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# Trinity's Global Relations

**Professor Juliette Hussey,  
Vice-President for Global Relations**

**At the beginning of his term of office, the Provost created a college officer position of Vice-President for Global Relations, tasked with the responsibility of setting up a team and developing the first Global Relations Strategy (GRS1).**

Professor Jane Ohlmeyer held this position from 2011–14 and I have held it since 2014. The strategy set the direction of travel with an overall ambition of developing partnerships with leading universities around the world and the global recruitment of excellent students to study in Trinity. Building on a long and strong record of internationalisation in terms of research partnerships, the time was right to consider educational partnerships. There were two main areas of focus: student exchanges and joint educational programmes.

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## **Student exchanges**

Student exchanges with leading universities around the world provide opportunities for students to undertake part of their programme overseas; typically in undergraduate programmes this occurs in the third year. Increasingly students select universities, not just on the reputation of a university and programme of study, but on the institutions that it partners with. Overseas experience is often regarded as a differentiator in terms of graduate opportunities. Developing globally aware graduates is key to the global challenges ahead. Working across cultures, countries and languages is important in preparing young people with the skills and experience for their lives ahead. These are articulated in the Trinity Graduate Attributes.

**RIGHT** – Singaporean students of physiotherapy celebrate graduating in Trinity as part of the Trinity Singapore Institute of Technology programme.



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The number of undergraduate students engaging in some form of mobility during their programme of study has more than doubled from 522 in 2012/13 to 1,101 in 2019/20. In tandem, the growth in those taking a semester/year in a leading university beyond Europe has increased fivefold from 37 in 2012 to 211 in 2019 and interest from students continues to be strong despite the interruptions due to the pandemic.

### Global partnerships

The Global Relations Office has focused on deeper engagement with a small number of universities, leading to joint educational programmes such as dual degrees, joint degrees and recruitment pathways in terms of articulation agreements. The development of programmes with Singapore Institute of Technology (SIT) marked the University's first significant engagement with transnational education – after four years of very successful one-year programmes in the allied health sciences, a joint degree in Physiotherapy with SIT was launched and commenced in 2016. The first students on the dual degree with Columbia University commenced their studies in 2018 following the launch of four programmes in the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences.

Ten years ago there was an absence of international educational partnerships leading to dual and joint degrees. Now Trinity has robust experience in developing a dual degree with a leading university and a joint degree delivered mainly through TNE (transnational education). The programmes in the dual degree with Columbia have grown to 11 and extended

to the Faculty of STEM. Over 900 students have completed the allied health programmes delivered in Singapore and there are currently 640 registered on the joint programme in Physiotherapy.

In addition, recruitment pathway programmes were developed with Thapar University in India, Beijing Foreign Studies University (BFSU) and University of Michigan – Shanghai Jiao Tong University Joint Institute (UM-SJTU JI), China.

Attracting students from all over the world and building relationships with government funding bodies was a challenge requiring robust planning and a data driven approach. A year-on-year increase in students from outside the EU was mapped to growth capacity, along with an analysis of applications to programmes with respect to areas of growth internationally and building knowledge of international qualifications particularly in secondary school systems. Growth has been achieved through adopting a holistic approach, including building an excellent recruitment team with wide reach which is supported by local representation, academics, and alumni ambassadors. Promotion and recruitment are intensive, and increasingly driven by online activity, and amplified by a personal approach to applicants and their families. The team in Dublin along with colleagues based in US, Delhi and Beijing have built the reputation and pathways essential for ongoing recruitment. Alumni have been key to achieving the breath of diversity in terms of student recruitment through promoting Trinity; many have acted as ambassadors for the University.

**LEFT** – Trinity exchange students in Beijing.

**BELOW** – Provost Patrick Prendergast, Prof Juliette Hussey, Vice-President for Global Relations with international students at the launch of the Global Relations Strategy 3 (GRS3).

### Enabling and welcoming initiatives

It became clear at the beginning of the growth strategy that to recruit sufficiently to undergraduate programmes there was a need to consider either development or access to a Foundation Programme. In 2015 the Trinity International Foundation Programme was developed with Marino Institute of Education and launched. The one-year programme focuses on English for Academic Purposes and Mathematics as well as on subjects specifically related to the undergraduate programme of choice. The option of a Foundation programme is critical for engagement with government scholarship bodies, particularly those in the Middle East.

The reputation of the International Foundation Programme has been strong, expanding from 25 in its first year (2016/17) to 91 this year, with continuing growth anticipated as applications rise. Given the huge uptake in online teaching and learning during the pandemic, the possibility of a parallel online programme for those wishing to remain in their home country is now being discussed.

Along with the opportunities sought and created overseas there has been a deep and sustained commitment to the overall student experience from Trinity staff, students and alumni. This has been essential in creating a welcoming and supportive environment where all students are nurtured. Incoming international students are introduced to the Global Room and its student ambassadors and encouraged to join societies and become part of societies organising Thanksgiving, Hannukah, Chinese New Year, Holi and other campus festivals. The Global Room hosts over 300 events per year and is a real epicentre for providing overall support and direction for students new to Ireland.

### Driving success

The end of Patrick Prendergast’s provostship is a good time to ask if our Global Relations strategies have been successful. A clear measure of success is Trinity being ranking 8th in the world and 1st in Europe for Internationalisation in the Times Higher Education rankings 2021. This indicates that our sustained efforts over ten years have paid dividends. Once the health situation, travel and restrictions permit, we expect a return to pre-pandemic level of activity in global relations.

In 2019/20, 3,234 non-EU students were registered with the university (an increase from 1,223 in 2011/12). This growth has happened across undergraduate and postgraduate programmes and we anticipate that this growth will continue.

