

# IT Sligo Annual Report 2014 - 2015



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# Foreword

On behalf of the students and staff of Institute of Technology, Sligo, I am delighted to present this Annual Report for 2014-2015.

The past year has been one of innovation, investment and celebration. This report captures a selection of those milestones.

There is much to be proud of.

The official opening of the new €17 million MacMunn Science Building last September by An Taoiseach Enda Kenny, T.D. highlighted the Institute's ambition to provide the highest quality learning environment for its students. This signature building compares favourably with any third level science facility in the country.

We were also privileged to host a series of major national and international events during the period in review.

Chief among them was visit of His Royal Highness Prince Charles to the Institute in May 2015.

The Prince's visit to Ireland provided an opportunity of reflection and reconciliation. It also signalled a new sense of confidence and partnership for the future, which was reflected in the IT Sligo 'leg' of the visit. The Prince's engagement with Ireland's younger generation signalled a comfortable relationship which seeks to look forward.

IT Sligo's engagement with the organisers of the Yeats 150 celebrations, commemorating the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of the poet W.B. Yeats culminated in the Yeats International Architecture competition, which attracted entries and attention from all over the world.

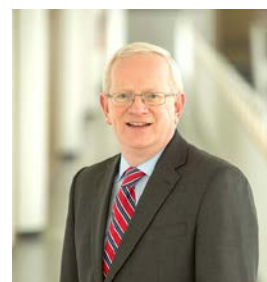
Other highlights included Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann 2015. For the second consecutive year, the Institute was the main competition venue for the world's biggest celebration of traditional Irish music, song and dance, hosting several of the Fleadh's signature events during a truly memorable week in August. The success of the Fleadh again highlighted a tremendous sense of collaboration and togetherness amongst the local authorities, stakeholders and the general public.

The exciting challenge for Sligo now is to harness that ability and community cohesiveness to ensure that other events of national and international significance keep coming to the region. IT Sligo is determined to help support that regional drive.

Strategically, the Connacht-Ulster Alliance bid to gain re-designation as a Technological University gathered fresh momentum in March 2015 when a formal Expression of Interest was submitted to the Higher Education Authority. We await approval from the Minister for Education & Skills in the Autumn.

Work has also started on the preparation of a new Strategic Plan for the Institute for the period 2016-2020. The proposed plan will retain TU achievement at its heart, as this remains the Governing Body's position. The emphasis has shifted slightly to a focus on IT Sligo itself achieving the criteria to ensure that we are best placed to respond to any changes in the proposed Government legislation.

**Professor Vincent Cunnane**  
President  
IT Sligo



# The McMunn Building



# 1. Science Future Innovation

The MacMunn Building, opened by An Taoiseach Enda Kenny, T.D. on September 2nd, 2014, gives IT Sligo a magnificent state-of-the-art science facility for students and staff working in a field that is crucial to Ireland's current and future prosperity.



Built to exacting standards over a 14-month construction phase, the €17 million project was overseen by BAM Contractors and contains 12 custom-made laboratories. The building has the very latest industry-recognised facilities including an advanced analytical instrumentation laboratory and a bio-pharmaceutical suite. The new 4,300m<sup>2</sup> space boasts a large 80-station first-year laboratory, seven other teaching laboratories and four research laboratories.

The MacMunn Building, named after the scientist Charles Alexander MacMunn, from Easky, Co Sligo, offers outstanding facilities for the teaching and study across the life science and environmental science disciplines.

The new building completes a five-year €35 million redevelopment of IT Sligo. Since 2002, €60 million has been spent on developing the campus.



## The Charles MacMunn Story

Charles Alexander MacMunn was a brilliant scientist and medical doctor, born in Easky, Co Sligo in 1852. He graduated in medicine from Trinity College, Dublin and joined his cousin's medical practice in Wolverhampton, England.

The Sligo man developed a special interest in Microspectroscopy and studied spectral changes in pigments within body tissues and the chemistry of their energy metabolism. His spirit of discovery led to a remarkable breakthrough.

MacMunn discovered a classification of pigments that were present throughout plant and animal tissues and that were capable of oxidation and reduction, and were therefore respiratory pigments.

These respiratory pigments are now known as the Cytochrome System, and are fundamental to cellular metabolism. What MacMunn discovered is now a cornerstone of modern biochemistry.

Recognition of his discovery only came after his death.

## 2. Student Participation & Experience

### Conferring 2014



1638 new Graduates were conferred during two days of ceremonies at the end of October.

Families, friends and other guests joined in the celebrations at the Knocknarea Arena on Thursday and Friday last week as new Institute President Professor Vincent Cunnane presented parchments to the students marking the successful culmination of their years of intensive study, practical research and project work at the Institute.

### Graduates Play New Ambassador Role



IT Sligo introduced a new Graduate Ambassador programme for the 2014/15 as part of the Institute's new marketing initiatives. The project sought to bring a

selection of college graduates directly into schools to tell their story of the "IT Sligo experience" in an effort to increase student recruitment. Five graduate ambassadors were recruited and they visited more than 200 secondary schools across the West and North West regions, promoting IT Sligo and its courses.

### New Investment in Online Learning & Precision Engineering



In March 2015, the Governing Body of IT Sligo committed €2.5 million of the Institute's cash reserves towards enhancing two of IT Sligo's key education pillars. One million euro will be spent on refurbishing our toolmaking facilities in the School of Engineering & Design. This investment reaffirms our commitment to ensure that the Institute's Precision Engineering infrastructure meet the needs of today's industry requirements. A further €1.5m is being invested in online learning. This money will be used mainly to develop 'people' resources, as the Institute continues to build on its position as the national leader in online learning.

### Forensic Science

The Institute's Level 8 Forensic Science programme has officially received its accreditation certification from the UK based Forensic Science Society, the only international forensic professional body. We're the first third level institution in Ireland to gain this recognition.

The Institute's Level 8 Forensic Science programme has officially received the seal of approval of the UK based Forensic Science Society, the only international forensic professional body. It signifies that the programme's taught and practice components and the Institute's scientific facilities and staff expertise meet the Society's highest standards.

IT Sligo now joins an elite list of UK universities with the Society's accreditation. They include King's College London, Keele, Kent, East Anglia, Portsmouth, Abertay Dundee and South Wales.



# Our Staff



Academic Staff	270
Non-Academic Staff	157
<b>Total Staff</b>	<b>427</b>

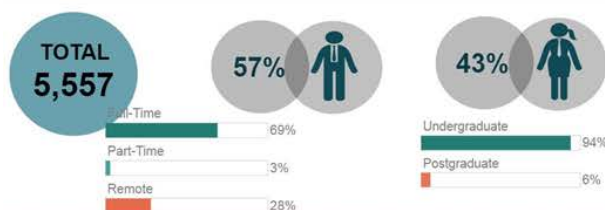
## IT Sligo 2014/15 Key Facts and Figures

### NEW ENTRANTS

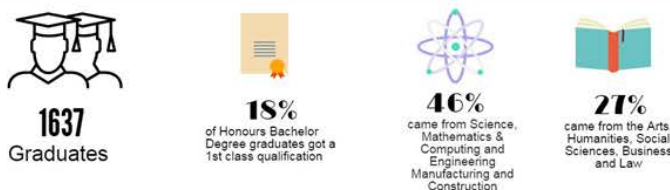
#### Full-Time Undergraduate New Entrants



### ENROLMENTS



### GRADUATES



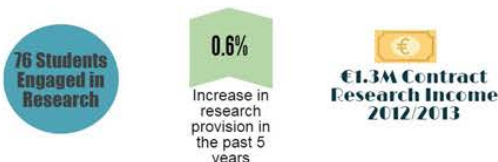
### PARTICIPATION



### INTERNATIONAL PARTICIPATION



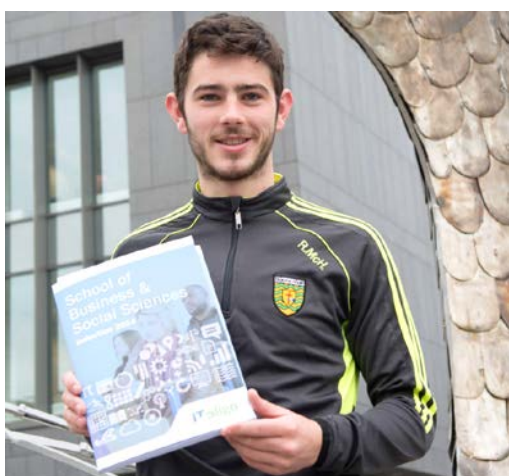
### RESEARCH



### 3. Achievements & Awards.

With almost 6,000 full-time and part-time students, IT Sligo is home to a wealth of energy and talent. During the period under review, our students and staff have enjoyed many successes. Here, we highlight a few of them.

#### GAA Young Player of the Year



IT Sligo first year Business student Ryan McHugh was named as the GAA's Young Footballer of the Year for 2014 at the All-Stars banquet in Dublin. This was in recognition of the role Ryan played in helping Donegal senior Gaelic footballers reach this year's All-Ireland final. Ryan is a IT Sligo Sports Scholarship recipient and is also a member of the Institute's Sigerson Gaelic football team.

#### All-Ireland Club Winner

Another Donegal footballer (and student here) Geraldine McLaughlin helped her club Termon win the ladies

All-Ireland senior club title for the first time. She scored 3-8 in the final and was named Player of the Match. Geraldine is a third year Sports & Rec student – and is currently one of the Institute's Gold Sports Scholarship Award Recipients.

#### Entrepreneur of the Year

Engineering student Brian Moran was named the Leitrim's Young Entrepreneur of the Year 2014 for his new business idea - Waterwatch. This is a smart water meter which will allow the consumer understand their real time water consumption, thereby saving money by reducing water usage.

#### HEA Making an Impact Award Winner



William Wilson, a post-graduate researcher in the Department of Civil Engineering & Construction, won the Higher Education Authority's 'Making an Impact' Award for 2015. William came with an idea on how to make stronger, environmentally-friendly concrete. His presentation at the National Final in the Helix, Dublin won the Judges overall award.

#### Engineers Ireland Award

Mechanical Engineering students from the Institute won an Engineers Ireland Innovative Student Engineer of the Year Award. Ruairi McGee,



Anthony Mannion, Gary Lyons and Niall McHale collected the top award for their Willow Harvester project, which is used for whole stem harvesting of biomass crops.

## The Votes are in – IT Sligo wins eGovernment award

A new online tally system for last year's local election count in Sligo, which was devised by Institute staff, won the e-Government 'Best Innovation' award for 2015. Edmund Gray and Padraig Harte from the Department of Computing and Creative Practice, used Microsoft Cloud Technology which made the tally figures instantly available online to the general public. The information, which appeared in spreadsheet form, showed the tally of votes for every candidate in every polling booth across county Sligo. It was used extensively by local radio station Ocean FM during its election coverage, and earned widespread praise from the public and media outlets.

## Corn Sheain Mhic Mhagnuis Award



The recipient of IT Sligo's Corn Sheain Mhic Mhagnais was Michael Moffatt, lecturer in the Department of Mechanical & Electronic Engineering and Programme Chair for Mechanical Engineering courses in the Department. Michael joined the College in 1978 and for the past 36

years he has played a central role in ongoing developments in the School of Engineering & Design. The Corn Sheain Mhic Mhagnuis Award, which was established by the Institute's former Chairman, Sean McManus, is awarded annually to recognise the contributions/achievements of an individual or group. Michael has been instrumental in the development of courses in mechanical engineering, tool design, computer aided precision engineering, mould making and polymer technology. He has also been very involved in Apprenticeship training in the College, particularly in the Toolmaking area, and has helped to ensure the Institute maintains its designation as the National Centre for Training for the Toolmaking Industry.

## Teaching Hero Awards 2014



Two lecturers Paula Roddy and Fran O'Regan received National Teaching Hero Awards at a special ceremony in Dublin Castle. These awards are organised by the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education – and the nominations come from the students in the various institutions. Paula is a lecturer in Recreation & Leisure. Fran lectures in mathematics to students undertaking a degree in Computing.

## Irish Heart Foundation Gold Award

IT Sligo received the Irish Heart Foundation Gold Award for its Healthy Campus work during 2014. The award recognises the commitment and hard work of the staff and management to ensure the Institute promotes and supports physical activity. The Institute is the first IOT in the country to receive such an award

## IrelandSkills National Competition 2015

The 2015 IrelandSkills National Competition in Toolmaking was hosted by the Institute in December and the award ceremony was held in January.



Joint winners were Donal Logan of Tool & Gauge (Sligo) and Gordon Hickey of Autolaunch (Carlow). One of the finalists now goes on to represent Ireland in Plastic Die Engineering at the World Skills Competition, which takes place in Brazil this August.

## 4. Towards a Technological University

The Connacht-Ulster Alliance (CUA) submitted a formal Expression of Interest to the Higher Education Authority (HEA) on March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2015, for re-designation as a Technological University.

provision of higher education to students (ii) providing flexible delivery of education and (iii) growing local enterprises and communities through collaborative research, development and innovation activities. The proposed TU will foster business networks and developmental clusters, and will enhance the ability of the region to attract inward investment.

A technological university in the region, focused on enterprise and innovation, will have a positive impact on the attractiveness of the region as a location for new and existing companies to innovate and grow.



This is the first of four stages in a process leading to the establishment of a Technological University for the West/North-West region of Ireland.

This Expression of Interest signals the ambition of the CUA, comprising IT Sligo, Galway-Mayo IT, and Letterkenny IT, to become a Technological University in order to better serve the needs of the region.

The CUA partners believe that the proposed TU, will stimulate economic growth across the geographically dispersed region by (i) enhancing the

Companies requiring highly skilled innovative workers typically locate close to a university, particularly one which has active links with industry.

The three Presidents of the Alliance partners believe that they can achieve TU re-designation by collaborating and working together. The Expression of Interest document sets out the high level vision for the TU and maps the achievements of the three CUA institutes.

## 5. Celebrating Yeats Through Architecture

In 2015 Ireland celebrated the 150th anniversary of the birth of the Nobel Prize-winning poet, William Butler Yeats. Yeats2015 presented a local, national and international series of exhibitions, performances, educational events, festivals, concerts, readings, talks and screenings.

Many of the cultural events were centred on Sligo, Yeats' 'spiritual home'. IT Sligo was proud to engage closely with the Yeats2015 organisers in the creation of a landmark architectural event.

The Yeats Architectural competition was conceived by the Institute of Technology Sligo Architectural Design programme team, Cliona Brady, Bernadette Donohoe and Michael Roulston, in partnership with the Model Sligo, Yeats 2015, Hazelwood Demesne Ltd and Sligo County Council.

Conceptual interpretations were invited of WB Yeats' famous poem 'The Lake isle of Innisfree'.



The competition attracted strong international interest with 110 entries from 33 countries meeting the stringent competition criteria to be assessed for the main award.

An Anglo-Korean design concept entitled 'Square Moon' was selected as the overall winner of the Yeats 2015 Architectural Competition.

The winning concept (see picture), inspired by WB Yeats' poem 'The Lake Isle of Innisfree', was submitted by Shindesignworks – an Anglo-Korean architecture design team based in London and Daegu, South Korea. Architects Yong ho Shin and John Randle led a small professional design unit specialising in exploring innovative concepts and developing advanced proposals in the field of architectural, environmental and industrial design.

Their submission, which is an aluminium-scaled frame and uses luminous lantern light, impressed the independent judging panel for its clarity and simplicity.

The student category award was won by Zita Fodor, Nóra Ferenczi and Éva Baráth, from Budapest University of Technology and Economics in Hungary.

The overall winning design was temporarily installed along the jetty area of Isle of Innisfree on Lough Gill for Yeats Day, June 13th, 2015 as a realisation of Yeats' vision – a gift on his 150th birthday. The structure was then moved to its permanent home - on the campus of IT Sligo.

## A Presidential Celebration of Yeats 2015

The Knocknarea Arena at IT Sligo hosted one of the flagship events for the Yeats 2015 celebrations – The Poet Laureate and National Poets Event, which took place on Yeats Day, June 13th, 2015.

President Michael D. Higgins and his wife Sabina were the guests of honour for this special, one-off occasion, as the laureates gathered to pay tribute to WB Yeats on his birthday in his spiritual home.



## 6 – An IT Sligo Welcome Fit For A Prince

Cave archaeology, the environment, IT Sligo's enduring Anglo-Irish links, and a celebration of the 21st century student generation were key themes during the visit by His Royal Highness, the Prince of Wales, to IT Sligo on May 20th 2015.



Several hundred students and staff gathered to welcome Prince Charles during an hour-long visit which included a visit to IT Sligo's new €17 million MacMunn Science Building,

The visit also afforded the opportunity to celebrate the Institute's Anglo-Irish connections through Gabriel Stokes, W.B. Yeats and Charles MacMunn. The visit also enabled the Institute to showcase its expertise in disciplines which the Prince has a personal interest in: namely Architecture, Archaeology, and the Environment.

Prince Charles also met with representatives of The CREST (Centre for Renewable Energy and Sustainable Technologies) research group, which has one of its centres at

IT Sligo. It helps small businesses in Northern Ireland, the border counties and Western Scotland to develop and adopt renewable energy and sustainable technologies.



## 7. EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT & OUTREACH

One of IT Sligo's key priorities is to be an enabler of regional economic social development, working in partnership with local authorities, agencies and stakeholders.



We strive to provide company specific accredited training and professional development through our online learning that meets the needs of regional business, enterprise and related stakeholders.

We proactively engage in public policy development through participation, communication and thought leadership.

We value our role within the fabric of the local community – and strive to reflect this in range of conference, cultural and sporting events which our campus hosts throughout the year.

### Cranmore Regeneration Through Sport Initiative

The Cranmore Regeneration Project, initiated by Sligo County Council, is a plan of action aimed at improving the quality of life in the Cranmore Estate

in the East Ward of Sligo through better co-ordination of services, community development and integrated planning.

The Institute's Centre for Research in the Social Professions (CRiSP) was commissioned by Sligo Sport and Recreation Partnership (SSRP) to provide an external evaluation of the Cranmore Regeneration through Sport Initiative. The SSRP works with its partner agencies to plan, develop and co-ordinate sport and recreation programmes in Cranmore.

### LASNTG Collaboration Signals New Direction For IT Sligo

The Institute signed a new agreement with the Local Authority Services National Training Group (LASNTG) for the development of a bespoke online part time Level 9 Cert in Road Maintenance Engineering and Network Management. This programme will address skills deficits identified in local authorities across the country. LASNTG will provide a minimum of 30 students per year for 4 years.

### Fleadh Cheoil na h-Éireann 2015



The Institute earned widespread praise for its role as the main competition venue for the All-Ireland Fleadh in August. 14 of the festival's

25 competition venues were located on our campus. The quality of the Institute's facilities and organisation for an event of this scale won strong approval from both the Fleadh organisers and the thousands of visitors to our campus over the course of the week.

## Sligo BID Project

IT Sligo has been a strong supporter of the Sligo Business Improvement District Project (BID). A BID is a defined geographical area, where legislation allows the public and private sector to agree, via a vote, to invest collectively in local improvements. In this business-led initiative, the businesses directly control the projects delivered in their town centres. The funding made available through the project has already enabled Sligo to win the prestigious Purple Flag Award, an award which recognises excellence in managing the evening and night time economy.

## Weather Beaten Archaeology Conference

The inaugural Weather Beaten Archaeology Conference was organised and hosted by the Institute's Department of Environmental Science. The conference was the first of its kind and established a forum for the exchange of experiences of extreme weather events and their impact on archaeological sites. It also piloted a new "Citizen" archaeologists project, aimed at assisting the public in protecting vulnerable coastal heritage from being lost to winter storms and climate change.

## Engineering Expo Photo IT Sligo AR 2015

The Institute devised and developed a new Engineering event, which aims to



collaborate with local industry and showcase the diversity of career opportunities for students and jobseekers in the engineering sector. Students from the School of Engineering & Design showcased their award year projects at the Institute's inaugural Engineering Expo, which took place in May 2015. More than 90 final year projects were on display ranging from an oyster shell crusher, pneumatic go-kart, mini robot to an automated rain water harvesting system, a study on hydraulic fracking and an assessment of hydro systems for the Shannon river. This was a free public event.

## The Power Of Science



Science Week 2014 attracted 3000 members of the public to 25 different events. The Family Open Day provided a big hit with families and younger science enthusiasts. The guest lecture



series included presentations Series from RTE's weather forecaster Evelyn Cusack and Deputy State Pathologist Dr Michael Curtis. The aim of Science Week at IT Sligo is to showcase the relevance of science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) in our everyday lives and to demonstrate their importance to the future development of Irish society and to the economy

## National Coaching Forum



270 leading sports coaches and practitioners from across Ireland attended last weekend's National Coaching Forum at IT Sligo. The event, which was organised by Coaching Ireland & The Irish Sports Council, highlighted the importance of quality coaching in developing athletes and providing opportunities for participants of all ages and abilities.

## Sophia House Collaboration

Third Year students from the BA (Hons) in Architectural Design collaborated with the Sophia Housing Association, headquartered in Tubbercurry, Co Sligo. Sophia works to enable people who are homeless to make positive differences in their lives by becoming more aware of their own strengths and potential. It approached the Institute's architecture programme to seek assistance in the development of the new facility.

Students were given a brief to develop and design a Wisdom Centre as a place for both spiritual healing and an active community space.

## Environ 2015



The 25th Irish Environmental Researchers Colloquium (Environ 2015) was held at IT Sligo from April 8th to 10th and was co-hosted by the School of Science and the Environmental Sciences Association of Ireland (ESAI). Environ is the longest running and largest forum for environmental researchers in Ireland with over 275 delegates attending the event annually. It provides a high-visibility platform for young researchers to present their findings to an audience drawn from academia, government bodies and industry.



# 8. Governing Body & Academic Council

## Governing Body

2010 - 2015

The Governing Body of IT Sligo met on seven occasions during the period under review.

Chairman

**Mr Ray MacSharry**

President

**Professor Vincent Cunnane**

Section 4 (1) (a) and (b)

**Cllr Mary Barrett** (MSLETB)

**Cllr Margaret Gormley** (MSLETB)

**Mr David McGuinness** (MSLETB)

**Cllr Tereasa McGuire** (MSLETB)

**Cllr Enda McGloin** (MSLETB)

**Ms Mary McGowan** (DETB)

Section 4 (1) (c)

**Ms Maeliosa O'Brien** (Academic Staff)

**Dr Ted McGowan** (Academic Staff)

Section 4 (1) (d)

**Ms Sheelagh O'Gara** (Non-Academic Staff)\*

Section 4 (1) (d)

**Mr Stephen Doak** (Student)

**Ms Helen Campbell** (Student)

Section 4 (1) (f)

**Mr Joe McDonagh** (ICTU)

Section 4 (1) (g)

**Mr Sean McEwen** (American Chamber of Commerce)

**Mr Philip Delamere** (Arts Council)

**Mr John McGowan** (Engineers Ireland)

**Mr Declan Walsh** (Institute of Chartered Accountants)\*

**Dr Mary Hodson** (HSE – North West)

*\*Stepped down in August 2014*

Secretary to Governing Body

**Ms Elizabeth McCabe**

Secretary/Financial Controller

### Advisors

**Mr Colin McLean**

Registrar

**Dr Jeremy Bird**

Head of School of Science

**Dr Perry Share**

Head of School of Business & Social Sciences

**Mr Shane Fanning**

Head of School of Engineering & Design

**Mr Tom Reilly**

Head of Strategy & Planning

**Mr Gordon Ryan**

Head of Development & Business Operations

### **Academic Council Members 2014-2015**

Professor Vincent Cunnane

Mr Colin McLean

Dr Michael Barrett

Ms Angela Bartlett

Dr John Bartlett

Mr Aidan Bell

Dr Jeremy Bird

Dr James Brennan

Ms Aodhmar Cadogan

Mr Pat Carter

Dr Tasmin Cavaliero

Mr Noel Connaughton

Ms Áine Doherty

Mr Stephen Doak

Ms Stephanie Donegan

Ms Anne-Marie Duddy

Mr Shane Fanning

Mr Declan Feeney

Dr Billy Fitzgerald

Mr Cillín Folan

Mr Jim Foran

Mr Roddy Gaynor

Ms Eileen Gillen

Ms Ann Higgins

Dr Oliver Joyce

Ms Una L'estrange

Dr Frances Lucy

Dr Brian McCann

Ms Mairead McCann

Dr Catherine McGuinn

Mr Trevor McSharry

Dr Breda McTaggart

Dr Carol Moran

Mr Noel Moran

Mr Emmet O'Doherty

Dr Tomás O'Flaherty

Ms Úna Parsons

Dr John Pender

Mr Tom Reilly

Dr Perry Share

Dr David Tormey

Dr Rhona Trench.

### **IT Sligo - Executive Management**

#### **Professor Vincent Cunnane**

President

#### **Ms Elizabeth McCabe**

Secretary/Financial Controller

#### **Mr Colin McLean**

Registrar

#### **Dr Jeremy Bird**

Head of School of Science

#### **Dr Perry Share**

Head of School of Business & Social Sciences

#### **Mr Shane Fanning**

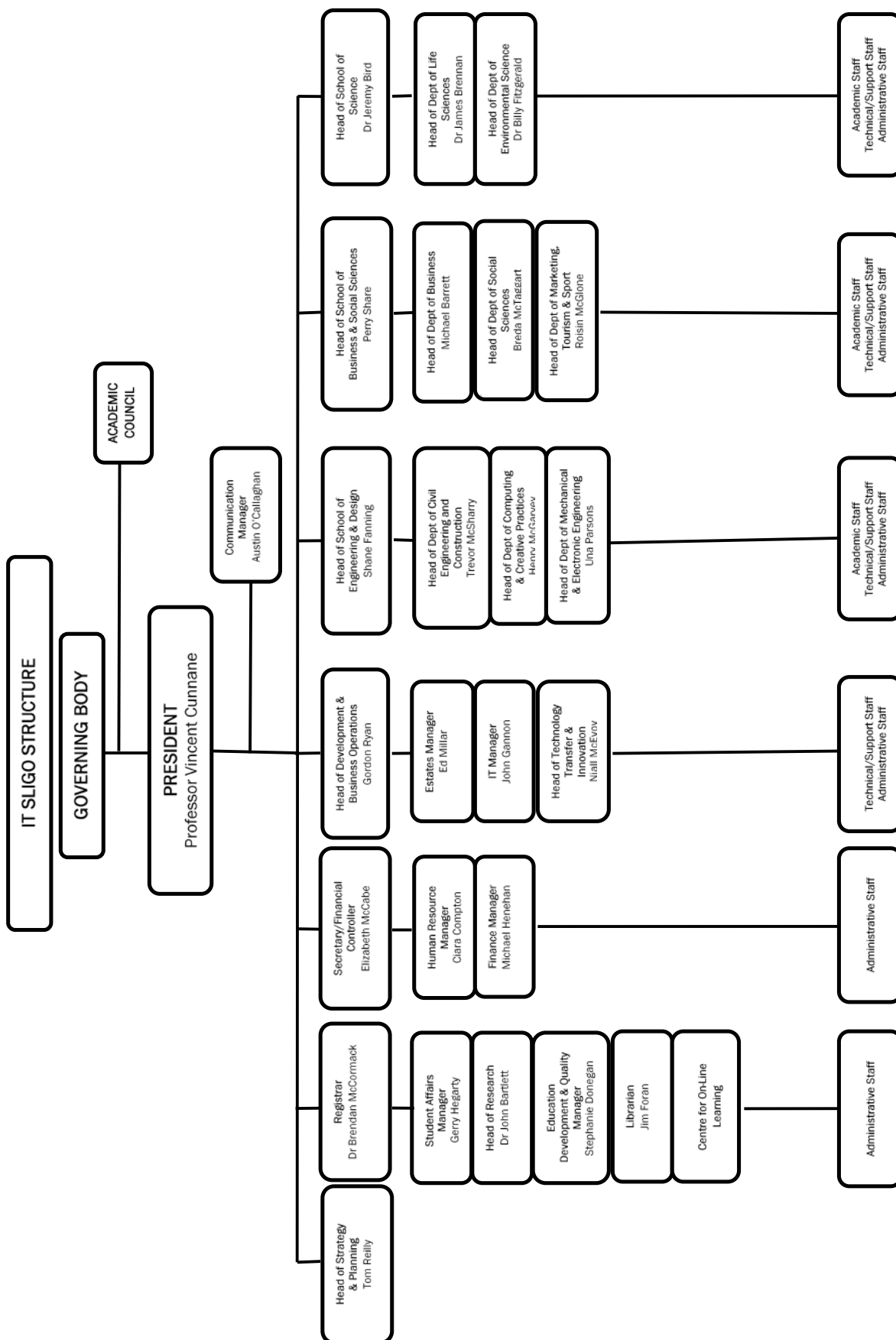
Head of School of Engineering & Design

#### **Mr Tom Reilly**

Head of Strategy & Planning

#### **Mr Gordon Ryan**

Head of Development & Business Operations



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