



Leading Innovative Professional Practice

STRANMILLIS  
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

**ANNUAL REPORT**

1 August 2015 - 31 July 2016





STRANMILLIS UNIVERSITY COLLEGE  
A College of Queen's University Belfast

# **Annual Report 2015-2016**

**(1 August 2015 - 31 July 2016)**

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# GOVERNING BODY (2015-2016)

## Chair

Professor Sir Desmond Rea OBE MSc (Econ) MBA PhD

## Members

Mr Edgar Jardine CB MSc BSc – Vice-Chair

Dr Anne Heaslett BA (Hons) MA DPhil MSc FRSA – College Principal

Mrs Shirley Madden LLB LLM PGDIP

Mr Andrew Brown BEd (Hons) MSSc FCIEA, FColIT, FRSA – Academic Staff Representative

Mr Kenneth Nelson BA MBA MSC MIC FCMI CMGR

Ms Ingrid Mercer BLS MCLIP - Support Staff Representative

Mr Adam Leahy BEd - Student Representative (1 June 2015 – 31 May 2016)

Mr Adam Pollock - Student Representative effective from 1 June 2016

Mr Robert Thompson MA BA DASE CertED

Dr Esmond Birnie MA (Econ) PhD (Econ)

Mr William Patterson BA (Hons) MBA FCIPD

Mrs Claire Moore BA (Hons) Mathematics FCA

Mrs Elizabeth Huddleson BEd (HONS) MSc

Mr Richard Hanna BEd MSc PGDip MSc (Education)

## Secretary to the Governing Body

Ms Karen Robinson MSc Dip IoD



# CHAIR'S FOREWORD



Stranmillis University College seeks to sustain a vibrant, inclusive learning community, educating, shaping and enriching society through excellence in teaching. As an institution which undergoes constant development to ensure that it continues to meet the

needs of both our current students and those who will study with us in the future, we are committed to providing an excellent personalised learning experience in high quality, inspiring and sustainable learning environments.

With respect to our student body and our staff, the University College is also committed to an environment that is inclusive, fair, open and welcoming of individuals from all community backgrounds, all ethnic groups and people with disabilities. Diversity is embraced as a key value within the University College and equality is recognised, encouraged, promoted and valued at all levels of the organisation and in all its functions.

Not only do we aim to provide the best possible experience for all our students, supporting them academically and socially from the minute they walk through our doors on their first day, right through to graduation, we also place a strong emphasis on their health and wellbeing. It is widely recognised that students will be better positioned to achieve their full potential when they feel emotionally, physically, socially, psychologically, mentally and spiritually secure and safe and hence feel that they are contributing to their own success.

The College's Scholarship and Research activities are providing insights that are being extended into schools, helping to underpin the learning experience and improve student experience and outcomes. Our staff have innovated and shared their learning with a global community of scholars, teachers, administrators and policymakers; in addition, through continuing professional development they are helping to refresh and develop new knowledge and skills in schools and the wider community as well as internationally.

Our International Programmes, which are constantly being developed, deliver important benefits – enhancing the student learning experience and academic outcomes for both staff and students. As well as the social and networking benefits, internationalisation allows us to embrace the diversity around us and to share our knowledge and experience across the globe.

**We have much to celebrate. The Governing Body is proud of all the staff and students who have helped to drive the College forward during 2015-16; as this Report demonstrates, we have seen important developments across all areas.**

**Professor Sir Desmond Rea, OBE MSc(Econ) MBA PhD  
Chair of the Governing Body**

# PRINCIPAL'S REPORT



This Annual Report once again demonstrates the University College's commitment to providing high quality education which serves the needs of professionals in Northern Ireland and beyond.

Central to the Stranmillis mission is developing and supporting professionals who work with children and young people to ensure they reach their full potential. This report documents the College's innovative work in the areas of Early Childhood and Early Years Education. Developments in these areas provide the all-important foundation on which future success can be built. The use of structured play in Literacy and Numeracy or the use of Physical Literacy to promote health and wellbeing and thereby create a better foundation for learning and development are examples of where the College is **'leading innovative professional practice'**.

Since it was established in 1922 the College has been in the business of producing high quality teachers and supporting professionals. They are at the vanguard of raising the aspirations, attainment and achievements of our young people, which is critical not only to their future employment prospects but also to enabling them to become full and active citizens. The College's Widening Participation programme is seeking to address disadvantage and improve educational outcomes so that we help to reduce educational inequality in our society.

The College has a vibrant International strategy which helps to promote respect for cultural identity,

shared space and shared education. Embracing internationalisation and integrating a global dimension into the curriculum and the College community is an important dimension of creating an innovative learning culture. We want to build a culture and an ethos which are shaped by a commitment to dignity and respect for all and which adhere to the College's core values.

Despite the challenging economic climate in 2015-16 the University College continued to demonstrate its capacity to generate income and be less dependent on the core grant of its Sponsoring Department. The table on page 49 shows that the College derived almost 60% of its income from other sources. This has enabled the College to continue to invest in its staffing and learning resources. As outlined in this report, there was also investment in major capital works. Since 2011 there has been almost £10m of investment in the Stranmillis campus which has had a significant impact on the student experience. The College can record that 86% of the buildings on campus now achieve at least a 'B' rating on the RICS Building Maintenance Scale.

As we approach the sign off on a new Programme for Government 2016-2021, the College can with confidence take forward its historic mission of making the lives of children and young people better.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading 'Anne Heaslett', written over a horizontal line.

**Dr A Heaslett**  
**Principal and Chief Executive**

*'Leading Innovative Professional Practice'*

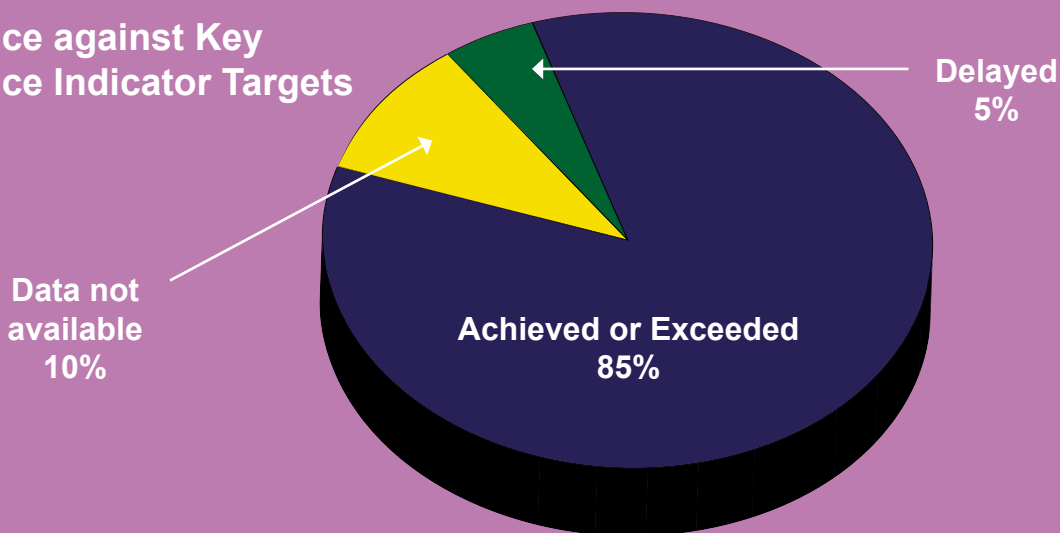
# SUMMARY OF OUR KEY ACHIEVEMENTS DURING 2015-2016

This Report outlines our key achievements in 2015 -2016 in the areas of:

- Leading innovative professional practice
- International Development
- Continuing Professional Development
- Widening Participation through Community Engagement
- Lifelong Learning
- Scholarship and Research
- Staff Achievements
- Student Support and Wellbeing
- Preparing our Students for the World of Work
- Student Achievements
- Corporate Service Developments

Excellent progress has been made across the 67 Key Performance Indicator target areas. Overall 85% of targets have either been achieved or exceeded. Due to circumstances outside the College's control, 5% have been delayed. In 10% of target areas, the data is not currently available.

## Performance against Key Performance Indicator Targets



## OUR STUDENT PROFILE

**The College's student profile and satisfaction levels remain strong, as indicated below:**

- **National Student Survey:** The College received positive scores across all seven sections of the survey to achieve an overall score of 4.3, which was the second highest score recorded across Northern Ireland institutions.
- **Student Entry Profile:** The overall average for all undergraduate programmes remains high at 325 UCAS points.
- **Undergraduate Retention:** The College maintained an outstanding student retention rate of 96%.
- **Undergraduate Success:** The College maintained an outstanding student success rate of 94%.
- **Graduate Employment:** The College achieved a high performance in terms of graduate employment as measured by the Department for the Economy performance indicators for Higher Education. The most recent published analysis for 2014-15 shows that the percentage of full-time first graduates of Stranmillis in work or study or both was 99.4%, against a Northern Ireland average of 93.5%. The comparable figure for the United Kingdom HEIs was 93.9%.





# LEADING INNOVATIVE PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE



Developing and sustaining collaborative partnerships remains a critical factor in determining the College's success in leading innovative professional practice. This report acknowledges the quality and depth of the partnerships which underpin our key innovations.

In a recent report following an Educational Enhancement Process exercise (July 2014) the Assessment Panel concluded that the College was too modest about its work, especially in areas like STEM, Early Childhood Education and other initiatives. It has leading edge examples of innovation using technology in all programmes. The Panel considered that this was an area for sharing good practice. This report attempts to address this issue by outlining how the College is taking forward its vision of ***'Leading innovative professional practice'***.

## SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

The College is leading innovative professional practice in Science and Technology by developing teachers who can be effective classroom practitioners in inspiring learners across all phases of their learning journey. Engaging with science and technology is critical for the development of a modern economy. Teachers need to become STEM leaders (STEM stands for Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics).



### Going for Gold

The International Association for STEM Leaders (IASL) is globally recognized for creating a “golden standard” for Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) excellence in traditional and non-traditional educational settings for all from pre-kindergarten through to adult students. Thanks to a new partnership with Dr Usha Rajdev from Marymont University, the students from ITE programmes have been given the opportunity to work towards this accreditation. This year 23 students successfully fulfilled the relevant criteria and achieved their certificates in STEM Leadership.



**“Primary science matters. As one of the recognised centres for Excellence in Primary Science in the United Kingdom, Stranmillis University College promotes science and technology for primary pupils. This is critical if young people from all backgrounds are to be given the confidence to pursue careers in science and technology.”**

## NASA Webinar



This new partnership with Dr Usha Rajdev from Marymount University Virginia has opened collaborative opportunities for

both institutions. During 'World Space Week' ITE students in Stranmillis from all subject areas took part in a NASA webinar and conducted four STEM tasks specially designed by NASA to bring the engineering of the Mars Rover and Moon landing into the classroom.

The Director of Education at NASA, Dr Bob Gabrys, commenced the event with an inspirational talk to the students explaining the importance of teacher education in preparing the forthcoming generation of STEM and Science pupils. Kelly Hartford, a NASA education facilitator based at the Goddard Space Flight Centre, took the students through four tasks, every one of which was directly linked to some of the challenges NASA faces when designing, building, launching, landing and operating its operations on Mars and the Moon. The students saw video clips of how their experiments were aligned with actual scenarios during missions.

Students were also introduced to all the NASA STEM teaching and learning resources which they were able to bring into their schools during school placement. This collaborative event between Stranmillis University College, Marymount University and NASA was one element of the accreditation for the International Association of STEM Leaders SU-IASL.

In a second NASA event which took place in October Ms Dorian W. Janney Educational Specialist on the Global Precipitation Measurement Programme (GPM) at NASA's 'Goddard Flight Center', delivered workshops on all things 'weather'! Dorian brought a number of weather issues alive and enthralled the students with her teaching approaches for classrooms from



Foundation Stage to 'A'-level. The Stranmillis students were introduced to the wealth of resources produced by NASA's Education team specifically tailored for the advancement of STEM Education. Her expertise and delivery of the workshop associated with these international projects was inspirational; watching and listening to an educationalist who demonstrated passion for the subject and such knowledge and expertise in its classroom delivery was awe-inspiring.



## NI Science Festival 'Playful Chemistry'

Over two hundred primary school pupils from Harmony Hill, Dunmurry, Cranmore Integrated and Holy Evangelist primary schools attended a 'Playful Chemistry' event at Stranmillis as part of the Northern Ireland Science Festival. The event, organised by the Primary Science Teaching Trust's Academic Collaborators at Stranmillis and supported by the College's Widening Participation programme, consisted of an enthralling demonstration lecture from Nick Barker from the University of Warwick and a hands-on chemistry workshop facilitated by the Year 2 (Primary) and Year 1 (Post-primary) science specialists. Nick had the pupils transfixed as he treated them to a wonderland of colour changes, eruptions, and even

explosions, alongside an engaging and fascinating narrative. After a well-earned break, the pupils used household materials to create bubbles in a range of contexts including density towers and effervescent mixtures, and even made their own lemonade!

The feedback from the teachers on the day and in follow-up emails was extremely positive as they described the excitement of the children back at school and how the event had given them great ideas for their own future practice. The opportunity to be involved in the festival proved equally invaluable to our student teachers as they experienced first-hand the organisation and management, as well as the educational value, of out-of-school visits.



## Outstanding Practice in Primary Science

During 2015-2016 students have been co-teaching with Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 Teachers from St John's, Oakgrove Integrated and Drumahoe Primary Schools as part of the Primary Science Teaching Trust's funded project 'Playful Approaches to Science'. The project focused on developing the teachers' and the students' teaching practice in planning, teaching and evaluating enquiry science lessons within a playful child-centred context. The findings of the work were presented at a seminar in Da Vinci's Hotel in Derry/Londonderry and included local principals and representatives from CCEA.

The findings of the project were presented by Dr Andrea Doherty at the Primary Science Teaching Trust's International Conference in Belfast on 8th June 2016.



## International Science Education Conference



Lecturing staff, along with student teachers and their partner teachers, took by storm the inaugural Primary Science Teaching

Trust's International conference at the newly opened Waterfront Conference Centre, in June 2016! The twenty strong cohort attended a number of workshops and seminars. Two of the seminars, led by the Trust's Academic Collaborators Dr John McCullagh and Dr Andrea Doherty, related directly to the curriculum development and research with which the group had been involved.

The event gave the students and teachers who had been involved in the 'Playful Approaches to Science' project, the opportunity to share their work with and listen to world leaders in science education and to network with stakeholders. This professional development opportunity is invaluable to our students who we see as the potential leaders of primary science in the future!



*At the PSTT Conference*

# “STEM – a platform for a shared educational experience between pupils from the different educational sectors...”

## The ‘MicroBot Experience’

The ‘Microbot experience’ for primary pupils is a collaborative research project being undertaken by academic staff from both Stranmillis and St Mary’s University Colleges. It is also intended as a platform for a shared educational experience between pupils from the different educational sectors operating in Northern Ireland.

The event was hosted on the 4th and 5th February 2016, with the first day in Stranmillis and the second in St Mary’s. One P7 class from each of five primary schools across the range of sectors completed a series of STEM-focused challenges using MicroBots (small robots). The five participating schools were all from the Belfast area: Bunscoil Bheann Mhadagain, Hazelwood Integrated Primary School, Holy Rosary Primary School, Seaview Primary School and Sullivan Prep.

The two-day event culminated in the MicroBots being programmed to find their way through a maze, along with development of an open-ended challenge to program a MicroBot to perform a dance, complete with music and ‘costume’, followed by presentation of the dancing robots and a ‘graduation’ ceremony. In total, 120 pupils took part.

This event was also linked to a joint research project being conducted by Stranmillis and St Mary’s University Colleges. The aim of the research is to ascertain if engaging in ‘hands-on’ STEM oriented practical activities can assist pupils to increase their understanding of elements of mathematics, such as measurement and time. The research team are also keen to establish if the practical approach to learning, which also involves creative activity, will better engage certain types of learner, who might otherwise

be ‘turned off’ by theoretical activity alone. While the two days were a fun experience for the pupils, the research team incorporated a research element that focuses upon particular measurements of the educational impact of STEM experiences.





## DigiSkillsNI: Report

This report on the provision of Digital Skills in the primary classroom is a joint DCAL and InvestNI venture, again highlighting the work being undertaken in the College which acts as the CAS Regional Centre for Northern Ireland. Stranmillis tutor Ann O'Neill delivered the CPD training in Computational Thinking and Computing to the teachers within the DigiSkillsNI project.

## Computing at School Conference

The 3rd CAS Conference for Northern Ireland was hosted by Stranmillis University College. There were 130 people in attendance. A wonderful, positive atmosphere prevailed throughout the entire day. The number of delegates had nearly tripled in two years since the inaugural CAS Conference,

showing the momentum gathered by the ever growing CAS community in Northern Ireland. LEGO Education brought the child out in all of us and set the scene at the keynote session with a little bit of computational thinking through the 'duck challenge'! Fourteen different workshops were organised as part of the event.

The CAS Conference continues to offer a rare networking opportunity for educators and stakeholders in computing education in Northern Ireland. The workshops annually present refreshing ideas for teachers to incorporate into their own teaching. The CAS name and the annual Conference are established in computing education in Northern Ireland. Future CAS conferences in Northern Ireland will be able to grow and expand.



*The 'Computing at Schools' Conference*



**“Promoting learning in the field of computing is critical to the success of a modern economy...”**

## Promoting STEM through 'Docendo Racing'

Student teachers have discovered a unique and exciting way to introduce school pupils to Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM). 'Docendo Racing' is a motor sport-inspired STEM initiative from Stranmillis students.

Using an education programme where children design, build and race single seat electric vehicles as inspiration, the Docendo Racing team have been assisting teachers in local schools to explore topics such as road safety, materials, electric circuits, gears and ratios. Students produced innovative teaching materials for pupils aged 9 to 11 years, and led practical sessions to show the relevance of STEM subjects using a kit car. Pupils raced their kit car at an all-island race festival on Saturday 11 June 2016 at Kirkistown Motor Racing Circuit. The Stranmillis students were thrilled to receive the 'Greenpower Cross Community Award' for this work.

The Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET) Formula Goblin, IET Formula 24 and IET Formula 24+ encourage pupils to build kit cars in primary school using simple tools. This leads on to pupils using cutting edge computer aided design software, materials and building techniques in post-primary school, college and university to build their own highly efficient electric cars.

With exams complete, Docendo Racing turned their attention to finishing the efforts of their own racing team which they established last year. The students built their own single seat electric car to compete in the IET Formula 24+ competition against other colleges and universities and gained 1st place.

Student teacher Anthony McGill said *"competing in the university category, IET Formula 24+, is an opportunity to use what we have learned in running educational outreach projects, to develop skills in further resourcing our support for schools, and in doing so, developing our technical capabilities in a highly charged, fast paced, and competitive environment."*

Stuart Christy, Regional Ambassador for Greenpower in Northern Ireland and Ireland added *"The Docendo Racing team will compete against international teams, and household names like Jaguar Land Rover and Lockheed Martin. They have displayed exceptional and selfless leadership in STEM education, having established new programmes and provided support to schools, all in their spare time. We are grateful to the team, and excited to see what they will innovate next."*



The victorious 'Docendo Racing' team

## Promoting Science through Competition - The Schools' Analyst Competition

Once again Stranmillis University College hosted the Schools' Analyst Competition. This annual event is organised by the N.I. Analytical Division of the Royal Society of Chemistry and is sponsored by Actavis. It tests sixth-form students' accuracy and precision as they carry out a range of chemical analyses relating to both the food and the pharmaceutical industries. This year's investigations bore a local flavour by including the analysis of 'Milk of Magnesia', invented by Ulster scientist John Murray. The other analyses were a 'value for money' comparison of popular household bleaches and a quality control assessment of a health supplement.

In addition to developing students' laboratory and team working skills the competition seeks to highlight the vital role of analytical chemistry in our everyday lives and profiles the various STEM career pathways.

The winners Down High School, who attained one of the highest scores in recent years, received a cheque for £200 to support the teaching of chemistry and went on to represent the Northern Ireland region in the UK final at Keele University on the 20th /21st June 2016. Last year's winners, Lumen Christi College, came a close second and received £100, with Royal Belfast Academical Institution coming third (£80). The students from Belfast Royal Academy and Friends' School Lisburn were jointly Highly Commended, with each receiving £50.



*6th Form chemistry students in action*



## LITERACY AND NUMERACY

Stranmillis University College has a long and well-established reputation in the field of Early Childhood Education for children aged 0-8 years, encompassing both the Academic Areas of Early Childhood Studies and Early Years Education. Instrumental to our success in this field has been our high quality, research-informed teaching and learning programmes, which extend from a Foundation Degree in Early Childhood Studies to a Post Graduate Certificate in Education (Early Years) and M Level and doctoral studies. A strong interplay between pedagogical theory and practice-related activities is inherent throughout all of our teaching and learning programmes.

In addition, Early Childhood Education at Stranmillis University College enjoys well-established professional partnerships with Early Years settings, schools and further education colleges throughout Northern Ireland and in the Republic of Ireland. Our international reputation within Early Childhood Education also enables us to benefit from working partnerships with a number of universities throughout the United Kingdom and beyond.

### Playful Approaches to Mathematics Teaching

During 2015-2016 the College was involved in the 'Promoting Early Number Talk' (PENT) partnership project.

The aim of this partnership project is to evaluate the impact of implementing 'Number Talk' in the Foundation Stage classroom. It is a small-scale study involving five Primary 1 teachers who are implementing the 'Number Talk' resource ideas and activities in their classrooms from January-June 2016.

The PENT partnership project ensures that BED (Primary) and PGCE modules in mathematics and numeracy are informed by research/scholarship. It has also helped to shape the CPD course on 'Number Talk'.

**“...a long and well-established reputation in the field of Early Childhood Education...”**



*Dr Pamela Moffett and Dr Patricia Eaton with five PENT Partnership teachers*

## 'Playful Approaches' Symposium



*Catherine Murray talks about 'Talking Mats'*

In May 2016 the Early Childhood Studies and Early Years Education departments invited leading practitioners, researchers, colleagues and students to a symposium centred around this year's research

and scholarly activity on the theme of 'Playful Approaches: Innovative Contexts'.

The audience heard research-informed presentations on the PENT project by Dr Pamela Moffett and Quality For Two-Year-Olds by Karen Hanna and an innovative final year thesis project by Early Childhood Studies student Catherine Murray, who investigated an early intervention resource to stimulate communication with children with special educational needs ('Talking Mats'). The symposium culminated in a marvellous, practically-orientated presentation on the work of the PGCE year group, centred on the theme of outdoor learning in early years education. The session was followed by a round table discussion on promoting the impact of research and scholarly activity in the field of Early Childhood Studies (ECS) and Early Years Education (EYE).



*The PGCE year group present on outdoor learning*

## Playful Learning at the Foundation Stage

During the year 2015-2016 the College, in partnership with schools, set up a number of 'Playful Learning Hubs' which enabled a professional development course focusing on Playful Learning in Foundation Stage classes to be delivered in a number of venues, many of which are outside Belfast. Schools can nominate themselves as learning hubs and take part in

the professional development course if they can guarantee a minimum of 20 participants in the local geographical area.

This innovative venture has been extremely well received throughout Northern Ireland where the Playful Learning course has been successfully delivered in a series of hubs during 2015/2016 - at Spires Integrated PS in Magherafelt, Augher Primary School and Enniskillen Integrated PS, as well as at Stranmillis.



*'Learning Hubs' 2014-16*

“... professional development courses... delivered in a number of venues...”



## ECS Team contribute to the Infant Mental Health Strategy

The College was represented on a number of significant external panels and committees throughout the academic year 2015/2016, helping to drive forward policy in the fields of early childhood education and care.

The College was also represented at the Northern Ireland Public Health Agency; its Health and Social Care Board and Trusts came together in 2016 to finalise the consultation for the Infant Mental Health Strategy. As a result of sustained engagement with this strategy group, Northern Ireland now has a robust infant mental health strategy to support interventions designed to maximise the potential of children from conception to three years.

During the year, the College was involved in national campaigns such as *'Tick The Box'*, supporting care leavers in their aspirations for continuing education development.

ECS team members designed and facilitated an interesting range of activities and events to enhance the experiences of their students within the degree programme. These enabled students to increase their competence when working with parents and to explore their competence in storytelling, singing and traditional rhymes through engagement with the Replay Theatre Company.



### Promoting Physical Literacy

Literacy and numeracy skills are two of the cornerstones for effective learning. Physical Literacy is also critically important in order to promote the health and wellbeing of learners. Promoting health must be aligned with developing the full potential of our children and young people.

Research in the Department of Health and Physical Education and scholarship falls within the broad umbrella of Physical Literacy, which is defined as *“the motivation, confidence, physical competence, knowledge and understanding to value and take responsibility for engagement in physical activities for life”* (Whitehead, 2016). Dr David McKee, in

conjunction with colleagues from Ulster University and Mary Immaculate College Limerick, wrote a paper on the effects of a classroom activity-break on physical activity levels and adiposity (obesity) in primary school children which was published in the Journal of Paediatrics and Child Health. Findings indicated that it is possible successfully to incorporate a teacher-led physical activity intervention into normal primary school routines, and that this results in a substantive increase in children’s physical activity but has no detrimental effect on curricular activity. The results of this study will inform content and delivery in both the BEd and BSc programmes.



**“Physical Literacy ... critically important in order to promote the health and wellbeing of learners.”**

## ARTS AND HUMANITIES

### Collaborations with St Mary's University College and International partners

Stranmillis lecturer Gillian Beck travelled to India in March 2016 with students and staff from Stranmillis and St Mary's to visit a range of schools in India which provide education for marginalised communities. Whilst in India, Gillian delivered CPD to teachers on special educational needs and the effective management of classroom assistants.



*Stranmillis and St Mary's students in India*

The STRIVE Project (Stranmillis Interventions Voluntary Engagement), led by Andy Brown, Head of Arts & Humanities, entered its second year. An evaluation demonstrated the value which the participants place upon their placements in schools in socially disadvantaged areas.





## EDUCATION STUDIES

Education Studies is at the core of the BED degree programmes at Stranmillis. Education Studies emphasises the importance of providing students with opportunities for critical engagement, intellectually rigorous analysis, the study of broader perspectives, and the critique of current policies and practice. In today's educational climate, the need for all our teachers to be critical consumers and reflective practitioners is greater than ever.

Education Studies strives to be challenging and rigorous, but also relevant and contemporary. This is reflected in the growing numbers of students who have chosen to take our Master's modules in

Education Studies (*Gifted and Talented Education; Tackling Underachievement in Schools*) and the now well established specialist option in Pastoral Care (*Healthy Minds, Healthy Bodies*).

On 23rd June 2016 Gillian Beck gave a poster presentation at the annual QUB Teaching and Learning Conference on "*Innovative approaches to assessment strategies which monitor and evaluate learning*". Her poster presentation was based on an innovative case-study assessment which forms part of her highly successful Year 4 Education Studies module on ASD and Sensory Processing Difficulties.

Gillian Beck's poster presentation

**Evaluation to Intervention: Enhancing employability through action-based assessment**

Gillian Beck

**Introduction:**  
The GTCEA competences 2-3 endorse the importance of developing an understanding of the curriculum, the "Masters that promote and foster effective learning" and the transfer of this understanding into effective practice (GTCEA, 2011, p.13). The HEA recommends that our role as HEI educators is to develop the critical and reflective abilities of initial teachers with a view to empowering and enhancing them as future professionals (Pegg, Waddock, Brady, Isaac, and Lawton, 2012) and as individuals who have learned "...how to learn" and evolve their own practice (Harvey, 2009, p.2).

**Module design**  
The HE module SENN022 was designed not only to enhance students' theoretical knowledge, but to enable them to feel confident in identifying the needs of children with ASD and Sensory Processing Issues and to plan effectively to meet these children's needs on their School Based Work Placement. The module was composed of 12 sessions, practical sessions exploring the use of sensory equipment and an on-line debate.

**Feedback:**  
While this was a challenging module for students, the feedback, in terms of emotional professionalism and employability, was very positive. Some students were asked to give advice on the writing up of a sensory room and the use of sensory equipment with one student being asked to lead a small sensory day.

**Assessment design**  
At the heart of this module was the case study assessment. Each Year 4 student was to select a pupil with an ASD, ideally from the class in which they would be teaching on placement. Once the necessary theory was covered in class, the students were given a pro-forma through which to collect detailed information on their pupil through observation of their behaviours, interviews with staff, parents and where possible children, over a series of day visits. These observations and data fed into 120 decisions as to what new theoretical perspective or suggested intervention approach could be discussed with a particular child in mind. This made for richer, more informed discussions and gave the students the opportunity to get some 120 feedback on their analysis of findings. The assessment consisted of two pieces of academic writing:  
• a case study of the child outlining their ASD profile and their sensory responses;  
• an essay outlining how this knowledge would help them to prioritise their own planning and practice for this child.

**References**  
GTCEA (2011) Teaching: the Reflective Professional, Belfast: GTCEA  
Pegg, A., Waddock, J., Brady Isaac, J. and Lawton, S., (2012) Pedagogy for Employability, York: HEA  
Harvey, J., (2009) On Employability, York: HEA (online at [www.focusactivity.co.uk/](http://www.focusactivity.co.uk/))

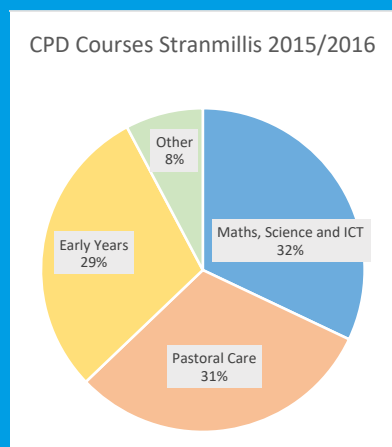
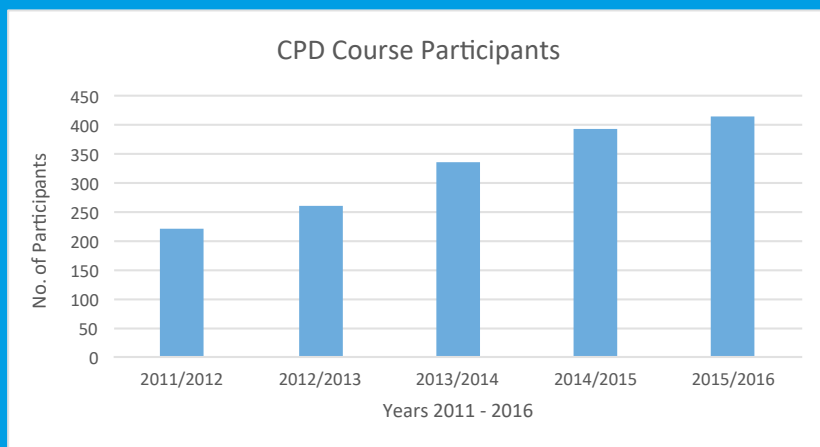
**Quotes from students:**  
"The case study was a very useful exercise in getting an insight into the process of assessing a child and their strengths and weaknesses and giving the skills which I will use in my future teaching career." (NQT)  
"It gave me the opportunity to apply my prior learning and to build upon my existing understanding of ASD in an engaging and practical context." (NQT)  
"Empowering principles noted how the "...current knowledge and competence [of] interventions] came through."  
"Interviewees demonstrated deeper analysis of children's strengths and weaknesses and, were more insightful across contexts on how to respond to the children... and their parents." (Principal, mainstream PS)  
"Senior parent health forum for ASD & Sensory Issues course... When the parent teaching in our Social Communication Unit in Carrduff Primary, she was able to apply a range of strategies despite her knowledge of ASD." (Principal, Carrduff PS)  
"Learning through case studies was invaluable. It enabled me to access each individual child's ASD profile and think about a range of strategies to support their academic, social and emotional development." (NQT)  
"...it was really interesting to see what I had learnt could be put into practice. Having this knowledge was very helpful when asked to suggest different strategies that I had learnt about, which then didn't yet start." (NQT)

## CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The College's vision of '*leading innovative professional practice*' is clearly evidenced in its engagement with and commitment to continuing professional development (CPD) for education professionals from all phases and sectors in Northern Ireland. The College is committed to improving and shaping educational practice and draws extensively on the research and scholarship of its staff to provide relevant, challenging and innovative courses to equip educators to be more effective in their roles.

### CPD Short Courses

The College's short CPD courses continue to increase in number. The chart below shows this increase in participation, with the 2015-16 academic year seeing a 9% increase in participants.



Our involvement with so many schools and other educational settings means that our CPD has a direct and immediate impact on practice across Northern Ireland. The key professional areas linked to professional development are shown on the pie chart on the right.

**“... for education professionals from all phases and sectors in Northern Ireland.”**

## Learning Hubs

Partnerships and Community Engagement are central to the concept of CPD. By building strategic relationships with schools across Northern Ireland we develop and sustain collaborative partnerships and promote the concept of learning communities.

## CPD Annual Lecture

On Wednesday 22nd June 2016 Stranmillis University College welcomed for lunch an invited audience of over 80 guests from the field of education for the CPD Annual Lecture. This year it was delivered by Madeleine Brennan and was a stimulating and thought provoking reflection entitled “Continuing Professional Development: An Essential Investment for Leading and Managing.” Madeleine was a primary and secondary school principal for 26 years, 18 of these as the founding Executive Principal of a large joint co-educational, Kindergarten to Year Twelve school in Adelaide, the first joint venture in Australia of the Anglican and Catholic Churches.

## Sharing the Master’s Experience

Master’s level study provides another avenue through which many educational practitioners choose to continue their professional development journey. The Annual Celebration Event again proved very stimulating when students who recently graduated with a Master’s degree came back to College to share their experiences with those embarking on the final stage of M Level study. This event is an invaluable opportunity for those who have completed their degrees to reflect on their experiences and provide feedback based on a holistic view of the programme. This year past students heard about initiatives to bring about closer alignment of the three M Level programmes, particularly about a new mode of delivery of modules exemplified by the Leadership module where students from all three programmes worked together for much of the module but also received programme-specific input and guidance to help tailor the assignment to their own specific setting.



At the CPD Annual Lecture





## SEN Literacy Dissertations

We have continued the legacy of the Special Educational Needs (SEN) CPD Literacy Project, with 19 students in the 2015-16 year choosing to continue with a dissertation to complete their Master's degree and over 40 students taking taught modules in the MEd specialist option 'Teaching Children with Specific Literacy Difficulties'.

## New Post-primary Master's Degree

In May 2016 we launched a new MEd degree aimed at post primary school teachers: an MEd in Assessment, SEN and Access Arrangements. A new post-primary CPD programme - 'Factors Affecting Literacy Development and Examination Access Arrangements' - is also being offered to schools so that post-primary teachers can support the examinations officer and meet the demands of support and assessment for SEN within their school.



*Staff and successful CPD participants receiving their certificates at Celebration Event with guest speaker Ms Madeleine Brennan*

# INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

**The internationalisation agenda remains a strategic priority for Stranmillis. Aligned with best practice, our focus is on both the longer-term internationalisation benefits (both in terms of the institution and in the context of the global economy) and short- to medium-term benefits in respect of student global learning experience and academic outcomes for both staff and students.**

Stakeholder and Alumni engagement confirms that periods of time spent abroad help participants to gain the skills they need to thrive in the employment market both today and in the future, while anecdotal evidence from engagement with incoming and outgoing students suggests that self-efficacy and intercultural competency contribute to their success by equipping them to work globally. Feedback from Reflect-Select-Defend Viva presentations by final year students also suggests that these experiences influence participants' career development by enabling them to understand themselves better and match their interests, skills and aspirations with a wider range of employment options.

## **Transatlantic Partnership with Institute for Study Abroad (IFSA)/ Butler**

The partnership between Stranmillis University College and IFSA/Butler was established in 2012 and was formally reviewed in 2015-16. The Evaluation Team - Scott Carpenter of Columbia University (Chair), Dr Julia Shahid of Austin College, and Dr Ann Cunningham of Wake Forest University completed a Program Evaluation of Systems and Operations (PESO) for the IFSA-Butler Stranmillis University College teacher education programmes in December 2015. Their summary statement

captures the professional contribution made by our partners and Stranmillis staff teams to the success of the programme and recognises the currency of our portfolio of programmes:

*'This program meets an emerging need for engaging American future teachers in international classrooms working under the auspices of highly skilled professional educators overseas.'*

*"The care, thoughtfulness, professionalism, diversity of opportunities, and rapid response to teacher candidates' needs are hallmarks of the Stranmillis programs for students in both the semester-long and ten-week teacher education programs. The collaboration between Stranmillis faculty and local school administrators and teaching personnel is strong and supportive, providing an outstanding opportunity for international students to hone their teaching skills in a diverse, international setting. Collaboration and open communication between Stranmillis faculty and international students' home institutions is also evident. The alignment between the educational mission of Stranmillis and the US institutions involved in teacher education makes for an exceptional learning opportunity."*

**“...an outstanding opportunity for international students to hone their teaching skills in a diverse, international setting”**

The IFSA/Butler partnership continues to attract considerable interest in the United States. In partnership with Opal Leeman Bartzis, VP Academic Affairs, IFSA-Butler, Stranmillis was invited to contribute a series of information sessions for Education Faculty in US universities and subsequently hosted visiting Faculty from another three universities interested in student participation in the future.

In addition to welcoming students from the University of Virginia, Drake University and St Martin's University, a group of students from a new partner, Tampa University, were on campus from 20th March – 5th May. Prior to spending their placements with Dunmurry and Harmony Hill Primary Schools, they joined practising teachers and classroom assistants for an Outdoor Learning module and visited St Joseph's Primary School – a great example of an Eco School. As part of the 'Expert Practitioner' series they explored the *Space Science Technology Curriculum* at CCEA and debated International Perspectives on Bullying with Dr Noel Purdy. Feedback from Merrie Tankersley, Clinical Director of Education at Tampa, captures the positive learning gained: *'My students had an amazing experience; I don't think they would change a thing....'*

The success of the IFSA/Butler partnership, built around academic expertise and our strong relationships with local schools and other key education stakeholders, has been acknowledged as *'... a gold standard available nowhere else in the UK'* (Butex Conference, July 2013). We continue to celebrate together with our partners at the Graduation Events.



US students with their graduation golden stoles



Students from Tampa, Florida



## “ ...leading the way in innovative professional practice on this international, collaborative programme... ”

### Strategic International Partnerships – the PGCEi

The Stranmillis PGCE International team is leading the way in innovative professional practice on this international, collaborative programme to *‘sustain a vibrant, inclusive learning community, educating, shaping and enriching society through excellence in teaching, scholarship and research’*. Teachers in Malaysia are provided with online teaching and learning, student support and feedback. The programme has been commended by the External Examiner as exemplary. 2015-16 was a successful second year for the College’s PGCE International Programme in partnership with Queen’s University School of Social Sciences, Education and Social Work, and Tenby Schools, Malaysia.

Twenty students were awarded certificates at a ceremony in Kuala Lumpur on Saturday 17th September, 2016. Dr Sharon Jones, Programme Coordinator (Primary) and Ms Barbara McDade, Senior Lecturer Education Studies and International Development, represented Stranmillis at this special occasion. The event was attended by Dato Lim Si Boon, Group Executive Director Tenby Schools Malaysia, Mr Mark Parkinson, CEO Tenby Schools Malaysia, colleagues from Queen’s University Belfast and Tenby Schools, and distinguished guests from Ekuinas Malaysia and the ILMU Education Group, and it was a fitting celebration for students, family and friends.



At the ceremony in Kuala Lumpur





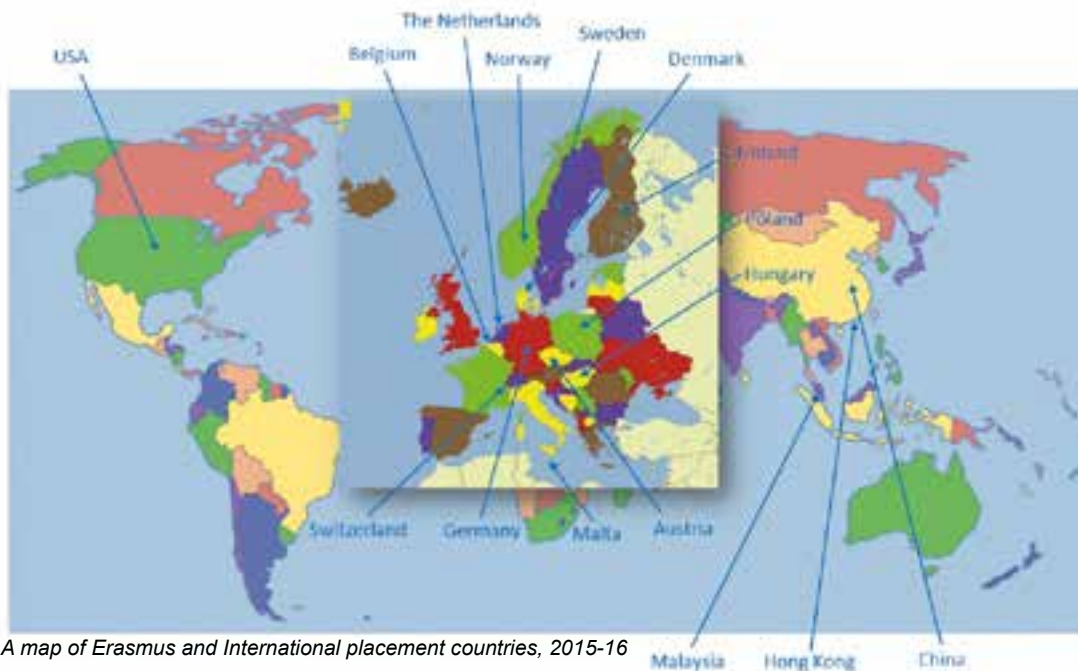
## Student Mobility - Erasmus and International

The Erasmus and International student mobility programmes remain extremely popular with College students in the penultimate year of their degree programme. Sixty Stranmillis students spent a full semester at one of our 'Erasmus+' partner institutions in Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Hungary, Malta, The Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland and Finland. Twelve students travelled further afield through the International programme to partners in USA, Hong Kong and China. In addition, five students completed school-based work placements in Malaysia and USA. In total, 45% of the BEd Year 3 students completed a semester abroad. Our students described how this educational and cultural exchange helped to develop their character, confidence, competencies and their coursework.

Fortunately there is incoming as well as outgoing mobility. We were privileged to host separate groups of international students in both Semester 1 and Semester 2. This helped to establish a vibrant and diverse College community throughout the academic year. The Erasmus+ programme enabled us to welcome 57 students from a number of our partner institutions in Europe. A further ten students came from Hong Kong, China and USA through the International Programme.

### Learning about other cultures: sharing experience

The majority of the Erasmus and International students took a module in 'Northern Ireland Culture and Education' which introduces them to the culture, history, geography and education system of NI. Many also participated in placements in our local schools.



A map of Erasmus and International placement countries, 2015-16



## Staff Mobility

During 2015-16 we hosted a total of 13 visits by academic/administrative staff from our EU partner institutions. The delegations were from Austria, Germany, Hungary, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, France, the Netherlands and Poland. On each occasion visiting staff met with a range of key College staff and heard presentations about the College's teaching, scholarship and research.

Five members of College staff also made informative visits to European partner institutions: Dr Noel Purdy (Orléans, France), Dr Ken Gibson (Weingarten, Germany), Dr Sheila McConnellogue (Volda, Norway), Dr John McMullen (Via, Denmark) and Mr Mark Shields (Thurgau and St Gallen, Switzerland).

Stranmillis staff were able to use these visits to build relationships with our partner institutions, quality assure the teaching, accommodation and student support available for our outgoing students, engage in teaching and meetings with key staff, and explore scholarship and research collaborations.



*Erasmus and International students immerse themselves in Northern Ireland culture*

# WIDENING PARTICIPATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

## Tackling Underachievement in Schools



Rathcoole PS pupils get experimenting!

Master's modules offer valuable opportunities to network and collaborate in order to improve the educational experiences of children in our schools.

Two of this year's MED students on the 'Tackling Underachievement in Schools' module, Christian Glass - a teacher in Rathcoole Primary School - and Tom Lavery, Academy of Engineering STEM Teacher Coordinator

for Northern Ireland - have reported that they have been able to put the learning and reflection which the module offers to excellent use. In an exciting joint initiative in Rathcoole Primary School they recently held an 'Air - Vacuum or Compressed?' event for pupils. This successful project goes to show that Master's modules offer valuable opportunities to network and collaborate in order to improve the educational experiences of children in our schools. According to Tom Lavery, the pupils at Rathcoole Primary School enjoyed the event and worked on the activities with great focus. Class teacher Christian said: *"The children had a fantastic day ... and look forward to more like it in the future."* In fact, a second special activity day involving a 'helicopter launcher' is planned soon. This activity, Thomas Lavery reports, *"investigates Newton's Third Law, aerodynamics, jet propulsion, friction, momentum and inertia, plus building a machine and working in groups and solving problems"*.

## Tor Bank Work Experience

Stranmillis was also delighted to host three work placement students this year from Tor Bank Special School in Dundonald - Conor McSherry, Paul Murray and Noel Montgomery. Tor Bank has hosted Stranmillis students for many years, but this is the first year that Stranmillis has hosted students from Tor Bank. Conor, Paul and Noel helped out in the



Conor helps out in Betty's coffee shop

coffee shop, with portering and with gardening. We hope that the success of this pilot project will lead to further opportunities to work together in the future. Dr Noel Purdy commented: *"This has been a terrific experience not just for Noel, Conor and Paul, but for the whole Stranmillis community, with staff and students from right across the College getting involved."*

**“...valuable opportunities to network and collaborate in order to improve the educational experiences of children...”**

## Community Engagement

Stranmillis continues to forge strong and growing relationships with community organisations including Mencap, Women's Aid, NASEN, the Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum, the Northern Ireland Language Council, CCEA, NICILT, Cruse Bereavement Care and many more. Lectures and workshops are also often led by visiting teachers from local mainstream and special schools. In April 2016 The Department of Health and PE facilitated a pilot of Disability Sport NI's 'Pupil to Paralympian – Discovering Hidden Talent' training course for post-primary teachers of PE. The pilot was a success and this course will be offered to students in forthcoming years as part of the College's Degree Enhancement programme.

## Quigong

In June 2016 Stranmillis hosted a delegation from China of professors of Qigong and a try-it event for staff, students and members of the community. Qigong is an integration of physical postures, breathing techniques and focused intentions



*A Qigong performance on the Orchard bridge*

which contribute to overall health and wellbeing. As a legacy of the visit the Department is offering BSc and BEd Post Primary students a 6-week Qigong programme within their modules as an example of promoting culturally relevant forms of PE to reflect the diversity of cultures in Northern Ireland.

## Engaging with Stakeholders

On 1st June 2016 the Education Studies Department held its seventh annual Special Educational Needs Stakeholder Group meeting. The event was well attended with representatives from the Department of Education, CCEA, Mencap, and local schools, as well as Stranmillis staff and students. The Stakeholder Group feedback was overwhelmingly positive about the breadth and depth of the preparation which students receive in this important area. Members enjoyed short presentations highlighting recent innovative developments in SEN across the BEd/PGCE (Gillian Beck), BA Early Childhood Studies (Dr Barbara McConnell) and BSc Health, Physical Activity and Sport (Melanie McKee) as well as new M-Level courses in SEN Literacy (Dr Sharon McMurray). Dr Noel Purdy also briefed members on recent scholarship and research publications in relation to SEN and inclusion. The highlights of the meeting were two illuminating presentations by current students: Chloe McIlwrath (Year 2 Health, Physical Activity and Sport), who spoke of the challenges and opportunities during her recent placement in an Alternative Education Provision in East Belfast, and Rebekah McKinley (Year 4 BEd Primary), who outlined her experiences of developing sensory approaches to teaching while on placement this year in Roddensvale Special School, Larne.



# LIFELONG LEARNING

The year 2015-16 saw continued progress on the range and delivery of Lifelong Learning courses at Stranmillis with a raft of exciting new classes on Irish History, Archaeology, Anglo-Irish Literature, Wine Appreciation, Landscape Painting and Health and Leisure. Our most popular courses continued to reflect historical themes such as 'The Big House in Ireland', the Easter Rising and 'Reconciliation in Modern Ireland'. This year saw the introduction of a new course on 'Religion in Northern Ireland', while Arabic and Mandarin joined our vibrant range of language courses. In particular, the public were offered an extended series of historical and cultural day tours including guided excursions to North Antrim, 'Georgian Dublin' and an exploration of 'The 1798 Rising in County Down'.

During the year the College's profile was greatly enhanced by extensive media coverage of our Lifelong Learning events. In the Spring of 2016 our signature programme of free public lunchtime talks were attended by hundreds of members of the public.



*Big crowds at the Lifelong Learning celebration*

Dr Éamon Phoenix's opening talk on 'The UVF Man at the Easter Rising' attracted over 100 people and received coverage on BBC Radio Ulster. The year ended in June with the Lifelong Learning celebration when over 200 people enjoyed a vibrant yet relaxed medley of chat, music and 'taster sessions' by our team of tutors. The speaker at the end of the evening was the Head of Lifelong Learning, Dr Phoenix, who took as his theme 'Voices of 16', reflecting on the 1916 Rising and the Battle of the Somme.

The year also saw a dramatic increase in enrolments on Lifelong Learning courses. We are especially proud of our new relationship with 'Positive Futures', the leading charity for people with a specific learning disability, which has enabled us to offer our courses to every section of society.



**“...a dramatic increase in enrolments on Lifelong Learning courses.”**



*Lifelong Learning Sketching*



*Lifelong Learning Computing*



*Lifelong Learning Tutors*

# SCHOLARSHIP AND RESEARCH

“...building an evidence base that can inform public debate on key educational issues and help to shape policy.”

The College promotes high quality scholarship and research in the field of education that can stand up to international scrutiny. Much of the work at Stranmillis is practice-based and aims to inform how we might enhance the quality of teaching and learning in order to address underachievement. Through its research the College seeks to build an evidence base that can inform public debate on key educational issues and help to shape policy. The College's research profile is built on collaboration with colleagues across the island of Ireland and beyond. Stranmillis is currently involved in ongoing scholarship and research with colleagues in the UK as well as other countries, including Germany, Italy and the USA.

**Highlights from 2015-16 are as follows:**

**The commitment to produce more research publications of world-leading and internationally excellent standard, and more scholarly publications:**

In 2015-16 there was a total of 74 outputs which included a growing number of international peer-reviewed journal articles, professional periodical articles, book chapters, professional resources, book reviews and research reports. The full list is provided in the pages which follow. College staff have presented their research papers at numerous regional, national and international conferences. Several staff have also been invited to deliver keynote addresses to UK and international audiences.





***The commitment to create a rich, vibrant and supportive scholarship and research environment:***

This was achieved through organising a series of lunchtime research seminars across both semesters for an audience of staff, students and key stakeholders. Presentations were given by College staff as well as visiting national and international researchers.



The Research Office also provided professional development for staff by facilitating four training workshops on academic writing and research funding applications, and by introducing an extended research mentorship programme.

A new College initiated seed funding competition was held in 2015-16 which facilitated the following small-scale research projects:

- 'Pre-Service Educators Learning about Childhood Trauma: An exploration of location and effectiveness'
- 'Evaluating a Teacher-led, Life Skills Intervention in Ugandan Secondary Schools'
- 'Promoting Early Number Talk (PENT)'

***The commitment to increase scholarship and research funding to the College:***

The Research Office helped organise two successful research funding workshops and circulated to staff a monthly digest of funding opportunities. As a result the College increased its number of external research applications three-fold over the 2015-16 academic year. Particular success was achieved in applications for seed funding from SCoTENS (Standing Conference on Teacher Education North and South) as well as a DE-funded research project which looked at modern language provision in Northern Ireland primary schools.



***The commitment to increase the knowledge transfer and impact arising from the College's scholarship and research activities:***

The College continued to work hard to develop meaningful partnerships with schools and other key stakeholders, and to ensure that the scholarship and research outputs reach a wide audience of researchers, policy makers and practitioners on a regional, national and international level. A particular highlight of the year was a lively public

symposium in March 2016 entitled 'Are Schools Failing our Kids?' which formed part of the Imagine! Belfast Festival of Ideas and Politics. Five members of academic staff presented their research which drew on the latest policy, research and best practice to discuss what schools can do to address some of the most pressing issues in pastoral care currently facing schools in Northern Ireland. A response was provided by the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People, Mrs Koulla Yiasouma.



At the 'Are Schools Failing our Kids?' event

### Peer-Reviewed Journal Articles 2015-16

Drummy, C., Murtagh, E. M., McKee, D., Breslin, G., Davison, G. W., Murphy, M. H. (2016) 'The effect of a classroom activity-break on physical activity levels and adiposity in primary school children.' *Journal of Paediatrics and Child Health*, Volume 52, Issue 7, pp.745-749.

Dunn, J. (2015) 'Insiders' perspectives: a children's rights approach to involving children in advising on adult-initiated research'. *International Journal of Early Years Education*, Volume 23, Issue 4, pp. 394-408.

Eaton, P., McKenzie, L., Richardson, N., McCracken, O. (2015) 'Teachers' Reflections on Community Relations and Diversity: A Northern Irish Perspective'. *The International Journal of Diversity in Education*, Volume 16, Issue 1, pp.1-14.

Gray, C. and Ryan, A. (2016) 'Aistear vis-à-vis the primary curriculum: the experiences of early years teachers in Ireland'. *International Early Years Education*, Volume 24, Issue 2, pp. 188-205.

Jones, S. (2015) 'Newcomer pupils in Northern Ireland: a pastoral perspective.' *Pastoral Care in Education*. Volume 33, Issue 3, pp. 154-160.

McKee, B.E. and Mason, S. (2015) 'Domestic violence and abuse prevention programmes in the early years classroom: a pastoral, academic and financial priority?' *Pastoral Care in Education*, Volume 33, Issue 4, pp.203-213.

McMillan, D.J. and McConnell, B. (2015) 'Strategies, systems and services: a Northern Ireland early years policy perspective'. *International Journal of Early Years Education*. Volume 23, Issue 3, pp.245-257.

McMillan, D.J., McConnell, B. and O'Sullivan, H. (2016) 'Continuing professional development – why bother? Perceptions and motivations of teachers in Ireland' *Professional Development in Education*, Volume 42, Issue 1, pp150-167.

Purdy, N. and McGuckin, C. (2015) 'Cyberbullying, Schools and the Law: A comparative study in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland'. *Educational Research*, Volume 57, Issue 4, pp. 420-436.

Purdy, N. and Meneely, H. (2015) 'Good news for the poor? – A case study of church and school collaboration in inner-city Belfast', *Pastoral Care in Education*, Volume 33, Issue 3, pp.147-153.

Purdy, N. and Smith, P.K. (2016) 'A content analysis of school anti-bullying policies in Northern Ireland'. *Educational Psychology in Practice*, Volume 32, Issue 3, pp.281-295.

### Books

Gray, C. and MacBlain, S. (2015) *Learning theories in childhood* (2nd edition). London, Sage.

Simons, I. (2015) *Go Berserk making more websites with CSS*. Belfast, Imphora.

### Book Chapters

Boyd, D., Hirst, N., Walsh, G., Warden, C., McNair, L., Prowle, A., Davidge-Smith, L. (2016) 'A Conversation between the Home Nations' in *Understanding Early Years Education across the UK: Comparing Practice in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales* (Ed. D. Boyd and N. Hirst). London, Routledge.

Doherty, A. and Walsh, G. (2016) 'The Foundation Stage Curriculum in Northern Ireland: An Inside Practical Perspective' in *Understanding Early Years Education across the UK: Comparing Practice in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales* (Ed. D. Boyd and N. Hirst). London, Routledge.

Palaiologou, I., Walsh, G., MacQuarrie, S., Waters, J., Macdonald, N. and Dunphy, E. (2016) 'The National Picture', in *Early Years the Foundation Stage* (3rd edition). London, Sage.

### Professional Periodicals

Casserly, A. M., Tiernan, B. and Moffett, P. (2015) 'Key Vocabulary and Supporting Strategies for Early Number Concepts'. *REACH Journal of Special Needs Education in Ireland*, Volume 29, Issue 1, pp.18-32.

Dunn, J. (2015) 'Using popular culture in the primary classroom: let's ask the experts'. *Literacy News* (Autumn Newsletter), Dublin: The Literacy Association of Ireland.

Moffett, P. (2015) 'Mathematics solutions'. *Special* (September), pp. 14-16.



Moffett, P. (2016) 'Number Talk – promoting understanding and use of early number language'. *Primary Mathematics*, Volume 20, Issue 1, pp. 15-18.

Moffett, P. (2015) 'Stop the bus, I'm leaving'. *Early Years Educator*, Volume 17, Issue 8, pp. 22-24.

Purdy, N. (2016) 'Autism: Making a Difference Together'. *Special* (March), pp.34-35.

Walsh, G. (2016) 'A Northern Ireland Perspective: The Early Years Workforce', *Early Education Journal*, Issue 78, Spring, pp. 7-9.

### Research Reports

McCullagh, J. and Murphy, C. (2015) *From Microteaching to Microlearning: The Final Report on the Video In STEM Teacher Assessment (VISTA) Project*. Armagh, Standing Conference on Teacher Education North and South (SCoTENS).

McPhillips, T., Beck, G., Casserly, A., Hazzard, D. and Tiernan, B. (2015) *Dyslexia in Ireland: A Review of current provision of support since the publication of the Task Force Reports, North and South* (2002). Armagh, Standing Conference on Teacher Education North and South (SCoTENS).

### Conference Proceedings

McMurray, S., O'Neill, S., and Thompson, R. (2016) 'An Innovative Model for Professional Development'. *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs*, Volume 16, Supplement 1. (Paper presented at the 8th Inclusive and Supportive Education Congress: Equity and Inclusion in Education, Lisbon, July 2015).

McMurray, S. and Thompson, R. (2015). 'Issues in Inclusion and Individual Learning Needs Learning to Read'. *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs*, Volume 16, Supplement 1. (Paper presented at the 8th Inclusive and Supportive Education Congress: Equity and Inclusion in Education, Lisbon, July 2015).

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Ryan, A., O'Toole, L. and Purdy, N. (2015) 'Welcome to this one hour lecture on . . . Constructivism . . . (!)": Rhetoric Or Reality? A Consideration of the Theory/Practice Nexus and its Implications for Approaches to Teacher Education'. Paper presented at the 2014 Annual Conference of the Standing Conference on Teacher Education North and South (SCoTENS). Available at <http://scotens.org/site/wp-content/uploads/Workshop-5.pdf>

### Research Conference and Other Presentations

Bell, I. and McLaughlin, R. (2016) 'Informatics Curriculum in British schools'. Paper presented at Österreichische Computergesellschaft, Computational Thinking and Coding at Schools, Vienna, April 2016.

Burns, S., Ievers, M., Leitch, R., Hughes, J. (2015) 'Examination of a Model of Full Service Extended Schools (FSSES) Provision in an Area of High Deprivation'. Paper presented at the European Conference on Educational Research (ECER), Budapest, September, 2015.

Casserly, A-M, Tiernan, B., Beck, G., Hazzard, D. and McPhillips, T. (2015) 'Our School Community: Promoting Resilience and Well-being', Paper presented at the Irish Association of Teachers in Special Education Conference, Dublin, June 2015.

Casserly, A-M, Tiernan, B., Beck, G., Hazzard, D. and McPhillips, T. (2015) 'Living Literacy: from Tots to Teens', Paper presented at the 39th International Conference, Literacy Association of Ireland, Marino Institute of Education, Dublin, September, 2015.

Dunn, J., Gray, C., Mitchell, D. and Moffett, P. (2015) 'Asking the Experts: Young Children's Views on using iPads in Early Years Classrooms', Paper presented at Innovation, experimentation and adventure in early childhood: The 25th European Early Childhood Education Research Association (EECERA) Annual Conference. Barcelona, Spain, September 2015.

Eaton, P., Horn, C., Liston, M., Oldham, E. and O'Reilly, M. (2015) 'The Collaborative Learning of Student Teachers: An insight from a study of mathematical identity' Paper presented at the ATEE Conference (Association for Teacher Education in Europe) 2015, Glasgow, UK.

Gray, C., Prunty, A., Logan, A., Hayes, G. (2015). 'Managing the transition to school for children with special needs in the North and South of Ireland'. Paper presented at Innovation, experimentation and adventure in early childhood: The 25th European Early Childhood Education Research Association (EECERA) Annual Conference. Barcelona, Spain, September 2015.

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Jones, S., McKee, B., McMullen, J. and Purdy, N. (2016) 'Are Schools Failing Our Kids? The challenge of meeting children's pastoral needs'. Papers presented at the Imagine Belfast Festival Symposium. Stranmillis University College, March 2016.

Jones, S. (2015) Challenges and Opportunities Facing Newcomer Children in Primary Education: a View from Initial Teacher Education'. Keynote presentation at Stronger Together Conference, Belfast. November 2015.

Leitch, R., Ievers, M., Burns, S., and Cownie, E (2015) "Investigating Links in Achievement and Deprivation (Iliad)", a presentation of draft findings to teacher unions and the BBC at Antrim Teachers' Centre, December 2015.

McCullagh, J.F. and Murphy, C. (2015) 'Towards ideal practice of micro-teaching: The collaborative thoughts and reflections of pre-service teachers from two ITE institutions'. Paper presented at the Teacher Education Advancement Network (TEAN) Annual Conference, Birmingham.

McKee, B.E. (2015) 'Early Intervention and Prevention of Domestic Violence and Abuse in the Early Years Classroom'. Paper presented at the European Conference on Domestic Violence. Belfast, September 2015.

McKee, B.E. (2015) 'Every Voice Counts: Children's understanding of safety through art'. Paper presented at the NIBPS and UU Domestic Violence Every Voice Counts Conference. Antrim, August 2015.

McKee, B.E. (2016) 'Safeguarding and Substance Abuse: Developments at Stranmillis University College'. Paper presented at the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland Conference, Stranmillis University College, March 2016.

McKee, B.E. and Devaney, J. (2016) 'Professional Development in Safeguarding Young Children and Interdisciplinary Working'. Paper presented at the Stranmillis University College and Queen's University Belfast Safeguarding Conference, Stranmillis University College, April 2016.

McMullen, J. (2015) 'Group-based Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioural Therapy with War-affected Children in the DR Congo'. Guest presentation at Treating the Trauma of the Troubles Conference, Riddel Hall, Belfast, November 2015.

McMullen, J. (2015) 'Supporting Children Affected by War and Displacement'. Paper presented at the Northern Ireland Human Rights Festival, Stranmillis University College, December 2015.

McMullen, J. (2015) 'Living Well- A Teacher-led Life Skills Programme'. Paper presented at the Fields of Life Annual Conference, Ibanda, Western Uganda, January 2016.

McMullen, J. and O'Callaghan, P. (2016) 'Providing mental health and psychosocial support for war-affected children - A reflection on interventions in Uganda and the DR Congo'. Paper presented at the NIBPS Annual Conference, Dundalk, March 2016

McMullen, J. and O'Callaghan, P. (2016) 'Methodologies For Researching With The Most Disadvantaged In Situations Of Conflict'. BERA President's Roundtable seminar, Riddel Hall, Belfast, May 2016.

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McMullen, J. (2016) 'Early Childhood Trauma and its Impact on Education Attainment'. Half-day workshop delivered for the National Children's Bureau, Binnian Room, Stranmillis University College, May 2016.

McPhillips, T., Beck, G. Hazzard, D. Casserly, A-M, and Tiernan, B. (2015) 'Dyslexia Provision in Ireland: A review of current provision of support 2002-2015', UKLA Conference, Nottingham.

Moffett, P., Casserly, A.M., and Tiernan, B. (2015) 'Developing number language in early childhood', Paper presented at Innovation, experimentation and adventure in early childhood: The 25th European Early Childhood Education Research Association (EECERA) Annual Conference. Barcelona, Spain, September 2015.

Purdy, N. and McGuckin, C. (2015) 'Cyberbullying, Schools and the Law: A comparative study in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland', Presentation at British Educational Research Conference, Belfast, September, 2015.

Purdy, N. and McGuckin, C. (2015) 'Cyberbullying, Schools and the Law: A comparative study in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland', Presentation at European Educational Research Conference, Budapest, September, 2015.

Purdy, N. (2015) 'Understanding School Bullying'. Guest presentation to Education and Training Inspectorate (Training Conference), Canal Court Hotel, Newry. September, 2015.

Purdy, N. (2015) 'What Bullying Means to Me' Keynote Address at Cookstown Youth Forum Anti-Bullying Conference, Cookstown High School November 2015.

Purdy, N. and Meneely, H. (2016) "Good news for the poor? - A case study of church and school collaboration in inner-city Belfast. Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the British Psychological Society Northern Ireland Branch, Dundalk, March 2016.

Walsh, G. (2015) 'Early Years policy from Across the UK: Common Challenges, Diverse Solutions – a Northern Ireland Perspective', Invited presentation, Early Education, AGM, NCVO: London, November 2015.

Walsh, G., Sproule, L. and McGuinness, C. (2016) 'It's Teaching but not as we know it: Unravelling the dilemma of teaching in a play-based curriculum in the context of Northern Ireland', Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the British Psychological Society Northern Ireland Branch, Dundalk, March 2016.

Walsh, G. (2016) 'A Quality Learning Experience in the Early Years of Primary School: Unravelling the Conundrum', Keynote address, NCCA Aistear Tutor Event, Athlone Springs Hotel, March 2016.

### Book Reviews

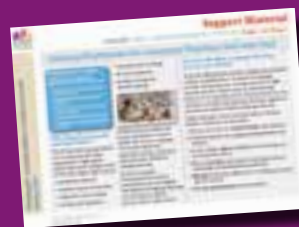
Jones, S. (2015) 'The country of the young: interpretations of youth and childhood in Irish culture.' *Irish Studies Review* Volume 23, Issue 2, pp. 252-255.

Purdy, N. (2015) Book Review of Understanding School Bullying (P.K. Smith). *Pastoral Care in Education*, Volume 33, Issue 2, pp. 130-131.

Purdy, N. (2015) Book Review of Talking about Death and Bereavement in School (A. Chadwick), What Does Dead Mean? – A book for young children to help explain death and dying (Caroline Jay and Jenni Thomas) and Seed of Hope Bereavement and Loss Activity Book (Caroline Jay and Unity-Joy Dale). *Pastoral Care in Education: An International Journal of Personal, Social and Emotional Development*, Volume 33, Issue 4, pp. 246-247.

### Professional Resources

Walsh, G. and Gillespie, S. (2016) Infusing Playfulness in Language Teaching and Learning, Support Materials for Teachers, NCCA website, available at: [http://curriculumonline.ie/getmedia/bb9ac07f-2eeb-46d2-a130-0abb0aa74cf6/ORW\\_InfusingPlayfulness\\_1.pdf?ext=.pdf](http://curriculumonline.ie/getmedia/bb9ac07f-2eeb-46d2-a130-0abb0aa74cf6/ORW_InfusingPlayfulness_1.pdf?ext=.pdf)



Walsh, G. and Gillespie, S. (2016) Observational Assessment using the Quality Learning Framework: Kilmaine

Primary School, Foundation Stage online course, <http://training.ccea.org.uk/course/view.php?id=86>





# STAFF ACHIEVEMENTS AND APPOINTMENTS

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Staff achievements in 2015-16 demonstrate commitment to on-going professional development which provides a strong foundation on which the College can build a *high quality public service*.

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**Dr Lisa McKenzie**



**Dr Fergal Corscadden**



**Dr John McCullagh**



**Dr John McMullen**

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**Dr Lisa McKenzie** was awarded a Doctorate in Education (EdD)

**Dr Jayne Moore** received a Doctorate in Education (EdD) from Queen's University

**Dr Frances Burgess** received a Doctorate in Education (EdD) from Exeter University

**Dr Fergal Corscadden** received a Doctorate (PhD) from Queen's University

**Ms Nuala Bready** was awarded a Postgraduate Diploma in Human Resource Management

**Mrs Elaine McConaghie** achieved a Postgraduate Diploma in Human Resource Management

**Mr Tom Carberry** has been awarded Affiliate Membership of Accounting Technicians Ireland

**Dr John McCullagh** has been made a Fellow of The Royal Society of Chemistry

**Dr Michael levers** has been made a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, Manufacture and Commerce

**Dr John McMullen** received chartered membership of the British Psychological Society (CPsychol)

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## External Appointments and Influential Memberships

**Staff continue to impact on policy and practice in education through external appointments and influential memberships on key bodies.**

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**Dr Irene Bell** is a UK representative on the Council of European Professional Informatics Societies, Computing in Schools special interest network. Last year Dr Bell was an invited speaker at conferences in Brussels and Vienna.

Dr Bell accepted the invitation to join the International Association of STEM Leaders (Women in STEM).

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**Dr Pamela Moffett** has been appointed external examiner at Edge Hill University for the PGCERT, PGDIP and MA Mathematics Education Programmes for the period 2015-19.

**Dr John McMullen** was appointed Trustee/Director of Fields of Life and Chair of its Education Committee. He was appointed Treasurer of the British Psychological Society's Division of Educational and Child Psychology in Northern Ireland.

**Dr Barbara McConnell** recently took up the position as Chair of the British Psychological Society in Northern Ireland (NIBPS). This was especially significant, given this is the 60th Anniversary of the Branch in Northern Ireland (pictured).

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In February 2016 **Brian Delaney** was re-appointed to the Board of Sport Northern Ireland for a period of a further four years and currently holds the role of Interim Chair.





**Melanie McKee** serves as a member of the Association for Physical Education (AfPE) NI Interim Committee which has been tasked with setting up a regional presence of AfPE with a view to becoming an advocacy group for PE. Two former Stranmillis BEd and MEd in PE graduates, Simon Patterson and Steven Park, are also members of the Committee.

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**Dr Sharon McMurray** was appointed to the British Dyslexia Association Course Accreditation Board.

.....

**Ms Karen Hanna** has joined the Board of Governors for St Brigid's Primary School in Ballymoney.

.....

In May 2016 **Dr Bronagh McKee** was invited to represent Stranmillis on the reshaped *Regional Pathways into Further and Higher Education for Looked After Children and Young People Group* led by HSCT and chaired by Deirdre Coyle, HSCT Director for Children's Services for Looked After Children and Young People (LACYP).

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**Dr Claire McVeigh** qualified as a British Psychological Society Verified Assessor for the qualification Test User: Educational, Ability and Attainment (CCET)

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# STUDENT SUPPORT AND WELLBEING

Student Support seeks to place the student at the centre of the College community. The new centre for Student Support and Wellbeing became operational in 2015-16. It aims to provide a 'one-stop shop', giving students access to a full range of support services in one place. Throughout this past year students have benefitted greatly from this provision. The aim is to make Student Support relevant and responsive to the needs of all students within the College community.

Staff in the Student Support and Wellbeing Centre and the Students' Union work collaboratively to provide an integrated support service. Such support is available to all students studying at Stranmillis including those from other parts of the world, whether they be an Erasmus student or an International student. In addition the Students' Union and the Student Support and Wellbeing Centre along with other academic and administrative areas in the College organised a series of successful 'Welcome and Orientation Week' activities for all new students.

## Careers Education: Preparing for the 'world of work'

As an institution, Stranmillis is very keen to ensure that its students are well prepared to enter the graduate labour market. The ultimate aim is to challenge all students to create their own career plan, encouraging them to develop and enhance their skill set, and to ensure that they are well-prepared for entering the graduate job market.

An increasing number of employers from across the UK, and indeed further afield, are recognising the quality of Stranmillis graduates, and as a result they are keen to offer them employment. The desire of so many different employers to recruit our graduates is testament to the high esteem in which our graduates are held. Once again the College hosted its annual Careers Fair in 2015-16. Over 60 different graduate employers were present, promoting employment in a wide range of areas and heightening student awareness of the many opportunities that exist.



**“...placing the student at the centre of the College community.”**

Careers Fair 2016

## Fife Partnership

Increasingly the College is also promoting careers through partnerships. A number of new partnerships linked to placements and job promotion were developed in 2015-16. As well our existing partnership with Kent County Council we have developed a new and exciting partnership with Fife County Council in Scotland. In April a delegation from Fife made a visit to Stranmillis to meet with key staff to discuss the potential for a partnership arrangement. As a part of their visit the delegation from Fife met with a number of final year students who had expressed an interest in teaching in Scotland. Following this, a number of students applied, were interviewed, and subsequently four were offered employment. One of the students, Maeve McCouaig, who was successful in securing a fulltime teaching position in Fife, writes:

*"This time last year, I was in the midst of assignment deadlines and dissertation preparation. Fast forward 12 months and I have completed my dissertation, graduated as a primary school teacher, moved to a new country, found a new flat to call home and started my first teaching job. Not bad going, if I do say so myself."*

*The school year in Scotland begins in mid-August, so I am currently halfway through our second term. I have a wonderful P7 class in Commercial Primary School in Dunfermline, where I teach in an open plan classroom. While this was a new experience – 120 kids in one room – teaching in the 'wing' is actually ideal for me as a new teacher, as I have three other teachers to observe and learn from throughout each day.*

*In my opinion, completing my probationary year in Scotland was the best decision I could have made. The wealth of professional development events that are open to us is invaluable. I cannot adequately explain to you the comfort of having a 'Supporter' teacher within the school to provide guidance and advice. Weekly, I have one day where I am released from class to work on my own professional development in terms of catching up on educational theory and journals, observing in other classes or other schools and completing my online probationer profile.*

*Working with Fife Council ... I would strongly recommend it. The wealth of opportunity and support I receive here is more than I could have imagined for someone at the beginning of their teaching career."*



Maeve McCouaig



# STUDENT ACHIEVEMENTS

## Critical Writing Prize



Critical Writing prize winner  
Jill Porter

Congratulations to Jill Porter (Year 4 BEd Primary) whose essay was highly commended in the 'Critical Writing Prize 2016' awarded by Critical Publishing. Jill's essay was entitled *'Bereavement in the Primary School: A critical consideration of the nature, incidence*

*and impact of bereavement on children, and possible school responses, both proactive and reactive'*. It had originally been submitted as part of her Year 4 Education Studies module 'Contemporary Issues in Pastoral Care'. As a prize Jill received a free book of her choice from Critical Publishing and her essay will be published in a forthcoming issue of the Teacher Education Advancement Network's STeP journal (Student Teacher Perspectives journal).

## The Hastings Elysium Cup



Dr Peter Hamill, (Secretary to the Church of Ireland Board of Education in NI) and Simon Hodgett.

Simon Hodgett, a BSc 1st Class honours graduate, was awarded the Hastings Elysium Cup for 2016 as a result of achieving the highest overall BSc classification. Simon was a direct entry to Year 2 of

the BSc programme, having previously studied at the Southern Regional College. During his time at Stranmillis he consistently demonstrated the highest standards of academic integrity and achievement - having previously been recognised as the highest achieving Year 2 student.

## Sixth Form Essay Competition

There was also a healthy response this year to the annual Sixth Form Essay Competition, where pupils had to submit an original 1500 word response to AS Neill's view that: *"Obviously, a school that makes active children sit at desks studying mostly useless subjects is a bad school. It is a good school only for those who believe in such a school, for those uncreative citizens who want docile, uncreative children who will fit into a civilization whose standard of success is money"*. The winner was Lauren Irwin (Lurgan College) while the runners-up were Leona Moorhead (Banbridge Academy) and Ciara McCormack (Limavady Grammar School).



Prize winner Lauren Irwin

# STUDENTS' UNION ACTIVITIES

## Freshers' Week

Arguably the busiest week of the year, Freshers' Week 2015 was once again a resounding success. The first event of the week was the 'American Frat Party', a party exclusively for the freshers. The events continued to be successful, with the winner of the 'balloon drop' on the Tuesday evening receiving an iPad, the Freshers' Fun Fair on the Wednesday afternoon, followed by an off-campus event that night. The final event of Freshers' Week was the UV party (held in Scholars bar/social area). This was the most attended-event of the week, and so secured its place in the programme for Freshers' week 2016. Freshers' Week was a smooth period of transition for all new and incoming students. This was primarily down to the close collaboration between the Students' Union, members of staff and volunteer returning students.

## The 'Back to School Bop'

Held over Reading Week (Wk 5), the Back to School Bop saw around 200 students make the journey back up to the College to attend the event. With Jonny Harper (an ex-President of the Students' Union) providing the entertainment for the evening, the atmosphere was that of reminiscence as all who attended turned up dressed in their old school uniforms.

## Erasmus and International Students

Stranmillis University College boasts a rich and diverse Erasmus and International student exchange programme. This was demonstrated in the 2015-16 academic year with the intake of 71 International/ Erasmus students in Semester 1 alone, with 100 in

total coming to study at the College over the course of the academic year. The programme was so successful that the intern role of International Student Welfare Officer was created - a role which the new Student President Adam Pollock will be fulfilling in the 2016-17 academic year.

## Formal 2016

The Stranmillis student formal was held during Valentine's week. The event was a great chance for the students to dress up, let the hair down (figuratively of course!) and have a night of enjoyment with their peers. The after-formal party was also a great success, with over 200 students attending.



*Back to School Bop selfies!*



## At the Freshers' Week Fun Day





## Stranmillis Pantomime

The Stranmillis Christmas Pantomime needs no introduction, which in itself speaks of the year-on-year success of this student-led production. With around 150 students involved in the 2015 production of 'Robin Hood', the shows took place

over a period of two weeks, with a total of fourteen shows being attended by schools from all over Northern Ireland as well as by the general public. The students took away a great experience of teamwork and a developed love and confidence for the Drama Society at the College.



*Panto, Christmas 2015 – 'Robin Hood'*

## Students' Union Charity

In light of the ever increasing number of mental health issues seen in the student population, the charity chosen by the Students' Union was MindWise - a mental health charity that specialises in student mental health issues and awareness. The Students' Union raised a grand total of £2081.34! This was raised through such events as 'Stran X-Factor' and 'Take Me Out', and by having collection buckets at the pantomime and in Betty's coffee shop.

## ATM facility

During 2015-16 an ATM facility was installed on campus. This has been a welcome addition to the many other facilities in the College and is accessible to staff, students, lifelong learners and visiting members of the public.

Overall, 2015-16 brought many different challenges for the Students' Union. However they have shaped the Union and the wider student body for the better. The work conducted by the Students' Union will continue to gain recognition in 2016-17 under the new President, Adam Pollock.

At the 'music@stran' evening in May 2016 – 'Nocturne'.  
Special guests were the choir from Roddensvale School



# CORPORATE SERVICES DEVELOPMENTS

## Estates and Infrastructure

The College has demonstrated its ongoing commitment to invest in its ambitious Estates Strategy which is regularly updated to reflect

investments made and newly identified priorities. Between 2011 and 2016 there has been an investment of almost £10m in capital projects. The Strategy seeks to improve the standard of the buildings across the campus,

many of which are listed, with several being of significant historical importance, whilst making the buildings safe and suitable for teaching, learning and related purposes.

In addition there has been considerable investment in social space for students. Students have been actively involved in the design of major projects such as the revamped 'Scholars' which is part of the newly refurbished Refectory Building. At a recent awards ceremony, Woodvale Construction Company Limited won the Construction Excellence Award for this project.



*'Scholars' – the Students' Union facilities*

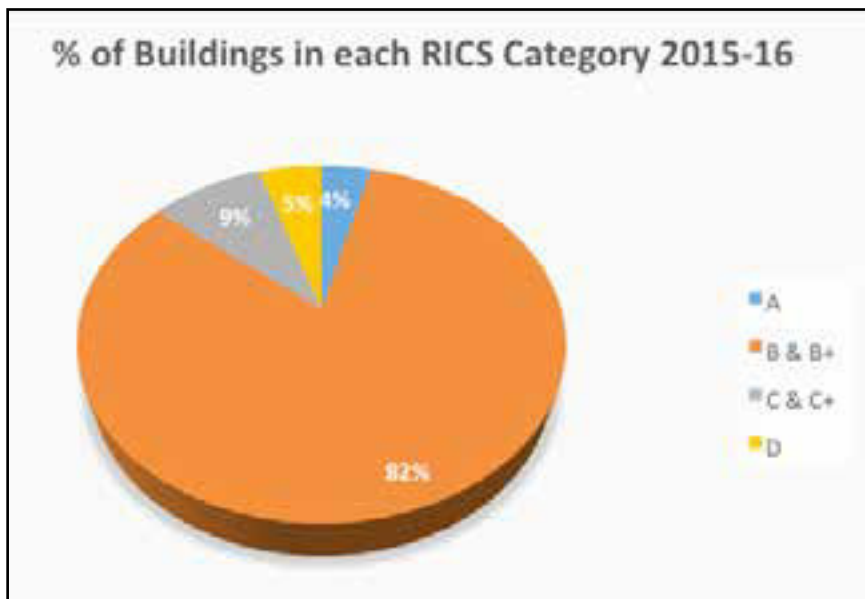




The new Betty's Coffee Shop in the entrance foyer of Central Building was also completed in the 2015-16 academic year and is now open for business.

As part of the updating of the Estates Strategy an updated assessment was made in July 2016 of the physical condition of each of the 22 buildings on the campus, and this is summarised in the pie chart below. The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) Building Maintenance definitions apply:

- A = as new
- B = sound, operationally safe, exhibiting only minor deterioration
- C = operational, but major repair or replacement needed soon
- D = inoperable or serious risk of failure or breakdown



The scale of the investment in recent years is shown on the table overleaf. It has significantly improved the proportion of College buildings which are graded B or above. The 2015-16 year saw 86% of the buildings on campus being rated at category B or above. This has created a modern, high quality environment for students and staff.

## TABLE SHOWING INVESTMENT OVER THE LAST 6 YEARS TO 2016

### Stranmillis University College

Capital Spend Trends	Total	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Total Capital Investment in Buildings</b>							
Main Building - project commencement	3,225	30	2,614	581			
Refectory Building Ph. 1 inc Scholars Bar	1,156	44	49	1,063			
Refectory Building Ph. 2	1,124	247	877				
Stranmillis House	1,241	86	-13	818	350		
Stranmillis House P3	289	289					
Halls of Residences	343		0	-30	319	54	
Orchard Building	78		0	0	19	10	49
Central Building - first floor Science	1,127		0	8	42	528	549
Central Foyer	818	604	150	64			
All Weather Sports Pitch	7	3	4				
Drama Theatre Dressing Rooms	74	4					
Central First Floor Foyer	5	5					
<b>Total Capital Investment in Buildings</b>	<b>9,417</b>	<b>1,312</b>	<b>3,681</b>	<b>2,504</b>	<b>730</b>	<b>592</b>	<b>598</b>









## Energy Efficiency

Recent capital investment projects over the last few years are expected to yield significant efficiencies in energy usage.



The Stranmillis House Phase 3 Project includes the installation of thermal insulation to the roofspace which had never previously been in place. The project also completed the replacement of all mechanical and electrical services. The heating system is now zoned and includes the ability to achieve more control via set times, room sensors, electrically operated valves and thermostatic valves fitted to each radiator.

Upgrades have also been carried out to the campus wide BEMS (Building Energy Management System) which controls the heating, air conditioning and hot water systems in all buildings on campus. These upgrades include the installation of energy meters, connection to the gas meters in the Halls of Residence and associated monitoring software. This allows the collection of usage data which can highlight trends, abnormal usage etc., which in turn enables energy monitoring, forecasting, benchmarking and optimisation.

Refurbishment works to Culmore West Halls of Residence during the summer recess included the final phase of replacing all corridor lights in the Halls with energy efficient LED fittings. This means that all 44 corridors throughout Halls have LED fittings, which provide lower running costs and extend lamp life with reduced labour and material costs in relation to replacements.

All teaching space now has energy efficient lighting installed with automatic dimming and switch off. Staff offices and the Library space within the Central Building are the most significant areas remaining which need to have this work carried out.

## Recycling

In August 2015 a new single waste management contractor was appointed from a Government Framework consolidating all waste streams from the College. In the calendar year 2015, the College produced 112.015 tonnes of waste via two separate waste streams - residential and non-residential. The split of these waste streams translated to an overall recovery rate of 65.9%, an increase of 22.66% on the previous year. It is anticipated that the amount of waste recovered in 2016 will increase to at least 85%.



The continued investment programme in Halls refurbishment and facilities has ensured that the College exceeded its occupancy target for the Halls of Residence. The occupancy percentage in 2015-16 was 99%. Despite the fact that the Main Building, including the Conference Hall and Stranmillis House, were out of commission for a period due to major refurbishment projects and despite the current financial climate, Hospitality income has remained strong. Overall Hospitality and Accommodation Services achieved an 8% increase on the previous year's income. This area of the College's activity is a critical dimension of its income generation strategy. The surpluses arising from this activity are being invested in the further upgrading of the College's infrastructure and in the student experience.

The opening of the new Betty's Coffee Shop in the entrance foyer of Central Building was warmly received by both students and staff. It provides a welcome facility for part-time evening students as well as those who attend day classes. Betty's has become an important social hub for the College.

### People Development

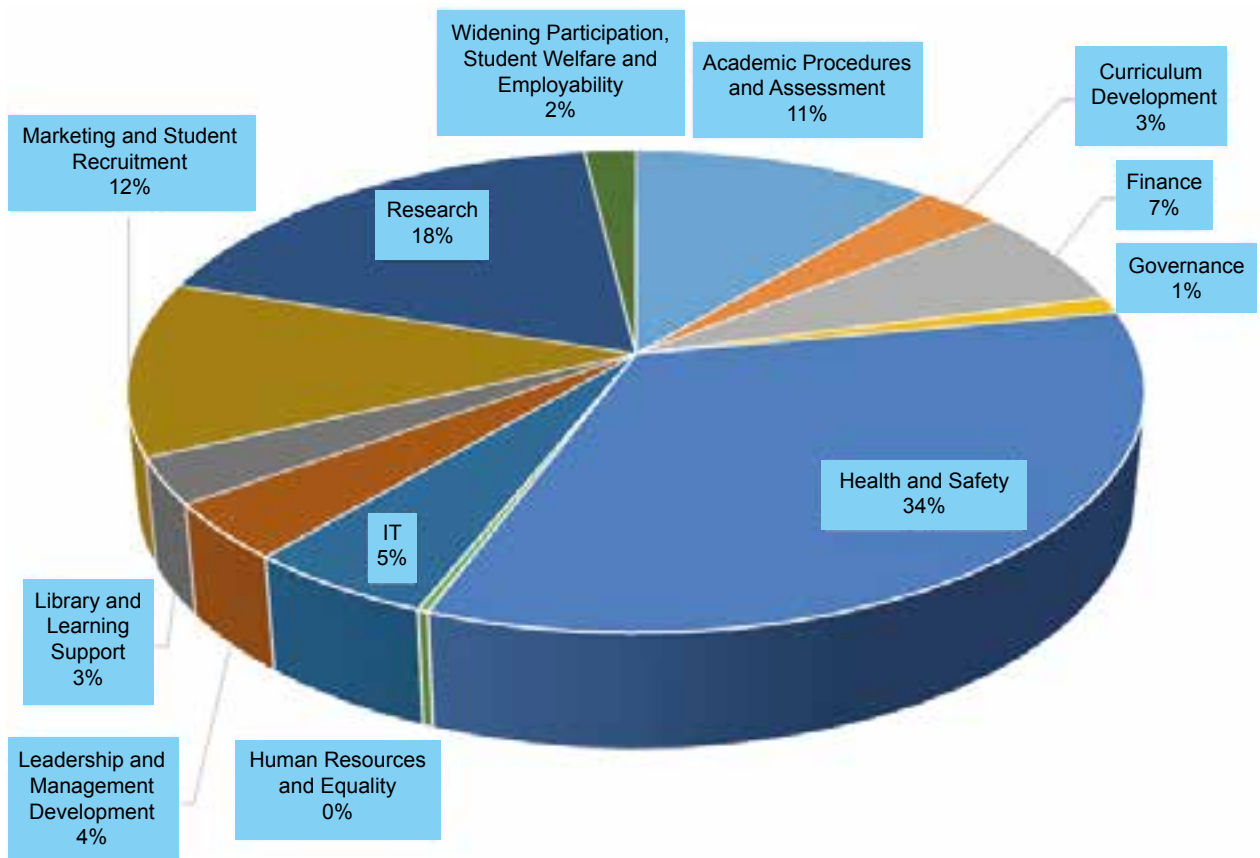
Following extensive consultation with staff, a new People Strategy was approved by the Governing Body in January 2016. The strategy recognises that the contribution of all staff is fundamental to the achievement of the College's educational and corporate goals.



The purpose of this strategy is to realise the organisational vision of leading innovative professional practice and to achieve the objectives set out in the Corporate Plan. The strategy is developed around the four broad themes set out below:

1. Resourcing effectively and developing talent to enhance workforce capability;
2. Building a collegiate culture which maximises commitment and contribution through enabling and involving staff;
3. Developing a high performance ethos which supports the achievement of the corporate objectives;
4. Promoting and supporting transformational leadership as a catalyst for change.

The Staff Development Plan has provided staff with the support to develop their expertise in line with the strategic priorities. There was significant development in the category of health and safety in 2015-16 which was in response to a major review of the College's Health and Safety Policy.



Expenditure on Staff Development Activity by category (% figures for a total of 2,368 hours)



## FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

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The University College recorded an operating surplus of £169,000 in the year to 31 July 2016, further strengthening the financial position of the College.

Total income reduced in the year by £428,000 or 3.2% compared with the previous year for a number of reasons:

- Recurrent Grant funding received from the Sponsor Department fell by £139k or 3.2% compared with the previous year as a result of general funding cuts to the sector;
- No Major Project Income was recognised in the year as a result of the ending of the SEN Literacy Project in March 2015 which contributed £955k of income during 2014-15;
- Sundry Other Income reduced by 6.4% to £233k in the year due to less activity related to the College's innovative Joint Graduate Internship Programme. Successful graduating student transition to full-time employment reduced the pool of newly graduated students available for taking up internship positions in both 2015 and 2016. Offsetting this reduction, Lifelong Learning income remained stable whilst a 30% increase in Continuing Professional Development income was experienced in the year.
- Income included £226k of Public Sector Transformation Funding to progress a Voluntary Exit Scheme during 2015-16 with no equivalent income received in the previous year.
- Tuition Fee income increased by £215k or 6%, contributing 29.6% of total income as a result of both inflationary tuition fee increases and an increase in students undertaking both full and part time courses.
- Accommodation, room hire, catering and conferencing business contributed £2,272k or 17.8% of total income in the year. This steady performance represents a continuation of the very positive results that have been achieved in recent years despite the very challenging economic climate.

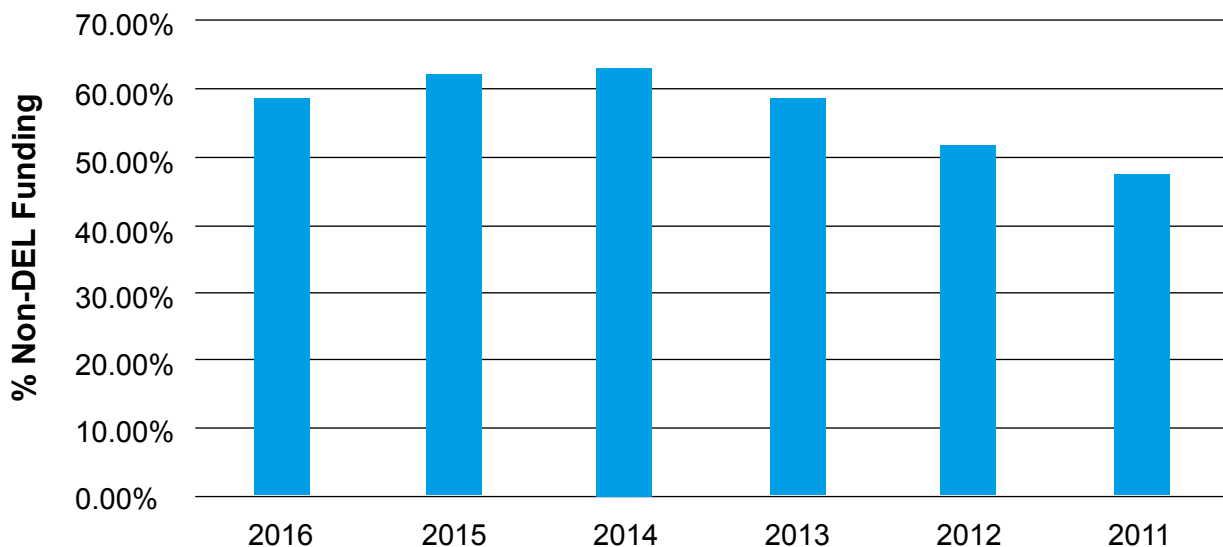




The figures and the graph below show the proportion of income, adjusted to remove the distorting impact of deferred capital grants on assets transferred to the University College on incorporation in 2005, derived from sources other than from the Sponsor Department core grant.

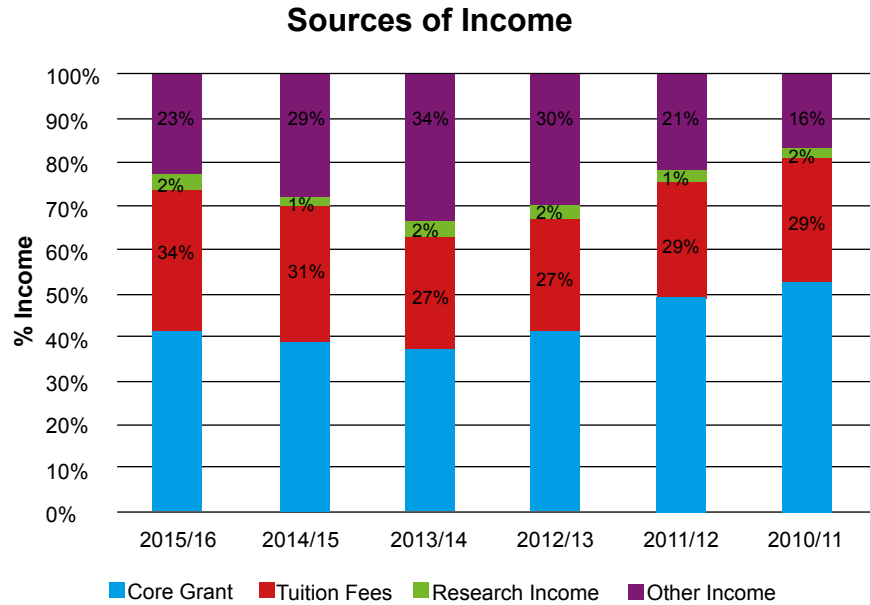
	2016 £'000	2015 £'000	2014 £'000	2013 £'000	2012 £'000	2011 £'000
<b>Total Income - ex Core Grants</b>	6,514	7,063	7,959	6,931	5,718	4,975
<b>Income adjusted for impact of DCG release</b>	11,088	11,545	12,657	11,893	10,997	10,458
<b>Adjusted Non DEL Funding %</b>	59%	61%	63%	58%	52%	48%

### Adjusted Non DEL Funding %



Years 2016-2011

In addition the graph below shows the proportion of income derived by income type over the 6 years to 2016 (excluding the deferred capital grants).



These results make evident the success in recent years of the University College's strategy to diversify the sources of its income, thereby reducing its reliance on core government grant funding.

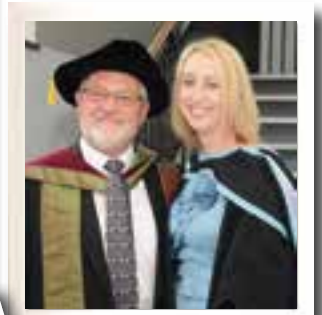
## Expenditure

Overall the College saw expenditure reduce by 5.6% in the year for a number of reasons:

- The ending of the SEN Literacy Project in 2014-15 resulted in a reduction in related Major Project expenditure (and related income) of £955k in 2015-16.
- Staff costs (adjusted for the impact of FRS 102 pension) fell by £771k compared with the prior year due largely as a result of the SEN Literacy project ending in March 2015. However off-setting staff savings achieved were Voluntary Exit Scheme payments of £226k made during the year.

Unadjusted staff costs represented 55.8% of total expenditure, which is below the Northern Ireland HE sector average (as reported by HESA – staff costs in 2014-15 represented 58.3% of total expenditure).











## **Stranmillis University College**

Stranmillis Road

Belfast BT9 5DY

Northern Ireland

United Kingdom

**Tel:** +44 (0)28 9038 1271

**email:** [registry@stran.ac.uk](mailto:registry@stran.ac.uk)

**[www.stran.ac.uk](http://www.stran.ac.uk)**



**STRANMILLIS UNIVERSITY COLLEGE**  
A College of Queen's University Belfast