



IT Sligo
Strategic Plan
2017 ▶ 2022

Your education
& innovation
partner for life

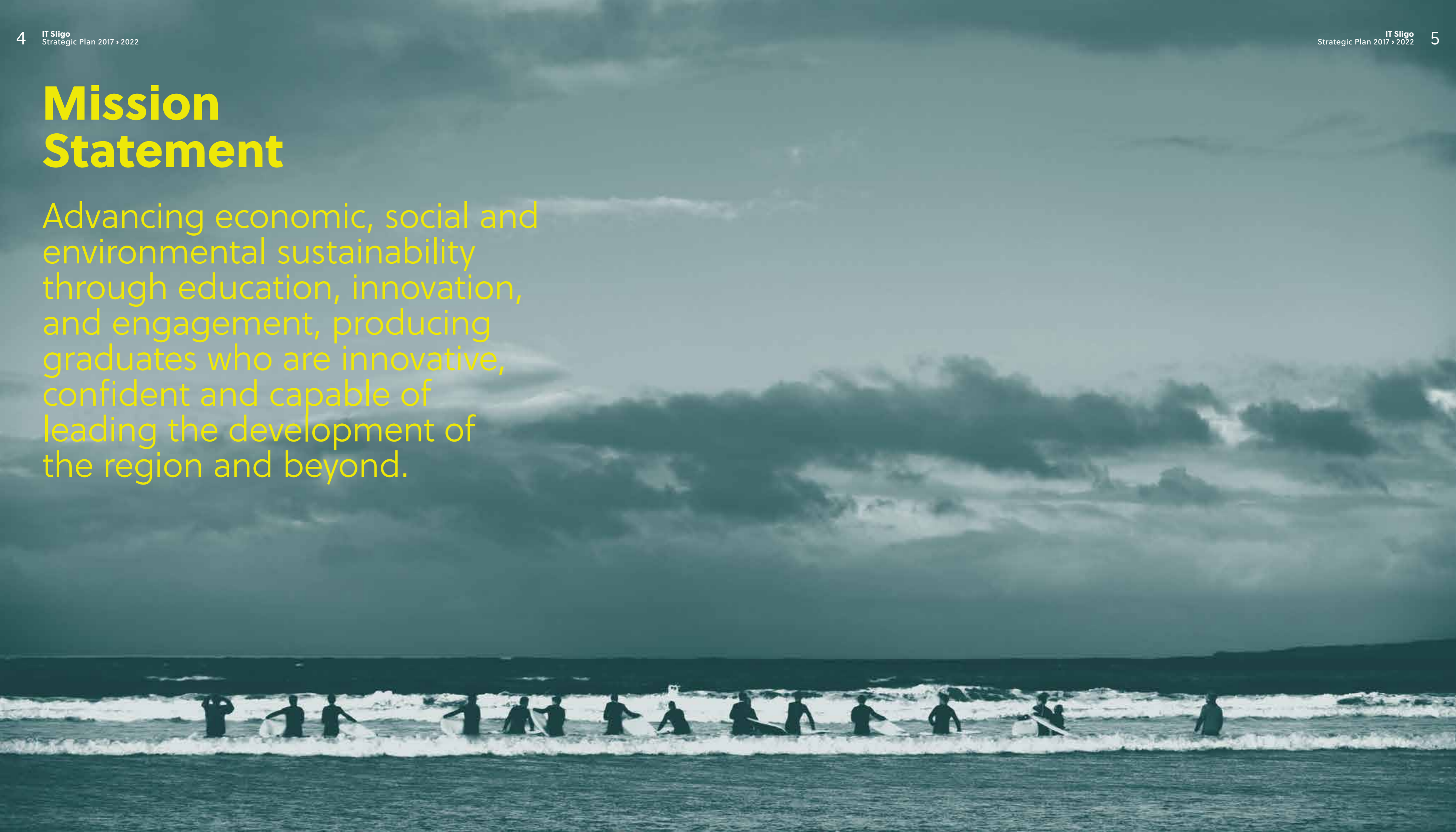
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Mission Statement

Advancing economic, social and environmental sustainability through education, innovation, and engagement, producing graduates who are innovative, confident and capable of leading the development of the region and beyond.





President's Note

Growth is the key deliverable for IT Sligo as we develop the Institute over the next five years, towards 2022.

A key target for the Institute is to almost double our enrolments from the current level of 6,000 to a figure of 10,000. It is a bold target but, together, we can achieve this important milestone.

In building scale, IT Sligo will move confidently towards achieving Technological University (TU) status. TU status will give our region and our communities exciting new opportunities and a platform on which the next generation can build a brighter future.

We are constantly striving to support and improve access to higher education and deliver excellence within it. In achieving the goals contained in this five-year strategic plan, we will bring IT Sligo to the next level, securing sustainable growth and a vibrant future for all stakeholders including students, staff and the communities in which we live in and serve.

**Brendan McCormack, PhD
President, IT Sligo**





Chairman's Message

IT Sligo has a strong track-record of engaging with students, schools, further education colleges, state agencies and employers across the region.

The Institute delivers to many national policies and strategies; on the creation of the future landscape of Irish higher education, increasing access to education, growing international education, and meeting objectives for innovation and entrepreneurship, job creation and regional development. The Institute has a national reputation for upskilling the work force through its online/blended learning programmes.

The vision of the Governing Body is to be a life-long education and innovation partner for learners. To achieve this vision, and to support the long-term economic viability of the region, the Governing Body has determined that the Institute should work with other higher education institutions to achieve re-designation as a TU for the north-west of Ireland.

This strategic plan sets out ambitious objectives and performance targets. In achieving these, IT Sligo will become even more effective in serving the educational, economic, and cultural needs of the region. Over the life of this strategic plan, the Institute will significantly increase the number of student enrolments and annual graduates, providing the necessary talent to support regional economic growth.

The Governing Body looks forward to working in partnership with students, staff, management and external stakeholders in the implementation of this strategic plan.

Niall O'Donnellan
Chairman, Governing Body, IT Sligo



We will provide a transformed technology-enhanced, learning environment for our students.



Our Culture and Aims.

At IT Sligo we:



Educate

students to reach their full potential



Champion

respect, equality, inclusion and diversity



Lead

by being ambitious, innovative and accountable



Promote

ethical and responsible behaviour



Believe

that publicly funded higher education should be accessible to all



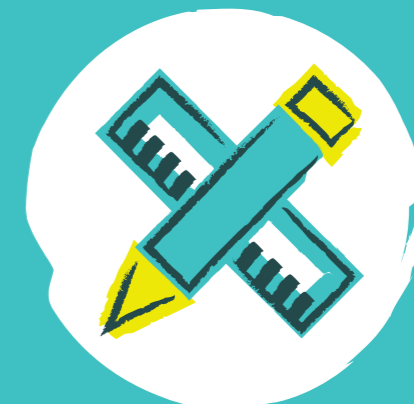
Value

students, staff, business, community and the environment



Respond

proactively to economic and societal challenges



Collaborate

for the enhancement of our economy, society and environment

IT Sligo 2017 › 2022

Student Numbers

2017 › 6,000
2022 › 10,000

Graduates (Per Annum)

2017 › 1,546
2022 › 3,000

TU Status

2017 › Stage 2 in Progress
2022 › Full re-designation
as a TU



Full time to Online Student Ratio

2017 › 62:38
2022 › 42:58

Work Placements

2017 › On Some Level 8 Programmes
2022 › On All New Level 8 Programmes

Student Retention

2017 › 77%
2022 › 82%



Online Enabled & Trained Staff

2017 › 70%
2022 › 90%

Management Gender Balance

2017 › 27% Female
73% Male
2022 › Minimum of 40% of both genders

Equality & Diversity

2017 › Adopting Athena Swan Charter
2022 › Athena Swan Bronze Award



Research Enrolments

2017 › 73
2022 › 200

Support for Start-Up Companies

2017 › 40
2022 › 125

Alumni Network

2017 › 320 on database
2022 › 10,000 on database



Our Objectives For:

1.

Our Students:

Develop the ability to navigate their futures in a complex world

2.

Learning & Teaching:

Support the continuous professional development of all staff. Maintain and strengthen leadership in technology-enhanced learning

3.

Research Development & Innovation:

Enable more students and staff to conduct research. Gain international recognition in key research areas

4.

Partnership & External Engagement:

Build stronger partnerships with second level schools/ETBs, employers and community

5.

Shaping & Influencing Economic, Social & Cultural Development:

Raise the education-qualification profile of the regional population. Support social entrepreneurship, business start-ups and development in the region

6.

Organisation & Governance:

Continue to provide robust governance, accountability and appropriate processes

1.

Our Students

Students will come to IT Sligo for a quality learning environment and because they are supported to be successful in their learning. The increase in the number of on-campus and off-campus students will offer a socially and culturally diverse place of learning.

Objectives

Develop their ability to navigate their futures in a complex world

Students will develop the ability to navigate their futures in a complex world through appropriate work placements and international experience, and with learning and delivery models and effective career guidance that develop self-efficacy. The learning outcomes will ensure that graduates have transferable competencies such as creativity, teamwork, adaptability, communication, problem-solving, critical analysis, entrepreneurship and relevant work place learning.

Foster inclusion and participation for all students

We will provide the best-rounded experience for students. Supports will be enhanced and the on-campus and north-west experience will be promoted through music, sport and other social activities.

Support students to achieve their full potential

Foster a culture of being successful together by developing student self-efficacy and by recognising achievement as a key objective. Completion rates of programmes will be improved through more enhanced academic support for students. Institute policies, procedures and news updates will be communicated to students in accessible formats.

Be part of a larger, more diverse student population (target 10,000)

The Institute will develop systems to better understand the range of student profiles, given their differing social and cultural backgrounds. The origins and personal challenges of students will be analysed and marketing initiatives will be targeted to show them how IT Sligo can meet their individual needs. Equality will be promoted among students. Our international policy will support on-campus cultural diversity and provide opportunities for overseas student experience. Employment, career and lifelong learning pathways will be clearly communicated.

“ Students will develop the ability to navigate their futures in a complex world through appropriate work placements and international experience.”

2.

Learning & Teaching

Maintaining a well-qualified and professional body of academic and non-academic staff is essential. We will support continuous professional development of staff to ensure the quality of our teaching and learning across multiple delivery modes. Our programmes will be fully accredited, relevant to the requirements of employers and will be regularly reviewed and updated. Infrastructure will be maintained at the highest level to provide the standard of education expected of the modern learner.

Objectives

Support the continuous professional development of all staff

Training and development will focus on the effective delivery of programmes to all categories of students. This will be achieved through the work of the Centre for Enhancement for Learning and Teaching. The staff development targets of the current Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy (2015-2018) will be completed.

Maintain & strengthen leadership in technology-enhanced learning

The Institute has an ambitious target to grow online students from 2,000 (in 2017) to over 5,500 by 2022. A step-change in the current systems and processes for recruitment and education of students online is required to achieve this target. Staff will be well prepared in online pedagogy and best practice will be applied in the design, delivery, assessment and resourcing across all in-class and online programmes.

Continue to develop a strategic approach to academic planning

The Institute is committed to deliver programmes from craft apprenticeship to doctorate, using the most appropriate mode of delivery. Inherent in the design of all programmes will be core (common) learning elements in programmes across all disciplines, that are essential learning for any graduate. There will be an emphasis on preparing students for employment.

Create an innovative and inspiring teaching and learning environment

The Institute will be continuously developed to provide state-of-the-art classrooms, laboratories and workshops. Care will be taken to provide 'creative spaces' and 'chat-spaces' that facilitate greater inter-disciplinary projects/team work for staff and students.

Achieve awarding body status by maintaining Delegated Authority

We will continue to ensure all programmes are nationally recognised on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). We will increase the level of professional and statutory accreditation to ensure programmes are relevant, current and will ensure 'enhanced and desired progression'. A focus to be maintained on achieving Awarding Body status from Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI).

“ Be successful together by building a culture of student self-efficacy and achievement.”

3. Research, Development & Innovation

The Institute has made significant strides in developing a strong research base. There is a growing body of staff actively engaging in research across many fields. To meet the ambitious objective of becoming a technological university, we must continue to support such activities. We must increase our research and development support for industry and become even more actively engaged with employers and sectoral bodies. Fostering innovation and entrepreneurship in students is vital for the next generation of new businesses.

Objectives

Enable more students and staff to conduct research

The Institute will increase the level of RDI infrastructural supports for students and staff. New supports will lead to an increase in the number of staff and students actively engaged in research across all levels leading to an increase the number and impact of RDI outputs.

Gain international recognition in key research areas

The Institute has three active Strategic Research Centres (SRCs), in Environmental Science, in Precision Engineering Manufacturing & Materials and in Social Professions. In addition, there are five recognised Research Groups. The Institute will support its research centres and groups to build a strong international reputation, as evidenced by publications and international collaborations, in key research areas.

Apply creative talent to develop innovative design solutions and increase contract and applied RDI

In becoming a technological university, the Institute will grow and increase the level of RDI supports it provides to industry. These supports typically include problem solving, training and education and the encouragement of more staff to engage in research and company projects.

Promote Institute RDI to stakeholders and market Institute achievements

It is important that the public, the academic community, state agencies and employers are made aware of the RDI activities of the Institute. Employment in research and development will be promoted as a career path for graduates with a view to creating job opportunities and encouraging new RDI to business start-ups in the region.

“ Regional SMEs will be proactively supported by providing a one-stop-shop/development centre for productivity and innovation.”

4. Partnership & External Engagement

The main stakeholders for external engagement are second level/further education colleges, educators, employers, community and alumni. Each of these is important to the Institute – both in acting as a source of new students and as advisors in the development of the academic portfolio and the curriculum. Over the coming years, the Institute will build on its existing relationships with these stakeholders to be widely recognised as an active and engaged entity in the region, supporting sustained education, employment and communities.

Objectives

Build strong partnerships with Schools/Education Training Boards

Simply put, the Institute will provide better 'joined-up education' and Second chance education opportunities from Levels 5 to 10 and enhance career guidance teachers' understanding of the programmes on offer at Levels 6 to 8.

Build stronger partnerships with Employers

Our Institute will work with employers to identify their needs, developing and flexibly delivering executive/bespoke education across all levels to respond to the needs of key regional employers. The Institute will work closely with the creative and cultural community to support this as a viable sector. Regional SMEs will be proactively supported by providing a one-stop-shop/development centre for regional business productivity and innovation.

Build stronger partnerships with Community

Engagement with the wider community is important in maintaining the relevance of the Institute as the main provider of higher education in the region. The Institute will support the development of non-profit, local government and other communities through education, innovation and engagement activities.

Build stronger partnerships with Alumni

We have 20,000 alumni working across the globe. This is a huge, and mostly untapped resource. Alumni are typically very willing to support the work of the Institute when asked, be it for guest lectures, student placements or advice on new directions. The Institute will develop alumni networks and leverage these for the benefit of existing students and the region.

“ Simply put, our Institute will provide better 'joined-up education' and second chance education opportunities.”



5. Shaping & Influencing Economic, Social & Cultural Development

To positively influence the economic and social growth of the northern and western regions, the Institute will become more active in national debates and policy development. Achieving the Institute's ambition to become a TU is dependent on active collaboration with other higher education institutions.

Objectives

Contribute to national & regional stakeholder policies

Management and staff of the Institute will become more actively involved in the development of regional and national policies and plans, beyond the immediate educational remit. The Institute will be recognised and will be heard as an active participant in such developments. The Institute will become a place where meetings on issues of national and international interest and concern are held and issues openly discussed and debated.

Support and promote social entrepreneurship, business start-ups and development in the region

In addition to receiving a discipline specific qualification, it is important that graduates have experience of entrepreneurship. If we are looking to these graduates to be the next generation of new business creators in the region, they need to be well prepared. The Institute will create a culture of entrepreneurship among students. Staff will work with students to engage with employers and the community on voluntary and professional projects.

Enable greater engagement between agencies and public sector bodies

Ireland is recognised as a having a good support structure for new business start-ups and for growing existing businesses, including foreign direct investment companies. The Institute has existing working relationships with employer organisations and state agencies in the spheres of education and economic development. These relationships will be further developed so that employers and state agencies are aware of the services provided by the Institute, and that the Institute is the acknowledged 'go-to' place for these services in the region.

“ The Institute will become a place where the community meets to debate issues of national and international interest.”

6.

Organisation & Governance

It is important that the Institute maintains good standing with the Higher Education Authority and the Department of Education and Skills, particularly as it has an ambitious plan for both growth in student enrolments and in becoming a technological university. The Institute will continue to provide the resources that meet the needs of staff and students. A fundamental requirement in doing this is to ensure that students, staff members, and external stakeholders are aware of these ambitions and are kept informed of developments.

Objectives

Deliver the actions of the plan

The Institute will need to plan for the provision of the staff, facilities and structures to scale up to a student population of 10,000 in 5 years. Similarly, resources will need to be provided to meet and build on TU criteria. This will require a new organisational structure and a financial plan to provide the necessary resources in a timely manner.

Develop a green campus providing an innovative and inspiring teaching and learning environment

The IT Sligo campus is recognised nationally as an exemplary facility. Over the coming years, the Institute will develop the campus as a greener facility. The concept of 'green' will be included in the core curriculum.

Promote equality, diversity and inclusion and provide for staff well-being and work-life balance

As part of the professional development programme for academic and non-academic staff, topics will be included on equality and diversity and quality of life at work. The Institute will apply for Athena Swan Bronze status, in developing a culture of equality and diversity.

Continue to provide robust governance, accountability and appropriate processes

The Institute will continue to be a publically funded organisation, focused on facilitating access to higher education. We will also remain compliant with all governance responsibilities and will remain financially balanced.

Improve evidence-based information systems to inform decision-making

We will develop our internal learning and will encourage staff to voice new ideas. The Institute will facilitate a culture of managing risks, pilot testing and 'fail-fast often'. The analysis and reporting of data will become more common practice in decision making, informing and underpinning resource allocation.

Improve communication processes within the institute

The Institute will develop an internal communication mechanism to ensure appropriate information and consultation between management, staff and students, and will ensure that committees and fora are managed effectively. The Strategic Plan will be disseminated in public areas across the Institute.

“ Analysis and reporting of data will become more common practice in decision making.”

**This document is a
summary of IT Sligo's
Strategic Plan 2017-2022.
The full document is
available at:**

itsligo.ie/publications



**In dreams
begins
responsibility.**

- WB Yeats

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and the European Union