

TAP

Trinity Access Programmes
Celebrating 20 Years
1993-2013



2020 Vision

The Trinity Access Programmes
Strategic Plan to 2020



TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN
COLÁISTE NA TRÍONÓIDE, BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH

THE
UNIVERSITY
OF DUBLIN



"Our vision for 2014 is of a university providing further leadership in education while being fully responsive to the changing needs of society. Opportunities to study in Trinity will be broadened through increased access and provision of new courses..."

Trinity College Strategic Plan 2009-14

Foreword

Education creates opportunities for individuals; and our society cannot thrive unless educational opportunity is made available to all.

Achieving equality of educational opportunity is not easily done; it is not just a matter of “free fees” or distributing scholarships – we need to embrace more fundamental changes to how people access university education.

The Trinity Access Programmes [TAP] have been in the vanguard of changing the system in Ireland for 20 years now. The TAP Strategic Plan to 2020 lists four strategic goals that will continue this work of promoting change. I congratulate the TAP team and its leadership under Cliona Hannon for their achievements so far, and for their ambitions for the future of Irish higher education.

Trinity College Dublin will continue its mission of serving all in society by providing higher education rooted in research, scholarship, and critical enquiry – with active citizenship in an inclusive society as our goal.

It is a pleasure for me to commend this publication, and encourage you to read it.

Patrick Prendergast
PROVOST



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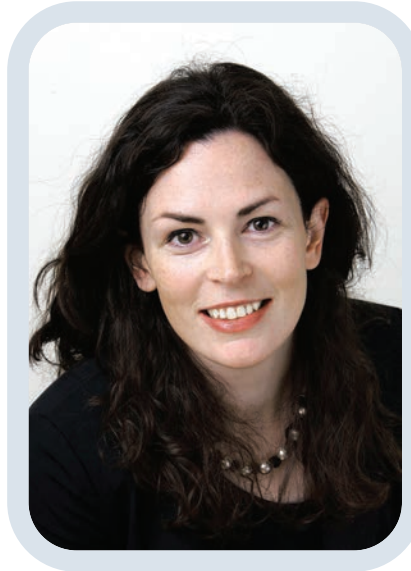
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Executive Summary



TAP presents this Strategic Plan as an opportunity to reflect on all that has been achieved by our students and partners over the last twenty years. It charts an ambitious future for Trinity College in developing new, innovative projects to address educational disadvantage and the low progression rates of some socio-economic groups to higher education.

Research has demonstrated the fundamental importance of developing 'social capital' within our communities and organisations so that we maintain the kind of 'high trust' environment that is conducive to both social and economic development. This is supported through high educational engagement levels in second and third-level education. In a university context, creating a more diverse campus means new perspectives and experiences, which are crucial to enabling us to think creatively, build our knowledge about the world and imagine different futures.

TAP's mission is to work in partnership across the education sector and with families, communities and businesses to widen participation in higher education of students who for social, economic and cultural reasons have not yet realised their educational potential. More than 1,300 students have entered Trinity through TAP since 2003 and over 5,000 students, parents and teachers engage in programme activities with us each year.



Our vision for 2020 is to:

-  develop a university campus that mirrors the diverse composition of Irish society and
-  build a broad **'coalition of the converted'** interested in highlighting and systematically addressing the causes of educational disadvantage and low progression rates to higher education.

This will be achieved through an approach that is inclusive, innovative, life-long, adaptable and collaborative. There are four strategic themes in this plan: Outreach, Admissions, Progression and Evaluation. These themes commit TAP to a continued expansion and development of its current suite of programmes, with a stated target of 2,020 TAP graduates of TCD by 2020. This vision requires a re-thinking about who learns, how they learn and how this educational currency is used to gain access to higher education. TAP looks forward to another twenty years of highly productive partnerships providing the kind of educational opportunities to young people and adults that they truly deserve.

Cliona Hannon
Director
Trinity Access Programmes

1

Philosophy of Educational Engagement

The Trinity Access Programmes comprise:

The School & Community Outreach Links (SCOL)

Alternative Admissions Routes: HEAR¹, MSDS² & Foundation Courses

Post-Entry Progression Programmes

Transition to Employment: Alumni Engagement

Successful Graduates!

Since 1993, Trinity College Dublin has worked to ensure a significant increase in participation at third-level of those who for social, economic, and educational reasons have not yet realised their full educational potential. Over twenty years, TAP has played a key role in the area of widening participation across the higher education sector, in developing policy, programmes, research, raising awareness and engaging in advocacy on relevant issues. In 2008, TAP expanded to incorporate the Mature Student Office, with responsibility for the recruitment, orientation and support of adult learners progressing to undergraduate study in Trinity College.

Higher education is both a private and a public good. It benefits the individual but also wider society. It is easy in today's highly competitive, globalised market, to focus only on the potential vocational, professional or business-related merits of educational activities. However, research has demonstrated the fundamental importance of developing 'social capital' within our communities and organisations so that we maintain the kind of 'high trust' environment that is conducive to both social and economic development.

The value of higher education within Irish society has intensified because, as the Provost of TCD Dr Patrick Prendergast said,

"A society that lives by its wits...and not through low labour rates or the exploitation of natural resources, needs to have people educated to the highest international levels if it is to create employment in a global economy."

Creating a more diverse university campus means a diversity of perspectives and experiences, which are crucial because this enables us to think creatively, build our knowledge about the world and imagine different futures. President Michael D Higgins underpinned this purpose in his recent inaugural address:

"We must seek to build together an active, inclusive citizenship; based on participation, equality, respect for all and the flowering of creativity in all its forms."

¹ HEAR: Higher Education Access Route

² MSDS: Mature Student Dispensation Scheme

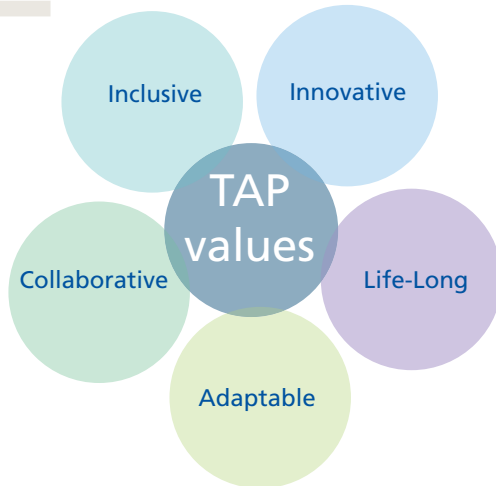
TAP's endeavour is not simply about progression to higher education, or the individual's labour market preparation, but also their capacity to contribute as an active, engaged citizen, to the re-construction of a more ethical, values based republic. Neither is it about moulding the individual to the culture: the higher education institution must also be prepared to shift its norms. It is not about continuing to work with existing, flawed systems that do not fully develop or prepare all students with potential. Rather, it is about re-thinking who learns, how they learn and how this educational currency is used to gain access to higher education. It is about being prepared to critique and fundamentally change these practices, and model what is expected within a truly knowledge-based economy, by being innovative, entrepreneurial and embracing evidence-based, timely transformations. This is a time for radical change, in how we engage all sectors of society fully in the educational process, in how we teach and how we learn, and how best we enable transformation of existing processes through collaboration and technological advances.



"Student services will be student-centred, flexible and well coordinated. We will have found further innovative ways to promote student engagement in clubs, societies and volunteering."

Trinity College Strategic Plan 2009-14

2 Our Values, Mission & Vision



Inclusive

We strive to promote greater inclusivity and diversity within higher education and to contribute to the development of a society where all people have the opportunity to engage and participate.

Innovative

We are innovative and creative, demonstrating our leadership by continually identifying and developing new opportunities with transformative potential.

Life-long

We are focused on encouraging children, young people and adults to continue their learning and development throughout their lives and on providing them with a broad range of flexible tailored options.

Adaptable

Through our own reflective practice, we are aware of the limits of our work and are resilient and receptive to development and change.

Collaborative



We work collaboratively to create and sustain long term relationships with students, educational organisations, communities, businesses and individuals to pool our collective expertise and commitment and make a lasting, significant contribution.

Mission

The Trinity Access Programmes (TAP) are a key part of Trinity's social mission, articulated in the 'Engagement with Society' theme of the current College Strategic Plan (2009-14). TAP works in partnership across the education sector and with families, communities and businesses to widen participation in higher education of students who for social, economic and cultural reasons have not yet realised their educational potential.

Vision

TAP's vision is to effect social and educational change through:

-  developing a university campus that mirrors the diverse composition of Irish society, so that a rich diversity of perspectives can contribute to the creation of new knowledge. Therefore all people with the ability and motivation to benefit from a higher education are given the opportunity to participate.
-  building a broad 'coalition of the converted' interested in highlighting and systematically addressing the causes of educational disadvantage and non-participation.

It works towards this vision through a focus on education, research and advocacy. Through its continuum of engagement with pupils and students from primary school through to post-graduation, TAP aims to support the development of human, social and cultural capital within families, schools and communities and to effect institutional change within Trinity College.

TAP is aligned internally with Bridge21 and the National Institute of Intellectual Disability (NIID), each of which shares a commitment to broadening access to third level education, innovation in models of learning and informing policy research. TAP works closely with College Student Services through the 'Student Experience Strategy', which has a three phase focus on 'Pre-entry & Admission', 'Building a College Career' and 'Progressing through College to Employment'.

3 TAP Achievements & Targets

Over the last twenty years, TAP has enjoyed significant growth through its student numbers, graduates, programmes and partners. TAP aims to continue this growth into the next period, aiming for 2,020 TAP graduates by 2020!

	1993	2003	2013	2020 targets
Entrants	0	77	240	300
Undergraduates	0	211	700	1,000
Graduates	0	7	600	2,020
Programmes	1	4	6	8
Partners	6	47	80	100

2003-13

- 1,300 TAP students through TCD (600 graduates and 700 undergraduates)
- 7,500 students to higher education from TAP link second level schools
- 19% of student body from 'under-represented groups' in 2012

Each TAP student creates a 'ripple' effect in their own family and community, acting as powerful role models and inspiring others to achieve.



4 Resources

Resources



The annual budget for the programmes is approximately €1,500,000 which represents operational and student support costs. TAP strives for a 30/70 blend of corporate/philanthropic and public funding and multi-annual grants (typically a four year engagement) to drive sustainable development and achieve efficiencies through the maintenance of long-term donor relationships.

TAP engages with statutory funders on a regular basis, to assess how to align project objectives with national policy objectives and also to advise how privately funded 'innovations' developed within the programmes might be replicated to good effect across the sector.

Supporters are actively engaged in advising, co-delivering and creating new projects so that programme networks develop long term ownership and participation. There are over 25 corporate and private supporters of the Trinity Access Programmes.

Efficiencies are achieved through continual refinement of processes and systems for project delivery, distributed leadership across the project teams, shared learning and engaged interaction with all stakeholders, ensuring that evaluation outcomes are discussed and implemented. Key performance indicators are generated annually and benchmarked internally and nationally, including a full analysis of costs.







5 Policy rationale

Widening participation for groups in society which are under-represented in higher education is a key strategic focus for the Irish government. From a social justice perspective, it is acknowledged that education makes a fundamental contribution to individual well-being, societal and economic development. Increasing the numbers progressing to third-level enhances the diversity of the student body making it more reflective of the widening demographic of Irish society. National research has consistently demonstrated that inequalities both in participation and in outcomes remain a feature of the Irish educational system.

From an economic perspective and from projected demographic fluctuations, it is acknowledged that the over representation of higher socio-economic groups at third-level will necessitate the continued development of widening participation initiatives. It is further recognised that in order for Ireland to remain competitive within the global economy, it is essential that Higher Education Institutions (HEI's) recruit from a wider spectrum of students, with government policies enabling and supporting this process.

The main policy documents guiding TAP's focus are:

-  The National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030
-  The National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education 2008-13
-  Trinity College Dublin Strategic Plan 2009-14
-  The College Access Plan 2009-13

The National Strategy states:

"It is essential to create and enhance human capital by expanding participation in higher education" through "much more flexible provision in time and place..." and "open engagement with community and wider society..."

6 Data



Trinity College Strategic Plan 2009-14 commits to:

- 🎓 *"A further significant increase in the participation of students from non-traditional backgrounds, for which the pioneering work of the Trinity Access Programme (TAP) will be broadened."*
- 🎓 *"Providing new opportunities to broad sections of the population for continuous professional development and life-long learning."*

TAP is cited in the College Strategic Plan as a flagship initiative within the 'Engagement with Society' theme and one of Trinity's core values is: *"the inclusivity of our community, which offers equality of access and opportunity to all, seeking out and recognising talent wherever it exists."*

Promoting access is a key strategic goal for Trinity College, with the growth of access within the College being affirmed by annually increasing enrolment rates, as well as a retention rate across the student groups of c.90%. In the 2001-2012 period, there has been a 14% increase in the participation rates of students from under-represented groups in Trinity College - from 5% in 2001 to 19% in 2012¹. These figures are testament to the success of widening access and participation practice and policy within Trinity College and its increasing relevance as an issue nationally.

Trinity College's Strategic Plan 2009-2014 and the College Access Plan 2009-2013 set a 22% target by 2013 for participation of students from under-represented groups.

In 2012, these groups comprised 19% of first-year entrants. The equivalent target within the National Access Plan for Equity of Access 2008-2013 is 30% of all entrants by 2013. Although the Higher Education Access Route (HEAR) and further education links have increased the number of students from under-represented groups progressing to Trinity, it is a challenge to significantly change the admissions landscape within the confines of the Leaving Certificate points system as a single modality for entry. Trinity is engaging with this challenge through its stated commitment to providing opportunities to talented students from all backgrounds and TAP will contribute to these developments.



¹ Students from socio-economically under-represented groups, students with a disability and mature students.

Flexible and part time learning

Trinity has a low proportion of part time students, 4% of the undergraduate student body, by comparison to the universities (11%) and the Higher Education sector (14%). Part time and flexible learning opportunities are essential to promoting life-long learning and increasing access to higher education, by responding effectively to the changing needs of diverse learners, particularly students in employment or with caring responsibilities. The current national target is for 17% of undergraduate students to be enrolled on part time programmes by 2013.



Socio economic background

44% of Trinity's new entrants in 2011-12 are from an 'Employer and Managers' or 'Higher Professional' background (based on father's occupation). These are also the largest categories across the sector. Students from socio economically disadvantaged backgrounds entering College via the Trinity Access Programme make up 5% of the total undergraduate population³.



Mature students

Mature students (23+ at the time of starting undergraduate degree) who accessed College via the dispensation scheme make up 4% of the undergraduate student population; the number of mature students on age² is 921 making up 8% of the undergraduate student population.



"Our vision for 2014 is for a College where activities under the banner 'Engagement with Society' are seen as core elements of our mission. They will be coordinated, effective and make a lasting impact."
Trinity College Strategic Plan 2009-14

² Age 23+ at University entry.

³ TAP students are young adults and adults. TAP students over 23 years are also counted in the mature students statistics.

7 TAP's Strategic Themes to 2020

Aim:

"TAP aims to increase the number of young people and adults from under-represented socio-economic groups (SEGs) reaching their full educational potential, expand opportunities for life-long learning and play a key role in contributing to the development of greater social capital within greater Dublin through direct engagement with other local education providers, businesses and agencies".

Strategic theme 1: Outreach

– Develop and strengthen our School & Community Outreach Links, continuing to focus on schools and communities with low progression rates to higher education

Actions:

-  We will deliver a broad range of outreach activities developed in partnership, to primary and second level students, their parents and teachers under the umbrella of the 'Creative Arts, Technologies & Cultural Hub (CATCH!) initiative. These will raise educational aspirations and provide opportunities to explore new subject areas.
-  We will aim to support maths and science subject selection and grade achievement in our link schools and use the 'Pathways to STEM and Health Science' programme to raise awareness of educational opportunities arising from these subject areas.
-  We will continue to develop good practice in recruitment and guidance of adults and young adults from our target socio-economic groups and to support our link schools in the provision of guidance.
-  We will extend our range of external partners to include new further education colleges, new corporate partners and educational non-governmental organizations (NGOs).
-  We will work with local education providers, businesses and other agencies to increase higher education progression within Dublin's Inner City.
-  We will involve corporate partners in our school and course activities to provide a broader frame of reference for participating students.
-  We will work closely with the 'Bridge21' initiative, the National Institute for Intellectual Disability, and academic schools within TCD, to create a strong national platform for educational transformation.
-  We will continue to build our national and international partnerships and benchmark our work against examples of best practice.









Strategic theme 2: Admissions

– Continue to build on current progress in meeting and setting new institutional targets through the development of alternative entry routes

Aim:

“TAP will collaborate across the sector to develop good admissions practice and new targets, to consolidate the diverse range of entry routes for our target student groups and to increase the provision of alternative modalities of learning”.

Actions:

-  We will work within College to review the 22% target in 2013 with a view to increasing it to meet projected student demand.
-  We will continue delivery of the TAP Foundation Courses, the TCD/CDVEC Partnership University Access Courses, the Higher Education Access Route and the Mature Student Dispensation Scheme.
-  We will support Trinity College in identifying and developing transparent, reliable and fair admissions practices to admit students from all backgrounds.
-  We will continue to develop strategies to ‘fill’ targets for our student groups within all courses.
-  We will explore further expansion of FETAC progression to Trinity College and the development of additional further education links.
-  We will work across the education sector to rationalise and simplify procedures and policies relating to the admission to higher education of mature students.
-  We will support the development of a new College Life-long Learning policy, audit current part-time provision and advance the development of greater flexibility for students.
-  We will support the internal development of open educational resources (OER) with the objective of broadening access to Trinity's educational resources.

7

TAP's Strategic Themes to 2020










Aim:

"TAP will continue to identify and strengthen the supports and services required by TAP undergraduate students to successfully progress through College and achieve their early stage career objectives."

Strategic theme 3: Progression

– Ensure a successful transition to higher education of students in our target groups through continued engagement with students, academic staff and college services

Actions:

-  We will collaborate with corporate partners and professional training bodies to ensure our students are engaged in a range of career development opportunities prior to the transition to higher education and throughout their undergraduate career, in order to broaden their professional frame of reference and assist them in making informed career decisions.
-  We will build on the success of the 'Pathways to Law' model through the implementation of 'Pathways to Business & Entrepreneurship' and 'Pathways to STEM & Health Sciences'.
-  We will work closely with Student Services and the academic community to make the Trinity College 'Student Experience' the best possible one and to ease the transition to higher education.
-  We will continue to improve and integrate our pre-university inductions with good practice across Trinity.
-  We will ensure excellent student preparation through the TAP Foundation Courses and the Pre-University Partnership Courses.
-  We will continue to provide a TAP advisor for each of our first year students.
-  We will continually strengthen our community of TAP students and alumni through focused events, opportunities to support the delivery of TAP projects and social networking.
-  We will expand and strengthen the TAP Ambassador project so that students are actively engaged citizens learning transferable skills, while acting as powerful role models for the next generation. We will work within Trinity to explore service-based learning opportunities.
-  We will work within Trinity to ensure our students have a positive teaching and learning environment and that staff and students are encouraged to participate in diversity training.








Strategic theme 4: Evaluation

– Research & Advocacy – Address educational policy and funding issues through our local, national and international networks

Aim:

“TAP will continue to refine programme evaluation systems, to question assumptions in our practice and to continually learn from each other, colleagues across College and national and international networks. TAP will also endeavour to highlight educational and funding policies that mitigate against full and effective participation of target student groups and to build innovative strategies for greater educational inclusion.”

Actions:

-  We will use the on campus Foundation Courses, and our partnership with Bridge 21 and link schools, as opportunities to explore innovative teaching and learning methodologies with a view to sharing experience and good practice across the education sector.
-  We will create a range of online guidance and information tools to facilitate the wider dissemination of core messages.
-  We will support the continued development of Student Ambassadors as a key group of ‘influencers’ for engaging more students and building a larger support base.
-  We will continue to strengthen existing innovative models of partnership with corporate supporters and explore the development of new models.
-  We will seek to articulate core messages to the wider public through the media.
-  We will engage in continual collaborative research, and disseminate outcomes, to explore key issues relating to educational innovation, ‘college going’ school cultures, business-to-higher education partnerships, student engagement and participation.
-  We will deepen our evidence-based approach through the development of a learning philosophy and associated annual plan, to ensure that best use is made of evaluation data and experience to explore our deeper assumptions and continually reshape our practice.

8 What Our Partners Say...



What Our Partners Say

"I think what TAP does is amazing work. I honestly don't think I would have coped with college life for my first year if I wasn't part of this group. I think the orientation at the start of the year is a very good idea. Getting to know the college and making a few friends in your course do that, it isn't as scary the first day." TCD 'TAP' undergraduate

"Every time I had contact with the TAP office I always was welcomed and assisted promptly and thoughtfully. I always felt like my situation was important and that someone cared about the things I needed help with." TCD 'TAP' undergraduate

"We find the programme great and of great advantage to the school. The pupils love the organised events and trips into Trinity." TAP School Liaison Officer

"My experience in TAP has been absolutely fantastic and I have loved every minute." TAP Foundation Course student

"TAP has kept me in college, not because I'm not academically able but because I was born into a set of circumstances that puts me at a constant disadvantage." TCD 'TAP' undergraduate



What Our Partners Say

"We are continually astounded and genuinely encouraged by the talent that TAP seek out, mould and release into our society. The ability to deliver on nationally strategically important goals for the country is even the more impressive given the resources available for TAP." **TAP Corporate Partner**

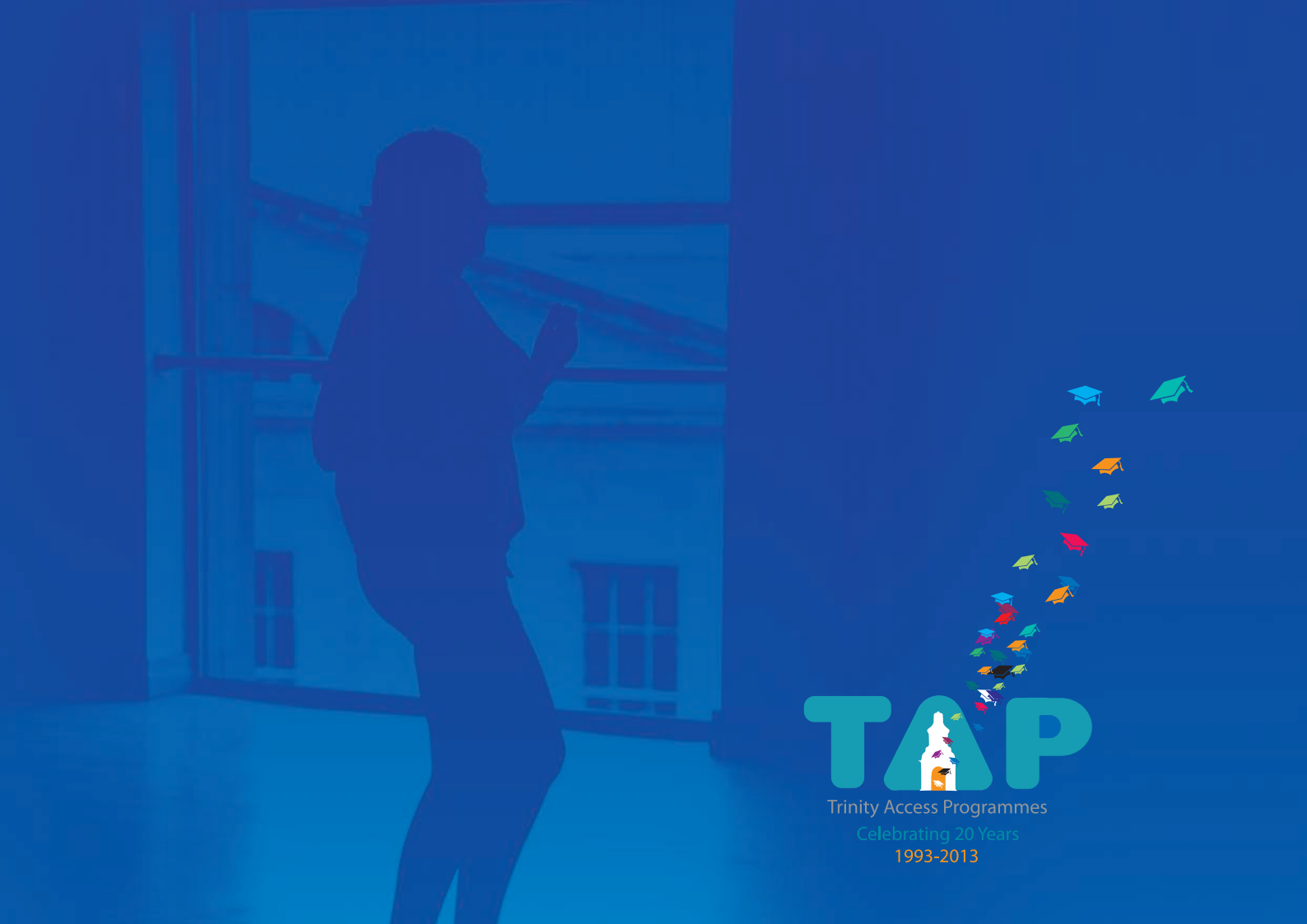
"If it wasn't for TAP I know that I would have had to drop out. Being secure and feeling assured that that help is available benefits my well-being as a student because it allows me to concentrate on just my studies." **TCD 'TAP' undergraduate**

"Workshops run in schools are excellent. I think these work really well because they run over a series of sessions. This gives the children the opportunity to become more involved in the project. The Maths and Science Scholars programme is also fantastic." **TAP School Liaison Officer**

"I really enjoy volunteering with TAP especially when meeting secondary school students. I love answering questions and chatting to them about my experience in school, with TAP and coming to college. It is clear second level students really benefit from having a 'primary source' on college and I can see that it changes the way they view 3rd level education." **TAP Student Ambassador**

"I think that the Mature Student Office does an excellent job with mature students especially those who are going to college for the first time." **Mature Student**

* These comments were provided anonymously in a wide ranging consultation process with stakeholders to inform the development of this plan.



TAP

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Celebrating 20 Years

1993-2013



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