Tier 03  
**Actions**  
2024 - 2026

**Tier  
03**

Not wanting to lose the ambition of the consultation process, **Tier 3 Actions** are included in this Action Plan, but are likely to begin and/or be achieved beyond the Action Planning Timeframe (2024 - 2026). The CESI Office will seek opportunities to advance these actions, however, Tier 1 activities remain the priority.

<b>ACTION</b>	Secure funding for a PhD in civic engagement	<b>ACTION</b>	Provide a CESI project seed funding for non-academic staff
<b>ACTION</b>	Develop a module or micro-credential course on engaged teaching and learning	<b>ACTION</b>	Provide a CESI fund for hospital and clinical staff
<b>ACTION</b>	Develop a module on engaged research methods, ethics and reviewer assessment	<b>ACTION</b>	Provide a CESI co-fund for partners' activities
<b>ACTION</b>	Include partners in CESI award opportunities	<b>ACTION</b>	Provide a CESI travel bursary to partners
<b>ACTION</b>	Develop a Transition Year Programme in CESI	<b>ACTION</b>	Provide a CESI student engagement fund for efforts that encourage Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
<b>ACTION</b>	Provide a CESI professional development fund to non-academic staff	<b>ACTION</b>	Provide a CESI conference fund for academic staff



## Concluding Thoughts

### POSITIONING CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AS A CORE VALUE

While the University prepares for its next Strategic Planning phase, this Action Plan aims to advance an ecosystem which values collaboration, bringing together stakeholders from academia, government, industry, and civil society.

By further developing these platforms for dialogue, interdisciplinary research, and community engagement, we will facilitate and foster partnerships that harness collective expertise and resources. We will continue to actively engage with the global community, sharing our knowledge, experiences, and best practices. Through international collaborations, cultural exchanges, and global service initiatives, we will contribute to global citizenship and enable a sense of connectedness. Our aim is to develop ongoing collaborations that generate solutions and amplify the impact of our collective efforts.

To conclude, **our vision for a civically engaged university is centred on the conviction that education should empower individuals to become active contributors to a just, equitable, and sustainable world.** We will radiate the values of inclusiveness and diversity. We will strive to create an inclusive and equitable learning environment where individuals from all backgrounds feel welcomed, respected, and valued. By embracing diversity of thought, perspectives, and experiences, we will foster creativity, innovation, and cross-cultural understanding. We will actively dismantle barriers and ensure equal access to education, promoting social justice and empowering individuals to reach their full potential.

By positioning civic engagement as a core value, we equip our community to be compassionate and influential leaders who make a meaningful difference for the common good. This Action Plan delivers a solid foundation on which to grow civic engagement for societal impact.

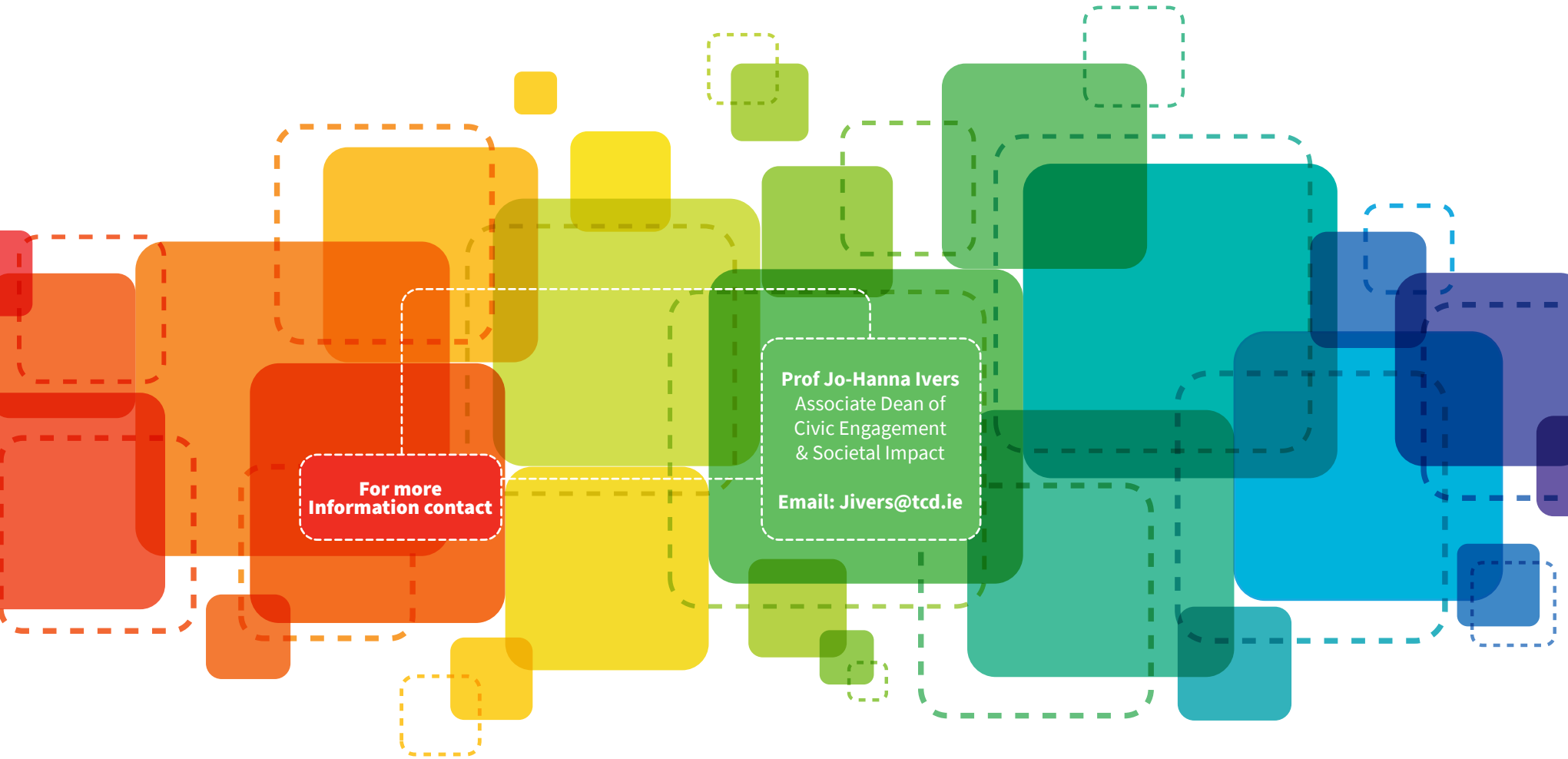






“ Our universities are not just centres of learning; they are also institutions that nurture social engagement, critical thinking, and ethical values. ”

**PRESIDENT MICHAEL D. HIGGINS**



**For more  
Information contact**

**Prof Jo-Hanna Ivers**  
Associate Dean of  
Civic Engagement  
& Societal Impact

**Email: [Jivers@tcd.ie](mailto:Jivers@tcd.ie)**



**Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath**  
**Trinity College Dublin**

Ollscoil Átha Cliath | The University of Dublin

