



STRANMILLIS UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
A College of Queen's University Belfast

ANNUAL REPORT

1st August 2008 – 31st July 2009



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STRANMILLIS UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

Stranmillis University College was founded as a non-denominational institution in 1922 by the recently established Ministry of Education for Northern Ireland to provide state-funded teacher training in the northern portion of the partitioned island, alongside that already available at St. Mary's College, Belfast, a Roman Catholic institution. The Ministry purchased for the purpose Stranmillis House, with its very attractive and historic 18 hectares of wooded parkland, only three kilometres from the centre of Belfast. Apart from a period during the Second World War when the College was temporarily moved to Portrush, it has continued to occupy this Belfast campus, most of which was declared a conservation area in July 1996. The College's Governing Body, which is responsible for all aspects of activity, is directly appointed by the Minister with responsibility for Employment and Learning in Northern Ireland.

The College became academically integrated with The Queen's University of Belfast on 1st September 1998, but retains its financial and organisational autonomy. For academic purposes it is now a 'College of The Queen's University of Belfast'. A new institutional title to reflect these arrangements was approved by the Privy Council and formally launched on 8th February 1999. The title in full is: 'Stranmillis University College: a College of The Queen's University of Belfast'. As a result of the approval by Parliament of the Colleges of Education (NI) Order (2005), Stranmillis became a legally incorporated higher education institution on 1st October 2005. Its grounds and buildings were on that date transferred from Government to the Governing Body, which also became the employing authority for staff. As a result of incorporation, the term 'Governing Body' replaced the previous usage of 'Board of Governors' from 1st October 2005 onwards.

BOARD OF GOVERNORS (2008-09)

Chair

Steve Costello, MBE BA

Members

Mrs Doreen Bell, MA DASE – *Vice Chair*

Neil Bodger, MBA Dip Modern Languages

Derek Campbell, BEd MA

Derek Capper, CertEd BA

Andrew Curry, BEd - *Student Governor*

Colm Donaghy, BEd MA – *Staff Governor*

Rev. Matthew Hagan, CertHE Theology MPhil

Ms Judith Harper, MEd DASE PQH(NI)

Dr. Anne Heaslett, BA MA D.Phil MSc FRSA – *College Principal*

Terry McGonigal, FCCA CIPD MBA

Hugh Storey, MSSc DMS ACIS MBIM - *Staff Governor*

Clerk to the Board

Norman C.G. Halliday, AFA

MISSION STATEMENT

The University College's vision is to be a centre of excellence in educational, professional and vocational development.

The University College's mission is: "to sustain a critical community of educational excellence in teaching and research in a shared learning environment where diversity is welcomed, in order to help meet the professional needs of society in Northern Ireland and beyond".

The University College's associated general aims are to:

- (i) Offer its students high quality education, to equip them with intellectual, scientific, technical and professional skills and to provide the facilities which will enable this to be achieved;
- (ii) Value staff and students and ensure their welfare and well-being;
- (iii) Sustain its historic role as a centre of excellence for the education of teachers and to develop further its more recent role of meeting the needs of a number of other professions;
- (iv) Be a major centre of knowledge, learning, innovation and scholarship for those disciplines in which it specialises;
- (v) Pursue selectively research of national and international standard and to develop new and existing areas as appropriate;
- (vi) Maintain and to develop further a research base which will facilitate applied research and knowledge transfer to satisfy the needs of appropriate professions, Government and the community;
- (vii) Maintain and extend the diversity of backgrounds, cultures and nationalities from which its staff and students are drawn;
- (viii) Enrich the quality of life in the Northern Ireland community;
- (ix) Continue to consolidate the University College's position within the university sector, serving identified niche markets of a professional nature;
- (x) Enhance and develop further partnerships with business and other organisations/institutions, both nationally and internationally.

A REVIEW OF THE REPORTING PERIOD

INTRODUCTION

In the 2008-09 academic year the College continued to operate within a policy vacuum. Despite the debate about Teacher Education having been initiated in 2004 the long awaited report remains unpublished. Equally disappointing was the failure to include representation from both Stranmillis University College and St. Mary's University College on the Steering Group of the Higher Education Strategy Review set up in 2009 by the Minister of Employment and Learning. These facts provide further evidence of the low priority given by government to Teacher Education and the failure to articulate its relationship to the economic and social development of our community.

Despite these challenges the College continues to take forward a robust and ambitious planning strategy which seeks to continually improve the provision for teacher education and related professional development in Northern Ireland. It continues to expand and strengthen its collaboration with key stakeholders and develop innovative partnerships.

In 2008-09 the College saw a further decline in Initial Teacher Education numbers. BEd Primary numbers were decreased by 10 places to 80. The initial decision to cut Post-primary by 10 places was reversed by the Minister for Education to remain at 50 places. The Minister also gave a directive to the College to recruit more Post-primary students to STEM related subjects. The College is now proactively pursuing a recruitment strategy for Post-primary recruitment which has a focus on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics) subjects. PGCE Early Years received an allocation of 15 places. The maximum number of non-ITE places (ie the diversified programmes of the BA Early Childhood Studies and BSc in Health and Leisure) remained at 277 in total across all years of these programmes. Details of New Student Admissions in 2008-09 are provided in Appendix 1.

The quality of students entering the full-time degree programmes remained high with the average UCAS Tariff for BEd remaining at 330. The Performance Indicators table - Appendix 2, shows that between 2004/05 and 2008/09 the College recorded an increase of 64% in the number of 1st class degrees awarded across all full-time degree programmes.

The College is addressing the challenge of operating under a Formula Based Funding model. This has involved streamlining processes and rigorous monitoring of budgets. In 2008-09 the College pursued a strategy of investing any in-year surpluses to enhance its infrastructure and learning environment.

The surplus for the year to the end of July 2009 was £2900. This lower surplus was achieved through a proactive strategy adopted throughout the year to invest in equipment and resources to enhance the student experience both in the teaching/learning environment and student residence. This included an investment of £100,000 on updating IT equipment and installing

additional whiteboards and a further £50,000 invested to improve Internet access in the Halls of Residence.

In 2008-09 income increased by 3.4% (£380,000). This was due to more students paying the higher tuition fee of £3,225 and a significant increase in income from part-time fees as a result of developments such as the Foundation Degree Consortium with the Further Education sector, the provision of professional development courses for Malaysian teachers and the development of the Lifelong Learning programme. In addition to these course fees income was also generated from consultancy work undertaken by staff. See Appendix 3 Financial Information.

The University College continued to develop its conference business attracting clients from both the public and private sectors, local and international. In 2008-09 £159,000 was generated from the hire of accommodation and facilities thus making a significant contribution to the University College's income.

The Lifelong Learning Programme, launched in 2008-09, was a significant development aimed at improving the College's capacity for income generation as well as expanding its range of learning opportunities. It attracted nearly 200 new learners to the College. Full-time students also had the opportunity to access courses on the Lifelong Learning programme at concessionary rates as part of the College's Additionality/Degree Plus strategy.

There was an increase in staff costs of 8.2% in 2008-09. The full implementation of the Framework Agreement and an increase in the employer's contributions to pension costs accounted for this increase. However, despite these increases the College continued to keep its staff costs at 57.8% of total expenditure which reflects a high level of efficiency. Further financial details are provided in Appendix 2.

In 2008-09 the College underwent a significant restructuring exercise in preparation for the retirement of three Vice-Principals. They retired at the end of the 2008/09 year after significant lengths of service. A new post of Assistant Vice-Principal for Teacher Education was created. This brings all Initial Teacher Education into a single leadership team and complements the work emerging from the review of the BEd programmes. Two new posts were created: Head of International Development and Head of Research Development.

These changes have placed a greater emphasis on distributed leadership within the College. The creation of two further Cross-College roles to lead developments in Special Education and Additionality (Professional Development) has extended development opportunities for staff.

In 2008-09 the College was subject to a focused inspection of Literacy and Numeracy within the BEd programmes. This involved using the self-evaluation framework that had been agreed with the Education and Training Inspectorate in September 2008.

The final report published in February 2009 highlighted the fact that a major strength was the caring ethos of the College. Students were well supported in their learning. In particular Advisers of Studies played a proactive role in supporting students and the quality of provision was described as very good. The inspection process confirmed that the overall standards achieved by students were very good.

While the College welcomes this endorsement of good practice it is seeking to use the self-evaluation and inspection process as a means of driving forward a commitment to continuous improvement.

PROPOSED MERGER WITH QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY

In 2008-09 a Project Implementation Group was established in response to the Governing Body's decision to explore in principle a merger with Queen's University. This has involved a number of Working Sub-Groups – Academic and Student Affairs, Resources, Human Resources and Communications. The priority in the 2008-09 academic year has been to prepare a Business Case for the Department of Employment & Learning documenting the case for the proposed merger.

TEACHER EDUCATION

The BEd Primary and Post-primary and PGCE Early Years programmes remain popular and the volumes of applications received continue to allow us to select students of the highest calibre – UCAS Tariff details are set out in Appendix 1. Interviews, using panel members drawn from leadership teams in our partner schools, remain a vital element of the selection process. Leaders in our partner schools continue to actively seek our graduates to replenish their teaching teams and to enhance their skill base with contemporary expertise.

During 2008-2009 the focused ETI inspection of Literacy and Numeracy highlighted instances of effective practice which illustrated aspects of the programme teams' self-evaluation and of the inspection framework. A selection of the programmes' innovative partnership activities, creative use of cutting-edge educational technologies and examples of enhanced reflective practice was included in the published report. A further aspect of evidence within the report was consistent with the views of external examiners in its reference to 'academic stretch', as evidenced by the high quality of many final year dissertations. Much of this work is deemed to be at postgraduate level and demonstrates the high calibre of practitioners exiting the programmes.

A significant number of our lecturers continue to have membership of educational groups engaged in the creation and implementation of recent educational policy and curriculum initiatives. Utilising their considerable expertise and an evidence-based approach, the College's undergraduate

teacher education programmes have been revised and successfully validated. The rationale for revision was based on the need to cohere and strengthen the emphasis on current educational challenges thus improving our graduates' capability to embrace the opportunities presented in the revised curriculum and the implementation of the Entitlement Framework. As part of the review process the programmes have also sought to achieve a more robust emphasis on enhancing the skills needed to meet the additional learning and pastoral needs of children and young people and to contribute to the considerable opportunities presented in the STEM agenda.

Consultation with key stakeholders was central to reviewing the process at all stages and will continue to inform refinement as the programmes roll out. External academic assessors who engaged with the validation process congratulated the Primary and Post-primary teams for the innovative approaches used to create opportunities for integrated learning within and across phases and in the utilisation of expertise from other professional programmes within the Stranmillis portfolio. They also commended the range of additional professional development options available to students that are complementary to modules within the degree programmes. Our PGCE students also have access to the additional professional development options and the combined study patterns often add a richness to dialogue and learning for students.

In the area of continuing professional development the MEd specialist options, Leadership in Schools and Special Education, continued to show a healthy recruitment, with a majority of graduates securing leadership and specialist positions in local schools. The MTeach maintained its action research niche. It continues to place the emphasis on practice being informed by theory and offers students the advantage of engaging in online learning.

Increased student numbers allowed more staff to become involved in the supervision of dissertations in areas related to their research specialism. In order to complement and bridge access to the M-level options a range of professional development opportunities have successfully recruited teachers and other educational professionals from across the province. Much of this innovative activity has been in response to demand from colleagues in partner organisations who wish to avail of the considerable expertise within the Teacher Education team.

PARTNERSHIP WITH SCHOOLS

Stranmillis University College has a number of non-contractual partnerships with most Northern Ireland Primary and Post primary schools and FE colleges. This is the largest set of partnerships. There are informal partnerships with ELB's in relation to Induction and Early Professional Development. The University College has also expanded its overseas partnerships and details can be found in the section in the International Development below.

The College has continued North/South Student Teacher Exchange – 2 students from Stranmillis University College joined 4 students from St. Mary's University College in undertaking a School Based Work placement in the Republic of Ireland. Altogether 14 students from colleges in the Republic of Ireland did placements in Northern Ireland. This involved St. Patrick's College Drumcondra, Marino Institute, Froebel College and the Church of Ireland College. Mary Immaculate College in Limerick joined us for the first time. The exchange gave students the opportunity to have a teaching experience in both jurisdictions of Ireland.

As a joint Stranmillis/St. Mary's initiative the School Experience Co-ordinator at St. Mary's University College and Head of School Partnerships at Stranmillis University College addressed the Belfast Area Principals' group about School Based Work in March 2009. All agreed that this professional dialogue was mutually very beneficial. We would wish to hold similar events in the future.

The Good Practice in Diverse schools (GoPids) was carried out again following positive evaluations in previous years. It gives first year students a breadth of insight into schools in different sectors across Northern Ireland.

Research into effective and innovative practice highlighted the value of paired placements in classrooms with peer learning being a significant part of the professional learning experience. Year 1 Post-primary students were paired together to work collaboratively. The success of this is monitored and evaluated on an ongoing basis with a view to extending this form of practice. The practice was commended during the inspection.

The Post-primary Team ran a partnership day on 3 April 2009. This is regarded as an important form of professional dialogue with key stakeholders.

A further pilot project emerged as a result of collaboration with the Kent Medway Education Authority. It involved 3 Post-primary and 1 Primary student participating in a school placement in the Kent Medway area. The rationale behind the project is to encourage students to have a wider teaching experience and explore the labour market outside Northern Ireland.

As a joint St. Mary's/Stranmillis University College initiative, we began planning for a student exchange school with Doane Stuart School in Albany USA. It is anticipated that this partnership will be developed in the 2009-10 academic year.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

The **BA (Hons) Early Childhood Studies** programme remains popular and maintains a healthy recruitment of good calibre students. Interview mechanisms continue to be used as part of the selection process. The partnership with Omagh (the South West Regional College) continues to be one of the most important collaborative relationships established by the Early

Childhood Education team. Recruitment there has, in fact, increased in recent times. The Monaghan outreach continues to be a valuable arm of activity for the team taking much needed practitioner development opportunities in early childhood education and care into the border counties.

The revised BA programme was validated in March 2008 and so began its first run of implementation in September 2008. The programme team was pleased with the results of the quality assurance mechanisms employed to garner student feedback and worked diligently to provide support and liaise with students; module reviews show excellent module scores.

External Examiner comments, as outlined below, provide further evidence of the high quality of this provision.

'The evidence examined suggests that the course meets the QAA Benchmarks for ECS well and provides students with a very sound academic underpinning for a potential career in a variety of professional roles related to early childhood.' (Waller, June 2009)

The MA Early Childhood Studies programme entered its third year in 2008/09 with the first cohorts of students completing their dissertation, and progressing towards completion. Recruitment levels continued to be strong.

The MA (ECS) is identified by External Examiners as a high quality programme which is commensurate with similar Master's programmes at other Universities in the UK. The modules in the programme were noted to be of good quality and are highly relevant and contemporary. They are judged to support the development of a comprehensive and critical understanding of early childhood, related international research and professional practice. Noteworthy were the external comments that some of the assessed pieces were of an outstanding quality and at least one of the dissertations was noted to be worthy of publication. The team involved in the programme is identified as knowledgeable in their specific areas. It was noted that staff are making specific reference to their own research, thus informing their teaching.

Consultation with a variety of stakeholders (including current students), identified 3 major developments for the MA (ECS) pathway which were pursued in 08/09:

- The identified need to offer the programme on both a full-time and part-time pathway;
- The expansion of the range of modules available to complement the developments in the field of Early Years in Northern Ireland, eg the impending EY Strategy 0 – 6 Years;
- The need to work collaboratively with QUB School of Education to offer one joint M Level programme in the field of early childhood education and care.

The Foundation Degree in Early Childhood Studies programme has been developed as a result of a major collaboration with the Further Education sector and is proving popular in the various catchment areas covered by the Consortium partners. The Foundation degree is offered on both a full-time and

part-time basis. Stranmillis has responsibility for co-ordination and quality assurance across the Consortium. This is achieved largely through a series of inter-College and intra-College module team meetings for those teaching the same modules in various locations.

The External Examiner's report (June 2009) highlights a number of areas of good practice:

- The merits of individual modules, highlighting their pertinent content;
- Assessments were judged as fair throughout with marks awarded matching the stated criteria;
- Personal & Professional Development Portfolio tasks as a strong feature of the Programme;
- Strong leadership and management of the Programme by the University College Co-ordinator;
- Excellent Quality Assurance procedures with inter and intra college work implemented.

BSc HEALTH AND LEISURE

In 2008/09 the numbers enrolled remained high while withdrawal rates were minimal. In the year under review 43 students graduated, maintaining the level of classification of previous years. During the year 47 students were offered places for 2009/10 and 4 part-time students were offered direct entry to stage 2 to join the seven already studying for the degree.

With the support and guidance of outside organisations, through the Programme Consultative Committee, a significant change to the pathway in third year was made to offer three strands to the students. Each strand was designed with future employment in mind thereby guiding students towards a career. Feedback from the students was very positive.

The link between BSc and BEd continues to be under review and has developed to the stage where a number of modules are jointly taught, particularly in the practical modules. Further collaborative developments are being considered for 2009-10. The course team also continues to monitor the degree in relation to content and relevance to the health and leisure professions. A review is currently underway to ensure that students have the appropriate skills and knowledge for their future careers in the industry.

Although the Health & Physical Education team is relatively small, significant developments have taken place in relation to research. Two research grants were obtained from SCoTENS and Sport NI. The Sport NI research focused on the theme of physical literacy and was a collaborative project with the University of Ulster. Further details are outlined in the Research Development section below.

With the development of the Orchard Building, which is now the focal point for Physical Education and Health & Leisure Studies, the department appointed a Sports Development Officer for the year to provide leisure and sporting

opportunities for students and staff and more recently the local community. A second year Health & Leisure Studies student on a one year placement was appointed to the position. The following developments highlight the success of the post in 2008-09:

- Duke of Edinburgh Group – The Duke of Edinburgh Club now has 20 members after being inactive for the previous five years;
- Aerobics, Hip Hop Dance and Pilates classes were organised as part of the Lifelong Learning programme;
- Staff Lifestyle assessments were undertaken for 50 staff and students;
- The following coaching courses for students were organized:
Disability Sports Games for All Leadership Award - 40 Students;
GAA Day - 40 Students;
Elevating Athletics - 20 Students (These students taught athletics while on School Based Work and were involved in the Athletics for Schools day held in the College).

WIDENING ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION

During 2008/09, the University College continued to successfully, *'recruit, sustain and support students from the widest possible range of educational, social and cultural backgrounds...'*. The revised College Access Agreement (2007) set out two central projects for Widening Access within Stranmillis:

- Project 1 – *Attracting more students from under-represented groups*
- Project 2 – *Males into Teaching: Role Modelling Scheme*

To achieve the above goals, the College Access Agreement recognised the need to, *'develop further, and enhance partnerships for all degree pathways with external institutions, organisations and professional groups'*. With this in mind, throughout 2008/09, numerous small and large group presentations were delivered from the large-scale keynote 'Teaching' presentation at the 2009 NI UCAS Convention, to various seminars/workshops/mock interviews in a variety of individual Post-primary schools. Targeted large presentations and small group seminars were undertaken with 'A' Level, ACCESS and mature students at South Eastern Regional College and Belfast Metropolitan College in relation to attaining an Initial Teacher Education place. A very successful *Access Open Evening* took place in December 2008 with the result that a number of the audience who attended that night are now enrolled in the College. Throughout 2008/09 the College also liaised closely with the Widening Participation (WP) team at Queen's University to contribute to the Summer School and various Widening Participation Events organised by Queen's. An open morning for Northern Ireland Careers Service Advisers was held in June 2009 highlighting the opportunities that exist in the College for mature students on our part-time Health & Leisure Studies course.

In addition to insight events the College is an active founding member of the *Northern Ireland Housing Executive Education Forum* and through this forum is supporting the raising of educational aspirations of individuals and groups within Housing Executive estates, including children in care. To develop

further and enhance the University College's community based links and activities, during 2008/09 a number of contacts were made with community groups to explore how the College might best extend the support that it can give to raising aspirations. To provide additional practical support to pupils in Project 1, a very successful 2-day *GCSE Mathematics Revision School* for 40 pupils from a number of non-selective Post-primary schools was held during Easter 2009. Sixth form boys with an interest in following a teaching career participated as peer tutors during the Easter School.

With regard to Project 2, during December 2008, the College Co-ordinator was invited to speak on BBC Radio Ulster on the issue of the decline in the numbers of male teachers in Northern Ireland. On Open Day (2009) a survey of males and their perceptions of Stranmillis and teaching was completed. This information has been used to inform the College on what it could be doing to encourage more males into teaching. In addition to insight presentations the central target during 2008/09 was to begin the development of an innovative website resource 'Y Not Teach' (www.maleteachers.co.uk) exclusively targeting males into teaching and early years environments. The construction of this site has now commenced with a target launch date of May 2010.

Widening Access provision in the University College extends beyond pre-entry insight/support initiatives to include support for successful Stranmillis entrants who are representative of the targeted project groups. A Student Entry Survey completed by the 2008 year 1 intake across all three degree programmes identified areas in which students would welcome support. The Student Support Centre continues to offer a range of services to students to assist them to successfully complete their degrees.

The College Selection Report (a copy of the full report can be accessed on the College website – http://www.stran.ac.uk/media/media_135873.en.pdf) demonstrates that we have been largely successful with our Widening Access Targets that are specifically concerned with entry to the College. While the College will continue with insight initiatives a central focus for future planning is on increasing community engagement to raise aspirations at primary school level and to offer a more comprehensive menu of support activity to underrepresented groups. Given the nature of the core business of Stranmillis University College, and our success to date, we are confident that we can make a unique contribution to raising the educational aspirations of the community groups that we target.

THE INTER-COLLEGE PROGRAMME FOR DIVERSITY AND MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING

The Inter-College Programme for Diversity and Mutual Understanding (DMU) is developed and delivered in collaboration with **St. Mary's University College**. It has been in place since the late 1980s with special funding from government and has in recent years adopted a much stronger curriculum focus. Thus the current programme operates as an extension of those areas

of the BEd pathways that deal with Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (Primary) and Local and Global Citizenship (Post-primary) and other areas relating to community relations/good relations and intercultural education. During the academic year 2008-9 each year group took part in mixed interactive workshop activities on the following themes: Year 1 – *identity and diversity*; Year 2: *understanding and dealing with prejudice*; Years 3 and 4: *global and development issues*. The hope is that in dealing with relevant educational, social, community and humanitarian issues the students will build their skills and confidence in these areas as well as developing positive personal and professional values and inter-community relationships. This is very much in line with the government's "Shared Future" policy in respect of teacher education (OFMDFM, 2005: para 2.4.16).

One of the most important features of the programme, in the view of many of the staff and students involved, is the residential training programme for students who volunteer to work as peer facilitators in the workshops for Years 1 and 2. This has consistently attracted 15 or 20 students from each college over recent years, and there is general agreement that the experience gained from this is greatly valued by the students who have taken part.

These DMU activities are organised by a joint staff-student committee and are also substantially supported and co-organised by colleagues from the National Union of Students/Union of Students in Ireland (for Years 1 and 2) and the International Red Cross (Years 3 and 4). A number of other educational support organisations are also involved in various ways in relation to the programme – including as group facilitators, trainers or advisers – and this helps to ensure that the inter-college programme relates more widely to the important areas of community relations and community cohesion.

Timetabling of joint events has sometimes proved challenging. Nevertheless, those responsible for this area continue to work to develop a programme that will effectively prepare our student teachers to play an effective part in education for diversity awareness within an ethos of mutual respect.

RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT

The research and scholarly activity undertaken by staff in the 2008-2009 academic year indicates that there is a vibrant research culture in the College and a growing sense that high quality teaching and learning is informed by research.

Stranmillis University College is committed to the vision of developing a research culture which supports teaching and learning and influences policy and practice. The College considers research as fundamental to the development of open and critical minds, fostered by students working with staff at the forefront of subject knowledge and professional practice. There is a symbiotic relationship between research and teaching.

The results of the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise broke new ground for the College. Its achievements in the RAE were by any standards outstanding. Of the work submitted 5% was rated as 4* - of world leading standard, 20% was rated as 3* - internationally excellent, 15% was rated as 2* - internationally recognised, and 40% was rated as 1* - nationally recognised. These outcomes meant that 25% of the Stranmillis entry was judged to be at international standard and above while the University College had 40% of its work above 1*. Out of a total of 79 universities and colleges that entered the RAE in Education, Stranmillis University College was among 55 entrants that had work judged to be of a world class standard.

This outstanding result owed much to the work and commitment of the staff. It not only raises the College's profile and its position as a leader in Teacher Education but will ensure that it is in a position to attract another income stream based on the RAE results.

In addition to the success in the Research Assessment Exercise the College staff engaged in a range of research activities linked to professional practice. A summary of publications, conference presentations and grant funding awards received in the academic year 2008-2009 is outlined below.

Funding Awards

Despite the recession and a visible reduction in funded research projects, it was pleasing to note that a number of College staff successfully attracted external funding awards. The Department of Education and Science: An Roinn Oideachais Agus Eolaiochta is currently funding (€90,000) a project that explores Professional Development for Early Childhood Professionals in the Republic of Ireland.

In March 2008 Stranmillis University College received funding (£14,000) to undertake a comprehensive independent evaluation of the work of *Springboard for Children*, an educational charity founded in 1992 at the Oliver Goldsmith Primary School in Peckham, South East London.

In addition to these projects, staff successfully secured three research awards from ScoTENS worth in the region of £15,000. Stranmillis University College was a collaborating fund holder in each of these awards. There was also a joint and successful ESCALATE bid (£10,000) made by the College with St. Mark's & St. John's University College Plymouth [Marjon].

Allied with the research projects undertaken in the College several teaching and learning projects received grant funding in 2008-2009. In partnership with the University of Ulster at Jordanstown, the College received funding (£4,000) from the BECTA/Teacher E-portfolio group NI to support a project that explores the development of an E-portfolio for teachers. In May 2009 the final report of a joint project with the University of Ulster – Assessment and Measurement of Physical Literacy in Children - was presented to Sport NI who had funded the research.

Funding was also received from the AstraZeneca Science Teaching Trust (£26,000) for two research and development projects. The DREAMS project aimed to develop the use of digital resources within primary science. Digital resources such as computer microscopes, movie-creators and data-loggers extend the means by which children can capture and communicate information about the world they live in. The second of these projects, entitled BASICS, aimed to promote and develop the use of both fiction and non-fiction books in enquiry-based science at Key Stage 1.

Table 1

Number of research activities engaged in by staff in 2008-09

Type of research activity	Number of research activities
Publication in a national journal	12
Publication in an international journal	6
Attendance and presentation at a national conference	14
Attendance and presentation at an international conference	11
Successfully awarded funding for research	9
Research appointments and awards	8

Staff publications

As indicated in Table 1, a considerable number of staff members were successful in having their research disseminated as peer reviewed scientific journal publications, published reports, and conference presentations, presentations to interest groups and as abstracts in the conference proceedings. International journals included: The Oxford Review of Education; International Journal of Early Years Education; European Journal of Special Needs Education; the International Journal of Technology and Design Education and Teaching and Teacher Education. National journals included: The British Journal of Visual Impairment; the Irish Educational Studies; Child Care in Practice; Support for Learning; British Journal of Learning Support; the Patoss Bulletin; Journal of the Professional Association of Teachers of Students with Specific Learning Difficulties.

A small number of staff were involved in the preparation of published reports for external funding bodies including: the Belfast Education & Library Board; SCoTENS, Age Concern and Springboard for Children.

Conference Presentations

In the academic year 2008–2009, a significant number of staff availed of College funding to present and disseminate the outcome of their research findings to international audiences at conferences in their specialist areas. International conferences included the **European Early Childhood Education Research Association** conference in Strasbourg; the European Conference on Educational Research in Gothenburg, Sweden and the European Conference on Educational Research Vienna, Austria. Papers were also presented at the following conferences in Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland: the SCoTENS Conference, Malahide; the British Psychology of Education Society Annual Education Conference in Preston; the Royal National Institute for the Blind a Belfast Conference, entitled Exploring the Needs of Children with a Visual Impairment in Northern Ireland. Staff also travelled to present papers at Charney Manor Primary Geography Conference, Oxfordshire; to the Association for Social, Scientific and Environmental Education (**IASSEE**) Conference at St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra, Dublin; The Department of Education and Science: An Roinn Oideachais Agus Eolaiochta, Dublin; the London Third National Conference on Research in Mathematics Education, UCET Annual Conference at Hinkley and to London to deliver papers on the outcome of the Springboard for Children project.

Staff Appointments & Awards

In recognition of their expertise, several members of staff were appointed to external posts. These included: the award of a Visiting Professorship in Child Development and Education at Plymouth University; an appointment to chair of the international journal Child Care in Practice; the granting of Associate status within the Higher Education Academy, the appointment of a member of staff as a Research Consultant to the NSPCC who was also invited to join the NSPCC Strategic Advisory Group and a Special Interest Group to examine research policy and practice on domestic violence and abuse in Northern Ireland.

Doctoral Research

In the academic year 2008-2009 two members of staff were awarded their doctorates. A further fourteen members of staff are engaged in doctoral studies. Each of these members of staff received financial support from the College for their postgraduate studies

Sabbatical Leave

In 2008-09 three lecturers were granted a period of sabbatical leave in order to support them in the development of their research. This has not only enabled staff to enhance their expertise in chosen fields of study but helped them secure publications in internationally recognised journals.

INTERNATIONAL OUTREACH

International Outreach

Each year the University College continues to enhance its programmes of teacher education and, increasingly, its other programmes, by sending a large proportion of the student population for a period of one semester to international contacts and hosting around fifty reciprocal students on an annual basis. It has a target of 20% of students participating in these programmes. In recent years the College has successfully achieved this target. For many students studying abroad has become a life changing experience. Some even go on to work in international settings following graduation. This achievement was commended by the Inspectorate in their report.

During 2008-9, the International Outreach programme continued to flourish, using ERASMUS to send students to a wide variety of destinations in Europe, whilst, through the international programme, students had the opportunity to visit the United States, Hong Kong, Republic of China, Uganda, Zambia and South Africa. One student undertook a year-long study visit to the United States through the Business Education Initiative. Fifty-three international students had reciprocal visits to Stranmillis and five students from France undertook a four-week visit through the Comenius programme. A further student, an academic from Makerere University in Kampala, Uganda, was also hosted by the University College between September and December 2008, to undertake PhD study. In January 2009 a new Memorandum of Agreement was signed with Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan, Poland, and it is hoped that student and staff exchange will commence in 2009-10.

Within the International Outreach programme staff also have the opportunity of engaging with partnership universities in Europe and worldwide and we would normally receive five visiting scholars through the ERASMUS programme. In 2008-9, three members of staff undertook staff mobility visits to Finland and Spain and one visited the United States. A special part of the programme enables two members of staff to teach a one-week long international module at the University of Leon in Spain. This is an ongoing course developed over the last eleven years by the University College. The International Outreach Coordinator, accompanied by the Administrative Officer for International Development, also attended an ERASMUS Symposium meeting in Nijmegen, the Netherlands, in May.

The Malaysian Project

An exciting new development this year has been the Malaysian Project, In September 2008, following negotiations with the management of Tenby Educare, Malaysia in 2007, four teachers from Ipoh and Penang enrolled on a twelve-week full-time course of Professional Development at Stranmillis. This had been planned by a course team from the Teacher Education (Primary) Department during the previous academic year. The course comprised three

modules: Teaching Studies, Professional Issues and Personal Development and Reflection; Curriculum Studies; School-based work. The teachers also engaged in a programme of cultural activities. On successful completion of the course, the teachers were awarded a *Certificate in Learning and Teaching* at a special presentation ceremony in November 2008. Reviews of the course were extremely positive. It is hoped that discussions will continue with the senior management of Tenby Educare with a view to providing further professional development courses in 2009-10.

Research Projects in Sub-Saharan Africa

Another significant area of international development in 2008-9 has been that of research within the context of sub-Saharan Africa. Two members of staff, have been involved in two major projects, funded by the British Council and Irish Aid respectively. The first is entitled *Capacity building programme for teachers in post conflict areas: A pilot project for teachers in Northern Uganda* which is considering the impact of conflict on children and teachers in areas emerging from conflict situations. Four countries (Uganda, Rwanda, Sierra Leone and Northern Ireland) are involved in the project and the aim is to develop appropriate teacher education programmes to deal with traumatised children in Northern Uganda.

The second project, *The Irish-African Partnership for Research Capacity Building*, is considering ways of developing research capacity within the fields of Education and Public Health and aims to develop team building between Irish and African universities (in Tanzania, Uganda, Mozambique and Malawi).

CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AND LEARNING (CETL)

The Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) at Stranmillis University College exceeded its milestones and objectives in 2008/09. It continued to embed an aesthetic learning experience within an innovative pedagogical and technological blend for the Primary, Post-primary and Postgraduate pathways and across many subjects. This included the embedding of multimedia learning within STEM subjects, and also Literacy, Numeracy, and Special Educational Needs (SEN), by providing a blend of 'situated' classroom learning and enquiry-based lecture provision. The CETL also helped to develop or contribute to projects involving the Early Years and Health & Leisure Studies. The Teacher Education projects were commended in the recent ETI Report (2009).

The CETL provided exciting opportunities to develop new types of professional partnerships with schools and colleges across the region. The use of innovative technologies is helping staff and students become involved in enquiry-based, video exploration and reflection using video analysis tools.

NATIONAL STUDENT SURVEY

For the fifth year, the opinions of final year students in Stranmillis University College were surveyed through the National Student Survey (NSS). The total sample of students surveyed from Stranmillis University College in 2008/2009 was 289 students, with a total response rate across all courses of 61% (with 86% of students being satisfied with the quality of the course), compared with the final response rate achieved by the HEFCE of 62%.

In comparison with the Northern Ireland HEI average score, the Stranmillis score was equal to or higher in all seven sections, with the exception of Learning Resources. This has been the case for several years. For the first time, the Business Plan incorporated budgetary action to deal with this deficiency and library and departmental staff began work to address students' concerns and possible misconceptions. Unfortunately neither of these actions has proved sufficiently effective in time for the NSS response in 2009, but refurbishment and restocking activity augurs well for future surveys. The highest scoring section of the report overall was 'Work Placement' with questions 'My placements were valuable in helping my learning' and 'My placements have helped me to develop my skills in relation to my course' scoring best.

Overall results show a positive variance from last year. In comparison with other institutions, it is commendable that Stranmillis has a higher score than any of the four benchmark institutions in Health and Leisure Studies and is second of five in Early Childhood Studies. Initial Teacher Education shows a positive variance from last year and work continues to raise the standard higher.

STUDENT LIFE AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Student achievements included raising the sum of £5137.71 for local and national charitable organisations, including RNIB, Shine-A-Light, Action Aid, and Plan International. The largest proportion (£3691.42) was collected to support the building of an orphanage in Lesotho, South Africa, in memory of Rachel White, a former Stranmillis Early Childhood Studies student who was tragically killed in a car accident in July 2008.

The Drama Society staged the annual pantomime, 'Cinderella', in December 2008 which, as usual, was extremely well attended by school parties and others. This was an impressive and professional production with credit due to the Producer, Paul Montgomery, and Director, Steven Condy, with an original script by Steven Condy and Clare Wilkinson, a large cast and chorus, and a 16-piece orchestra.

Music staff and students were responsible for the excellent choral input to the 'Celebration of Christmas in Words and Music', which took place in St. Bartholomew's Church in December 2008 and for mounting an impressive 'Music for a May Evening' concert in May 2009. The annual exhibition of work

by Art and Design students, visited by a number of local artists and representatives from the Creative and Arts Design areas of CCEA, was also staged in June.

The Men's Football Club successfully competed in and won the First Division of the Northern Ireland Universities League for another year. The Men's Rugby Club were winners of their division of the Irish Colleges' Rugby League and progressed to the quarter finals of the All Ireland competition where they were defeated by Institute of Technology, Tallaght, Dublin. The Badminton team were successful in retaining their position as winners of their leagues, and this year saw for the first time the establishment of Stranmillis Gaelic Team who successfully competed in the Ulster Colleges' League Division 2.

'Scholars', the student bar, offered its customary range of social events through the College Club and hosted the inaugural meeting of Stranmillis Alumni Association which was attended by graduates representing various eras of Stranmillis. The Students' Representative Council, under the leadership of Andrew Curry continued to represent student views on a range of issues and Sara Lindsay was elected to serve as President during 2009-10.

During graduation week a number of students were awarded individual prizes in recognition of their achievements in certain areas. These are detailed in Appendix 4.

STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

In 2008-09 the College aligned its Academic Plan with Queen's. A copy of the Academic Plan can be accessed on the College website (<http://www.stran.ac.uk/media/media,170671,en.pdf>). This was in response to the Governing Body decision on 17 April 2008 to explore in principle a merger with Queen's University.

**DR ANNE HEASLETT
PRINCIPAL
FEBRUARY 2010**

APPENDIX 1: NEW STUDENT ADMISSIONS 2008-09

BEd Primary	2008 Applications	2008 Entrants
Total Primary	772	78

BEd Post-Primary	2008 Applications	2008 Entrants
Business Studies	65	13
Mathematics and Science	24	9
Religious Studies	66	18
Technology & Design	38	11
Total Post-Primary	193	51
Total BEd	965	129

BA Early Childhood Studies	2008 Applications	2008 Entrants
Full-time Total	348	57
Part-time Total	94	46 + 15 (Monaghan)
Foundation Degree		
Full-time		11
Part-time		47
Total		58

BSc Health and Leisure Studies (Full-time)	2008 Applications	2008 Entrants
Total	170	37

PGCE	2008 Applications	2008 Entrants
Total	161	15

UCAS Tariff Points Scores of Entrants

The average tariff score for the BEd Primary is 360 (remaining the same as for 2007) and Post-Primary BEd is 300 (a small decrease on the 2007 figures).

Tariff Points Scores of Entrants (A= 120, B = 100, C = 80, D = 60, E = 40
AS Levels: A = 60, B = 50, C = 40, D = 30, E = 20)

Subject	Average UCAS Tariff Points	
	2008	2007
BEd Primary		
Average BEd Primary	360	360
BEd Post-Primary		
Business Studies	300	320
Mathematics and Science	320	300
Religious Studies	320	320
Technology & Design	260	280
Average BEd Post-primary	300	310

BA Early Childhood Studies		
Entrants to Year 1	Entrants	Average UCAS Tariff points
A Levels	24	300
Vocational A Levels	1	360
BTEC National Diploma	8	300
BTEC Nat Award + A Levels	2	320
CACHE Diploma	4	310
Advanced CACHE Diploma	3	Not on tariff
Fetac Level 6	1	Not on tariff
HND	6	Not on tariff
Foundation/Access	2	Not on tariff
Entrants to Year 2		
HND	6	
Total	57	320

BSc Health & Leisure Studies		
Entrants to Year 1	Entrants	Average UCAS Tariff Points
A Levels	23	270
BTEC National Diploma	6	260
BTEC Nat Award + A Levels	1	360
BTEC Nat Certificate + A Levels	1	340
HND	5	Not on tariff
Foundation/Access	1	Not on tariff
Total	37	310

APPENDIX 2: SOME PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09
1. INPUTS					
(a) Recurrent Funding	£5,629,598	£4,538,992	£5,446,200	£5,503,101	£5,643,055
(b) Tuition Fee Income	£1,347,482	£1,405,443	£1,878,836	£2,284,570	£2,585,371
(c) Capital Funding	£ 191,333	£4,665,622	£4,939,041	£2,435,795	£ 296,630
2. ACTIVITIES					
(d) Number of Students					
BEd	772	778	744	678	599
PGCE	40	40	30	20	15
BA (ECS)	128	131	131	148	147
BSc (HLS)	99	103	105	111	121
Other Courses	91	93	90	80	75
TOTAL	1130	1145	1100	1037	957
(e) Gender BEd					
% Male	17	19	19	22	18
% Female	83	81	81	78	82
(f) Entry Points (UCAS Tariff from 03/04)					
BEd	330	338	335	330	330
BA (ECS)	320	330	320	320	310
BSc (HLS)	260	270	310	310	270
(g) PGCE Entry					
2i and above (No)	40	30	20	20	15
%	100	100	100	100	100
(h) Staff FTE	64	61	61	59	61
(i) Support Staff FTE					
Total	109	108	110	108	108
Grant Aided	74	74	78	75	74
3. OUTPUTS					
(j) Graduates					
BEd	192	177	196	183	175
BA (ECS)	89	64	74	75	59
BSc (HLS)	31	32	40	28	42
PGCE	40	39	31	20	15
(k) Classification					
1	36	40	48	42	59
2i	174	166	169	183	153
2ii	70	79	82	54	62
3	5	3	11	7	2
Pass	-	-	-	-	-

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09
4. VALUE FOR MONEY					
(l) Funding/ Student					
<i>All Courses</i>	£4,981	£3,964	£4,951	£5,306	£5,897
(m) Teaching Staff: Student Ratio					
<i>All Courses</i>	1:17.6	1:18.8	1:18	1:17.6	1:16.5
(n) Teaching Staff: (FTE) Support Staff Ratio					1:1.21
	1:1.16	1:1.20	1:1.25	1:1.27	
(o) Energy Performance					
gig/100m ²	125	124	127	101	105
kw/sq m					
(p) Expenditure on pay					
% of total expenditure	66	68	60	57	58

APPENDIX 3: FINANCIAL INFORMATION 2008-09

The extracts from the College's audited accounts for the twelve-month period 1st August 2008 to 31st July 2009 which follow indicate that it successfully operated within the block grant allocated to it by the Department for Employment and Learning. Income was also derived in part from its various income-generating activities associated with the hire of premises and catering/residential services, accrued to the College. The audit statement for the period was unqualified. A full set of audited accounts is available, upon application, from the Finance Manager – Tel: 028 9038 4265.

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

For the Period Ended 31 July 2009

	2009 12 Months £	2008 12 Months £
Income		
Funding Grants	7,286,824	7,079,908
Tuition Fees	2,585,371	2,284,570
Research Grants and Contracts	329,338	462,473
Other Operating Income	1,344,933	1,272,836
Interest Receivable (Including FRS17 Amount)	39,432	106,472
	<u>11,585,898</u>	<u>11,206,259</u>
Expenditure		
Staff Costs	6,692,958	6,188,104
Other Operating Expenditure	3,098,959	2,976,130
Depreciation	1,680,081	1,654,445
Interest Payable (Including FRS17 Amount)	111,000	-
	<u>11,582,998</u>	<u>10,818,679</u>
Surplus on Continuing Operations after Depreciation of Fixed Assets at Valuation and Before Tax	2,900	387,580
Taxation	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Surplus for the Period Retained within Reserves	<u>2,900</u>	<u>387,580</u>

There were no other recognised gains or losses. The Income and Expenditure Account of the College relates wholly to continuing operations.

BALANCE SHEET

As at 31 July 2009

	2009 12 months £	2008 12 months £
Tangible Assets	55,887,235	57,113,976
Total Fixed Assets	<u>55,887,235</u>	<u>57,113,976</u>
Debtors	360,935	635,572
Short Term Deposits	437,961	418,993
Cash at Bank and in Hand	2,049,947	1,107,409
Total Current Assets	<u>2,848,843</u>	<u>2,161,974</u>
Less: Creditors – amounts falling due within one year	<u>(946,811)</u>	<u>(446,771)</u>
Net Current Assets	<u>1,902,032</u>	<u>1,715,203</u>
Total Assets less Current Liabilities	57,789,267	58,829,179
Less: Creditors – Amounts falling due after more than one year	-	-
Less: Provisions for Liabilities and Charges	(5,267,000)	(2,338,000)
NET ASSETS	<u>52,522,267</u>	<u>56,491,179</u>
Deferred Capital Grants	54,241,876	55,529,688
Reserves	3,547,391	3,299,491
FRS 17 Pension Reserve	(5,267,000)	(2,338,000)
Total Funds	<u>52,522,267</u>	<u>56,491,179</u>

APPENDIX 4: PRIZES AWARDED TO GRADUATING STUDENTS, JULY 2009

Mahon Prize – top male BEd Primary course student	Richard Nelson
Mahon Prize - top female BEd Primary course student	Deborah Steele
Vere Foster Medal - top Secondary course student	Sara Lindsay Philip Toal
Gail Addison Memorial Prize for School-Based Work (SBW) Post-Primary	Sara Lindsay Janine Craig
Association of Teachers' and Lecturers' Prize for Education Studies	Lynn Donaldson
Susan Curry Award for Religious Studies	Deborah Steele
The J.C. Davidson Cup for Physical Education	Grace Irwin
The English Cup	Rachel Minnis
The Science Prize	Sarah Cummings
Robert Simpson Award for Music	Emma Pickering
Society of Teachers in Business Education Cup - Business Studies	Jonathan Mills
Stranmillis University College Association Prize - SBW Primary	Deborah Steele
Maeve Ann Winters Award for Early Childhood Education	Deborah Steele
Kathleen McSherry Prize for Early Childhood Education	Nicola Wallace
The Andrews Loynton McCulla Prize (Allied Dunbar Prize) for History	Laura McNeely
Centerprise International Trophy for Geography	Victoria Rollins
Art & Design Prize	Lorraine Mitchell
Hastings Cup for Health and Leisure Studies	Lyndsay McVicker
TrainDirect Cup for Health and Leisure Studies	Dane Duffy
The Dunn Cup for Technology & Design Award	Mark Patton
The Northern Bank Prize for Mathematics	Lyndsey Meredith Claire Thompson
The Effenberg-Wilkinson Cup for International	Claire Stevenson Beth Loughrey
The GTCNI Prize	Sara Lindsay
The Institute of Engineering and Technology (IET) Trophy for Technology & Design	Philip Toal

