



Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin



BUILDING CAPACITY AND COMMUNITY

**STRATEGIC PLAN
2023 - 2028**



**SCHOOL OF LINGUISTIC, SPEECH
AND COMMUNICATION SCIENCES**



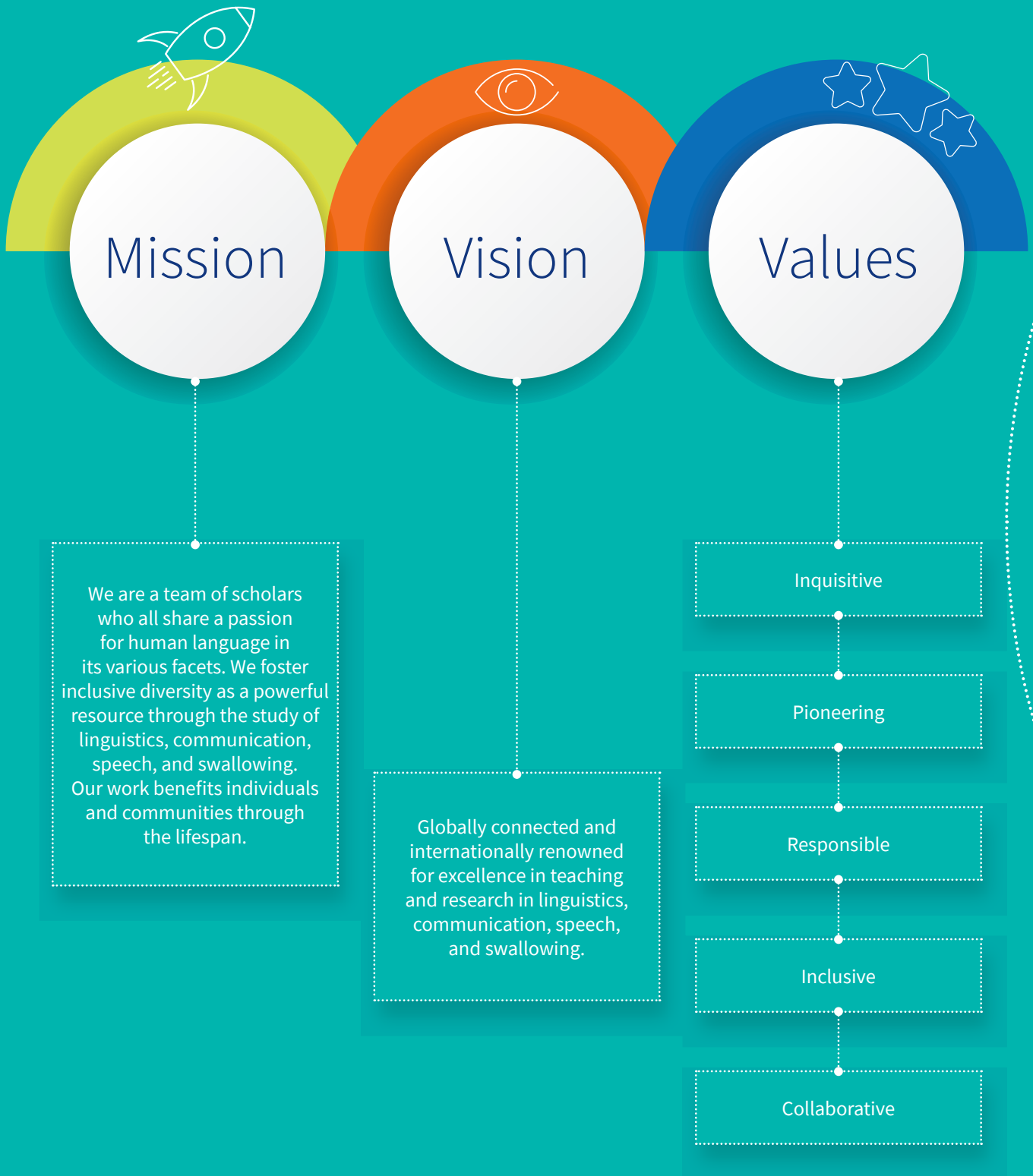
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Building Capacity & Community



Strategic Priorities

Diversity

Innovation

Integrity

Research

Culture

We aim to promote diversity by recruiting the highest calibre of staff nationally and internationally, by encouraging applications from students from all backgrounds, and by advocating an appreciation for inclusive diversity among all whom the School serves.

We stand up for research. We aim to support quality research as well as the necessary time and resources to achieve it. We want to position research at the heart of our School.

We aim to think creatively to streamline our processes and to deploy technology to its best effect in all our activities.

We aim to foster a culture of integrity, transparency, and honesty in all of our activities. We cherish academic freedom, diversity of scholarship and the pursuit of truth.

We aim to be a dynamic and vibrant School that is more than the sum of its parts, where staff and students all benefit from an authentic community ethos. We want to harness our collective expertise for the greater good.



...the key aim of this Strategic Plan is to consolidate our profile nationally and to propel the School's knowledge and achievements to an international scale...

Timeline: Pre-History

1969

Dublin School of
Speech Therapy
(later the Department
of Clinical Speech and
Language Studies)
established

1979

Centre for Language
and Communication
Studies established;
first B.Sc. degrees
awarded in the new
Department of Clinical
Speech and Language
Studies.

2001

Centre for Deaf
Studies established



Timeline: Achievements to Date

2005

School of Linguistic,
Speech & Communication
Sciences established

2006

First graduates from the
M.Sc. in Clinical Speech
and Language Studies

2009

Launch of the
Bachelor in Deaf Studies

2015

Formal opening of
the Trinity Centre
for Asian Studies

2019

Launch of Trinity
'Language & Culture'
Electives, taken by 1400
undergraduates annually

2021

Launch of the Joint Honours
degree in Linguistics

2021

School receives an
Athena SWAN Bronze Award



Introduction

Much has changed since the preparation of our previous Strategic Plan. Society has had to respond to a global pandemic, people are feeling the impact of greater levels of geopolitical volatility, and there is a recognised, urgent need to respond to the climate crisis. However, these threats to societal cohesion have also brought about a shift in people's mindset that has encouraged greater levels of compassion and appreciation for the values of diversity, inclusion, and transparency.

The two main keywords in the title of the School's Strategic Plan 2023-2028, **capacity** and **community**, reflect our aim to promote our work to increase our research impact both locally and globally and to build a true School community. The aims of this plan dovetail with the university's Strategic Plan 2020-2025, and especially Trinity's focus on civic action, research, education, and fostering an effective and flexible organisation.

The School has been for some time a national and international point of reference in its core disciplines. The key aim of this Strategic Plan is to consolidate our profile nationally and to propel the School's knowledge and achievements to an international scale. The actions in this Strategic Plan seek to attract the highest calibre of staff and students in order to enrich our teaching, learning and research environment.

Looking to the future, we know that a pivot to new technology will continue, both through developments in our fields of work as well as a greater demand for hybrid and online education. The implementation of the actions in this Strategic Plan will help to ensure that the School is poised to respond to these technological demands.

The School has recently been awarded an Athena SWAN Bronze award in recognition of its ongoing actions to ensure gender equality amongst staff and students. We aim to promote an ethos of equality, diversity and inclusion in all of our activities and to foster a family-friendly working environment. By the nature of our teaching, outreach and research, our School's work is academically and pedagogically oriented towards the inclusion of minorities and often under-represented populations. However, we are aware that any individual accomplishments do not necessarily translate into systematic equality in our policies, procedures and practices, nor foster an environment where every student and staff member may thrive. Through this Strategic Plan as well as the priority actions identified in our Athena SWAN submission, we are fully committed to equal opportunities for progress and success.

This Strategic Plan has been prepared in consultation with staff and students. It will take the whole School to work together to deliver on these actions and to ensure that we are on track to deliver on our mission and work towards our vision. Through the actions described in this plan, we aim to create the right culture for change and to make a tangible difference in the way we operate.





About the School

The School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences is a multidisciplinary school that includes the following academic areas:

- Department of Clinical Speech and Language Studies
- Centre for Language and Communication Studies
- Centre for Deaf Studies
- Centre for English Language Learning and Teaching
- Trinity Centre for Asian Studies

With 30 academic and 7 professional staff, we are a relatively small School that is spread across two sites: the Arts Building and 7-9 South Leinster Street. This is a time of transition for the School, with some senior staff retiring and others selecting part-time or blended working patterns. The School now has a very youthful staff profile. Our team of academic and professional staff are highly qualified, multi-talented and ambitious.

The School has a number of unique features that make it an attractive place to work and study, including:

- Ireland's longest established undergraduate programme in Speech and Language Therapy
- A world-class Phonetics and Speech Laboratory
- Ireland's only academic Centre for Deaf Studies
- Ireland's longest established postgraduate programme for speech and language therapists with an international reputation in the area of swallowing disorders
- A comprehensive and multidisciplinary Centre for Asian Studies grounded in the study of Asian languages and linguistics
- College-wide and extramural language learning programmes supported by the School's research expertise in Applied Linguistics



Message from the Head of School

As our School publishes this Strategic Plan, we find ourselves in a time of enormous uncertainty. Ongoing threats to public health, social cohesion, democratic citizenship and our environment mean that we have learned to take nothing for granted.

In this plan, we have articulated a vision for our School that aims to unite staff and students in the ambition of becoming a globally connected and internationally renowned centre of excellence in our fields of research and teaching. Coming from a range of different subject areas, we all share a passion for the study of language, linguistics and communication in its various facets. We foster inclusive diversity as a powerful societal resource, and we are committed to seeing the application of our research bring improvements to many different people and groups. A university can be a stressful and lonely place both to work and to study. Our strategic plan recognises this as a risk and creates a path towards a more connected and supportive School community.

We aim to provide the very best environment for our students to pursue their ambitions and to achieve their goals. We also aspire to be a great place to work for all of our team.

As Head of School, I am confident that the different constituencies in our departments will recognise themselves in this plan. This Strategic Plan was truly a collaborative effort. The goals and actions presented below were the result of a sustained period of consultation with all members of the School, including several online workshops, an all-staff away day, an away day with the School Executive, and student consultations. I value the input of each individual who took the time to share honestly their thoughts and ambitions for our School during this period of consultation and I hope that all members of our School community will recognise their voices in what follows.

Professor Lorna Carson
Head of School



Strategic Goals & Actions

Communicate effectively with internal and external audiences

1

Context

Improve awareness and public engagement about how central language and communication is to the human experience. Promote the achievements of the School's disciplines and departments. Engage profoundly with the public.

Actions

1.1 Create seamless internal School communication tools for staff and students

- Compile a single School-wide mailing list to be used for official communications that includes all staff and all students
- Biannual School newsletter to share news and celebrate achievements
- Innovate in the area of communication, use video and other tools to share our message

1.2 Overhaul website to showcase the School's teaching, research and events

- Conduct a full review of website content and structure
- Dedicate resources to a comprehensive overhaul of the website
- Maintain updated website as the School's front window to the public
- Ensure the website contains comprehensive, up-to-date and easily accessible information about academic requirements and opportunities for students

1.3 Professionalise our use of social media channels to increase the impact of our work and enhance our communication

- Increase our audience on social media channels
- Stay in touch with students, alumni and stakeholders via social media
- Provide training in social media for both research impact and course marketing for staff
- Develop a content management plan for the various departmental social media channels



1.4 Build on our research seminars and lecture series to inform each other and the public about our work

- Support and promote our existing public talks to a wider audience
- Launch a new School Public Lecture series which promotes a deeper understanding of our research areas in an accessible format
- Organise informal talks and events which provide a practical, real-world lens for budding linguists
- Invite researchers to provide School-wide presentations of their current work to undergraduates and postgraduates; encourage students to get involved where possible
- Design an Introduction to Linguistics extramural course for the general public, covering key areas of study, the development of the field, future research perspectives and the value of Linguistics to the community

1.5 Reflect on the School name, School organisational structure and names of units with a view to building the School's reputation internally and externally

- Review School organigram and consider whether current structure is fit for purpose
- Examine the naming of units (departments, disciplines, centres) within the School in light of the review
- Consider whether the School name is accurate, transparent, and memorable internally and externally and make any changes based on consensus



Strategic Goals & Actions

Attract and retain high calibre staff and students who share our passion

2

Context

Attract the very best staff and students from all sorts of backgrounds across the world who share our passion for linguistics, communication, speech, and swallowing.

Actions

2.1 Take an intentional and strategic approach to staff hiring and student recruitment

- Ensure post descriptions attract the best and brightest applicants from across the world
- Foreground family-friendly and flexible working practices in job advertisements for posts within the School
- Identify new advertising locations for effective academic recruitment by discipline beyond the standard platforms
- Maximise our presence at events such as Higher Options, Trinity Open Days, and recruitment fairs
- Develop a School outreach plan and connect with guidance counsellors
- Boost induction support for new staff

2.2 Target new markets for student recruitment

- Identify and expand into new recruitment areas by degree course
- Promote diversification in recruitment to attract students from all backgrounds
- Consider ways to attract and retain mature students

2.3 Invest time and resources into marketing our School's courses and activities

- Review and improve our promotional materials and prospectuses
- Systematically capture student feedback to share in course marketing
- Ensure our website showcases all courses and activities
- Highlight student successes and career outcomes in our marketing materials
- Engage with partners in Trinity Global, Marketing, and Trinity Public Affairs and Communications
- Showcase student careers and develop programme-specific Employability and Employer Guides with the help of the Trinity Careers Service
- Run standalone careers education workshops related to our courses



2.4 Develop and promote scholarship opportunities widely

- Create and continue to update a dedicated School webpage which brings together all scholarship opportunities
- Hold information sessions on scholarship opportunities
- Celebrate the success of our scholarship holders through our website and social media
- Work with student representatives to amplify student concerns regarding finances, accommodation and the cost of living

2.5 Seek industry/philanthropic funding for dedicated School scholarships and internships

- Engage with Trinity Development and Alumni to develop a fundraising plan by discipline
- Identify industry partners who have shared interests in our research
- Develop relationships with industry partners with a view to creating funded internships
- Seek budgets and funds for living wage Ph.D. stipends



Strategic Goals & Actions

Connect with key partners and build networks

3

Context

Build and promote university, national, and international collaboration. Identify new partners and consolidate existing networks, especially research networks. Use the principles and goals of Trinity's Research Excellence Strategy as a foundation for our work. Encourage civic engagement and service to community amongst students and staff. Foster and grow research talent.

Actions

3.1 Seek to develop new research and to build on existing research partnerships within Trinity

- Deepen and extend existing relationships with the Trinity Long Room Hub Arts & Humanities Institute and Trinity Research in Social Sciences (TRISS)
- Foster engagement with relevant Trinity Research Centres such as the Trinity Research in Childhood Centre (TRICC), the ADAPT Centre, Trinity Centre for Global Health, the Trinity Centre for Literary and Cultural Translation
- Pursue opportunities for collaboration and partnership across the School, Faculties and the College, including deepening relationships with the Faculty of Health Sciences and STEM.

3.2 Engage in outreach activities that will inform our work and educate the public

- Launch programme of school visits to inform Transition Year students and school leavers of the opportunities for further study offered by our School
- Maximise opportunities to share information about our work at events attended by school leavers and the general public
- Cultivate a culture of effective communication with public audiences

3.3 Connect with alumni via public events, CPD courses, targeted seminars, and conferences

- Work in partnership with Trinity Development and Alumni to formalise our alumni records and develop a School alumni newsletter
- Liaise with the Trinity Careers Service regarding our alumni career paths
- Engage regularly with our alumni and celebrate their achievements
- Start a conversation with alumni from our different disciplines to determine how the school can best engage with them through events and training
- Consider opportunities for new CPD courses and/or micro-credentials
- Invite alumni to share their careers since graduating through 'a day in the life' events open to all current students

3.4 Identify new partners among professional organisations, industry and NGOs

- Foster a discipline-led approach to civic and professional partnerships
- Compile a record of existing partnerships
- Reach out to new potential partners relevant to our research, teaching and civic engagement

3.5 Promote international exchanges

- Publish on the School website mobility opportunities available for staff and students through existing Memoranda of Understanding with international exchange partners
- Showcase international mobilities and traineeships available through the Erasmus+ Programme
- Work in partnership with the Trinity Erasmus Office and Trinity Global to enhance the School's international profile

3.6 Promote an 'arms open wide' approach for all scholars

- Build relationships with SAR-Ireland (Scholars at Risk) and Trinity's University of Sanctuary Committee
- Consider locally how the School can support threatened academics and enable them to continue their work
- Find resources for an Asylum-Seeker Scholarship in our School
- Contribute to meeting the language needs of Ukrainian refugees in Ireland and other vulnerable groups in need of language support, through classes, training, and resource development



Strategic Goals & Actions

Foster a culture where staff and students thrive

4

Context

We are recognised for the warm and friendly student-centred environment in our disciplines and departments. We strive to work as a team, to engage in collaborative problem-solving and to enhance the staff and student experience. We try to take a person-centred approach in all interactions, recognising that work and study can be challenging for all of us at times.

Actions

4.1 Roll out a School Research Day policy for academic staff

- School Executive Committee to propose a defined Research Day Policy
- Create a culture of encouraging the equivalent of a 'one day a week' research practice where staff systematically use automatic email replies to protect their research time during dedicated periods

4.2 Increase social collaboration within the School

- Facilitate face-to-face events for students and staff to foster a culture of connection among undergraduates, postgraduates, and staff
- Monthly in-person School staff coffee mornings
- Coffee morning for staff and students at least once a term
- Call for members to initiate a new School Social Committee
- Host a School welcome event for all students at the start of each academic year
- Work with postgraduates research students to provide ways to connect meaningfully and to ensure that they feel part of the School community

4.3 Foster academic integrity through adopting the University's Statement on Integrity

- Strive to do what we say we will do, ensuring that we are aware of our commitments and responsibilities in order to fulfil them, and abiding by College and other relevant policies as well as the highest standards of conduct.
- Give credit where credit is due, recognising and acknowledging the contributions and achievements of others in scholarship, teaching, research and service
- Tell the truth, as a community and as individuals, speaking out and listening even when it is difficult, naming problems and honestly acknowledging mistakes
- Hold ourselves and others to account for the things for which we are each responsible
- Use resources for the purposes for which they are intended and be above reproach in financial dealings
- Deal fairly, consistently and transparently with others

4.4 Encourage a transparent culture of non-judgemental accountability (“no blame”)

- Embrace the possibility that errors are par for the course in any workplace and encourage their reporting
- Model transparency and accountability to our students
- Foster a culture where trust, honesty and appreciation of others are encouraged

4.5 Promote the value of mentoring, coaching and peer-to-peer support

- Pilot an effective voluntary School appraisal system in consultation with School staff
- Establish a School peer support system which allows senior and junior staff to connect and share experiences
- Communicate suggestions to all staff on how to get the most out of mentoring
- Ensure all staff at Assistant Professor level have access to a preferred mentor
- Employ peer-to-peer support and a buddy system to ensure that postgraduate students feel more connected to a community of researchers in the School

4.6 Raise awareness of equality, diversity, inclusion, and human rights in our School culture

- Provide annual unconscious bias training for all staff
- Promote the aims and activities of the School’s Equality, Diversity and Inclusion committee
- Create welcoming classrooms and social spaces for all students and staff
- Ensure inclusive policies and curricula, equitable processes, and accessible events
- Support initiatives which will enhance a diverse teaching and learning community in our school



Strategic Goals & Actions

Think innovatively and use technology effectively

5

Context

Think creatively about School processes in order to deliver a quality experience for all. Identify new digital tools to support our work. Rethink how we do things and simplify where possible.

Actions

5.1 Seek and implement ideas to enhance how School and departmental processes are delivered

- Engage in micro strategic planning at department level
- Transform School process document into a School handbook for all staff
- Gain feedback from School staff regarding new content for the School handbook
- Consult with students regarding content of course handbooks to ensure they are relevant and useful
- Create a 'go to' guide which indicates where to go for assistance across the School and its departments

5.2 Identify new ways of embedding technology in academic administration and manage our paper archives

- Investigate electronic solutions to taking attendance in lectures
- Seek secure and responsible means of disposal of digital data and hardware (including reuse where possible)
- Streamlining use of collaborative technology such as MS Teams to ensure that documents are appropriately stored as well as accessible
- Attend to timed deletion of digital records where necessary e.g., research ethics files, email archives

5.3 Equip staff with appropriate software and hardware training

- Avail of training offered by IT Services
- Develop bespoke training by discipline
- Ensure the equipment in our classrooms is easy to use, share video demos and instructions where possible



5.4 Identify opportunities where new technologies can be adopted in teaching and research

- Model good practices in technology-based teaching for lectures and tutorials
- Recommence the role of School Digital Champions
- Consider the role of fully online learning in some future areas of our teaching
- Maximise access to technology licenses for student researchers

5.5 Leverage digital solutions for inclusion

- Ensure School digital documents, including our website, are fully accessible
- Maximise use of transcripts, subtitles and captioning in online meetings
- Embed ISL recordings of videos where possible



Strategic Goals & Actions

Focus on
Climate Action
and
Sustainability

6

Context

Inform ourselves and take appropriate steps locally to address climate change. Improve our sustainability practices and think about our carbon footprint.

Actions

6.1 Promote environmentally conscious practices

- Reduce paper use
- Reuse, recycle and repurpose items where possible
- Use College-wide Yammer board as a resource for reusing office and lab equipment/furniture
- Conserve energy by switching off lights/computers
- Investigate fixes and upgrades to IT hardware before replacing
- Consider the green credentials of new suppliers
- Promote reusable mugs and water bottles for meetings
- Reduce single use catering items
- Remember digital is not green

6.2 Reduce carbon emissions by reducing air travel where possible

- Promote remote and hybrid meetings
- Evaluate the impact of international air travel in the external examining process
- Encourage sustainable travel for academic trips

6.3 Start a formal local discussion about how we as a School can respond to the UN Sustainability Goals

- Engage with Trinity's Sustainability Office and VP for Biodiversity & Climate Action
- Invite participation in a new School working group on the UN Sustainability Goals
- Nominate a School champion and set realistic targets to measure our successes







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