Welcome from the Provost

In a particularly busy and dynamic year, two launches really stand out: on 2nd May we launched Inspiring Generations in the Public Theatre - the first comprehensive philanthropic campaign in the history of the university. Inspiring Generations has two goals: to raise €400m in philanthropic donations to contribute to projects and initiatives that drive excellence across the university, and to inspire 150,000 volunteering hours from alumni and friends of Trinity around the world. You can read about the campaign and its flagship projects in Chapter 5, Inspiring Generations.

Just three weeks later, on 23rd May came the formal opening of the Trinity Business School. Six years after we announced our intention to build this, it was thrilling to be standing in this flagship new building, an iconic, contemporary design by Scott Tallon Walker, which houses Tangent, Trinity’s Ideas Workspace and the A & K Dargan theatre, now the largest auditorium on campus. The Trinity Business School was enabled by donations from graduates and friends and it’s their generosity and enthusiasm that gave us the confidence and ambition to reach out worldwide for Inspiring Generations.

After the Dublin launch, I went on to launch Inspiring Generations in London, Paris, New York, and San Francisco, with plans for Asia launches in 2020. Trinity now has more than 121,000 alumni in 150 countries, and research partnerships as measured by joint publications numbered 2,905 in 2019 – in all our initiatives for the university, we have to think globally.

Another important launch this year was our third Global Relations Strategy, or ‘GRS3’, as we call it, (see Chapter 3). This builds on the dynamic initiatives we’ve put in place over the past decade. Our headline actions for the next five years include: expanding our partnerships with like-minded universities round the world; further diversifying our student body and giving students more opportunities to study abroad; and continuing to integrate students into the global Trinity community. Global travel was a highlight of the year. I led a delegation to Morocco to discuss research collaboration and student exchange with key universities, as well as a trip to East and South Africa (Dar es Salaam, Nairobi, Johannesburg, Cape Town) where we visited 10 universities/research institutes to discuss future collaboration and partnerships, building on Trinity’s strong existing academic relationships on the African continent.

The Student Experience is central to the Trinity Education and Chapter 9 details our multiple co-curricular and extra-curricular initiatives. A key development this year was growing the Zôn Mac Léinn network of student spaces, to turn spaces into places where students can meet friends, recharge, and socialize. Two new spaces come into the network this year - the Buttery after hours and a new space in the Trinity Biomedical Sciences Institute (TBSI) and three more spaces were identified for development; there’s now an App showing students their nearest Zôn Mac Léinn. Chapter 11, Sport at Trinity, highlights how we engage students in sport, from the athletes who win medals to the 6,200 students who joined a sports club this year and through their participation improved not just their health and fitness, but their leadership, organisational and social skills.
Inspiring Generations has two goals: to raise €400m in philanthropic donations to contribute to projects and initiatives that drive excellence across the university, and to inspire 150,000 volunteering hours from alumni and friends of Trinity around the world.
A milestone for the Healthy Trinity initiative this year was the introduction of a tobacco-free policy which removed tobacco use from the entire campus, with three minor exceptions. You can read more about this, and other developments supporting healthy behaviours as a natural part of life on campus in Chapter 10. Healthy Trinity.

The student experience is also central to our innovation and entrepreneurship initiatives which continue to go from strength to strength. Chapter 7. Innovation and Entrepreneurship, presents the key successes of staff and student innovation.

Innovation comes out of outstanding research. In June we launched our first ever Research Charter and Living Research Excellence Strategy (see Chapter 6) at a special event in the Douglas Hyde Gallery. The Charter and Strategy are the result of a highly collaborative process, headed by the Dean of Research, Prof Linda Doyle, which sought inputs from across the university. The process identified seven core principles which form Trinity’s Research Charter and six key actions for the Excellence Strategy.

In Chapter 4. Research Case Studies, we give a brief snapshot of Trinity research, showcasing twelve researchers across three faculties engaging in urgent research – from measuring consciousness in comatose patients to developing technology solutions to reduce energy consumption in the water sector; from the Irish contribution to Gothic horror to developing appropriate models of higher education for the digital age. And in Chapter 12. New Professor Interviews we talk to three new professors – in Medieval History, Special Care Dentistry and English Literature – and hear about the exciting research they’re undertaking in their disciplines.

As ever, public lectures, symposia, talks, 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 8. Public Engagement. Some of my favourite events - choosing from a very competitive field - include Schrödinger at 75 – the Future of Biology, a symposium commemorating the 75th anniversary of Erwin Schrödinger’s iconic What is Life? lectures in Trinity in 1943, and attended by five Nobel Prize-winners and some of the world’s most brilliant science minds. I also enjoyed Hannah Sullivan speaking in Trinity when she won the inaugural John Pollard Foundation International Poetry Prize; and the 3-D digital scan of the Museum Building on the new interactive public website, makingvictoriandublin.com, which also has information on the building’s design, materials and history, from leading Trinity geologists and architectural historians. Do take a moment to check it out.

It’s been another exceptional Trinity year. My thanks to the whole community - staff, students and alumni - for their inspiration.

Dr Patrick Prendergast
Provost & President
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