

STRANMILLIS
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

ANNUAL REPORT

1 August 2014 - 31 July 2015



Leading Innovative Professional Practice



STRANMILLIS UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
A College of Queen's University Belfast

Annual Report 2014-2015

(1 August 2014 - 31 July 2015)



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GOVERNING BODY (2014-2015)

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

Mr Alex Ramage, Support Staff Representative to 30 July 2015

Ms Ingrid Mercer, BLS MCLIP - Support Staff Representative effective from 1 October 2015

Mr Michael Pollock, BEd - Student Representative (2014-15)

Mr Adam Leahy, Student Representative effective from 1 June 2015

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

Dr Clifford Boyd, MSc PhD to 8 June 2015

Ms Karen Robinson, MSc Dip IoD effective from 9 June 2015



CHAIR'S FOREWORD



Stranmillis University College's 'bread and butter' is teacher education. However there is much more to the College than this. We have a unique body of work and portfolio of courses at Stranmillis, and geographically we are able to reach out beyond Northern Ireland to international markets. We also have a strong

commitment to collaboration and partnership. Our profile is such that we have students coming here to take courses, particularly from the United States, and our extramural outreach attracts people of all ages to take part in Lifelong Learning Activities.

Our new Mission Statement, approved by the Governing Body in June 2015, sets out the College's ongoing commitment ***'to sustain a vibrant, inclusive learning community, educating, shaping and enriching society through excellence in teaching, scholarship and research'***.

Our Vision - ***'Leading Innovative Professional Practice'*** - provides the strategic direction for everything we do.

We are committed to the development of a community of learners who learn with and from each other. We want our graduates to have the professional and academic skills which will enable them to make a significant contribution to their chosen profession and to social and economic well-being within Northern Ireland and beyond. We strongly encourage social responsibility through community engagement and are committed to providing a warm and welcoming environment that embraces diversity.

The Governing Body at Stranmillis is concerned with the effective and efficient management of the College's activities and property.

The Principal and staff are to be commended for their professionalism and enthusiasm and congratulated on the successes achieved in 2014-15. The Governing Body acknowledges the significant improvements that have been made to the College's Infrastructure, with the re-opening during the year of the iconic Main Building, following extensive refurbishment.

The Governing Body also values the input of staff, students and other stakeholders in the ongoing development of the College as we continue our work to deliver excellence in teaching, scholarship and research.

Significant work has been undertaken during the year to strengthen further our governance arrangements and to update our policies and procedures to ensure that they are relevant and compliant with good practice, evidencing the College's ongoing commitment to continuous improvement.

We are acutely aware of the challenges of managing the College in the current economic climate. However, through ongoing re-structuring and streamlining of our processes and through our Investment Strategy, we can begin the next academic year in good shape.

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

'Leading Innovative Professional Practice'

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT



The Annual Report for 2014 - 2015 documents another successful chapter in the life of the College as it seeks to sustain

'a vibrant, inclusive learning community, educating, shaping

and enriching society through excellence in teaching, scholarship and research.'

The aspirational aim in the Stranmillis mission seeks to have a positive impact on the local community and beyond through shared learning and accessible resources. We strongly support the view that Education can have a transformative power in the lives of individuals and communities; therefore the College's strategic priorities have a critical part to play in helping to shape people's lives and their future prosperity.

The achievements of the past year reflect a renewed commitment to our refreshed vision:

'Leading innovative professional practice'.

Delivering this vision owes much to the

professionalism and dedication of College staff. This Annual Report illustrates the breadth of that work and innovation. Their efforts are to be applauded and celebrated.

Building collaborative partnerships has also been a critical factor in determining the College's success. This report acknowledges the quality, range and depth of the partnerships which underpin our key innovations.

Despite the challenging economic climate the College achieved a positive end of year financial position. In the 2014-15 academic year we continued to invest in the student experience and the College infrastructure. An enhanced learning environment is now being enjoyed by home and international students in addition to the professional communities we serve.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "A Heaslett".

Dr A Heaslett
Principal & Chief Executive

'a vibrant, inclusive learning community, educating, shaping and enriching society through excellence in teaching, scholarship and research.'

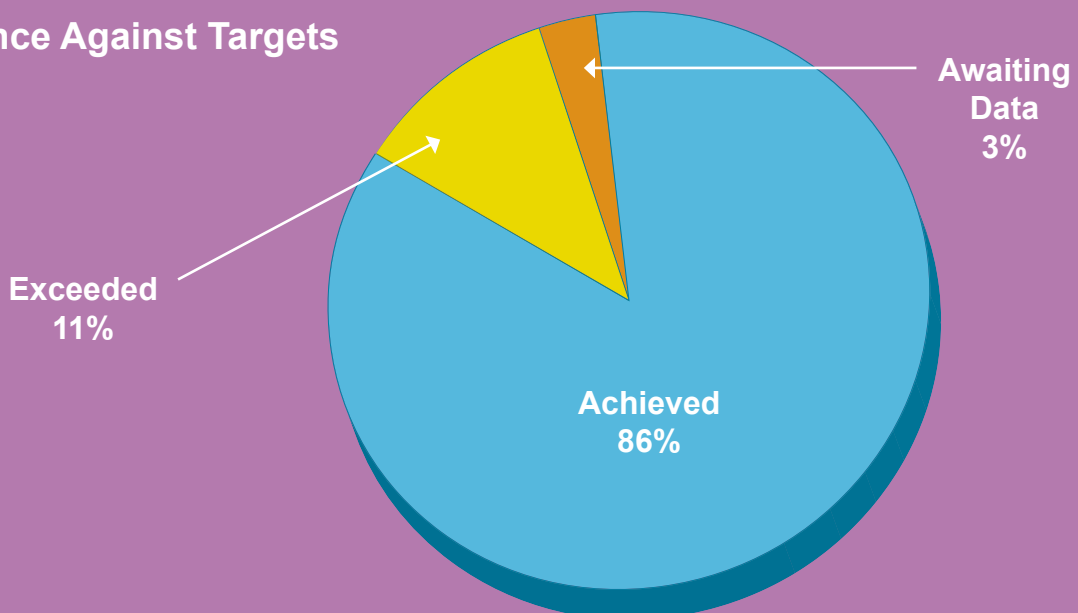
SUMMARY OF OUR KEY ACHIEVEMENTS DURING 2014 - 2015

This Report outlines our key achievements in 2014 -2015 in the areas of:

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

Excellent progress was been made across 57 target areas. While we are still awaiting data to confirm the results in 3% of the target areas, the majority of targets were either achieved or exceeded by 31 July 2015. A number of lower level Scholarship/Research targets were not met because of the concentrated effort required to reach the targets linked to the REF (Research Excellence Framework) return. The College made a successful REF return in 2014 as highlighted on page 35 of this report.

Performance Against Targets 2014-15



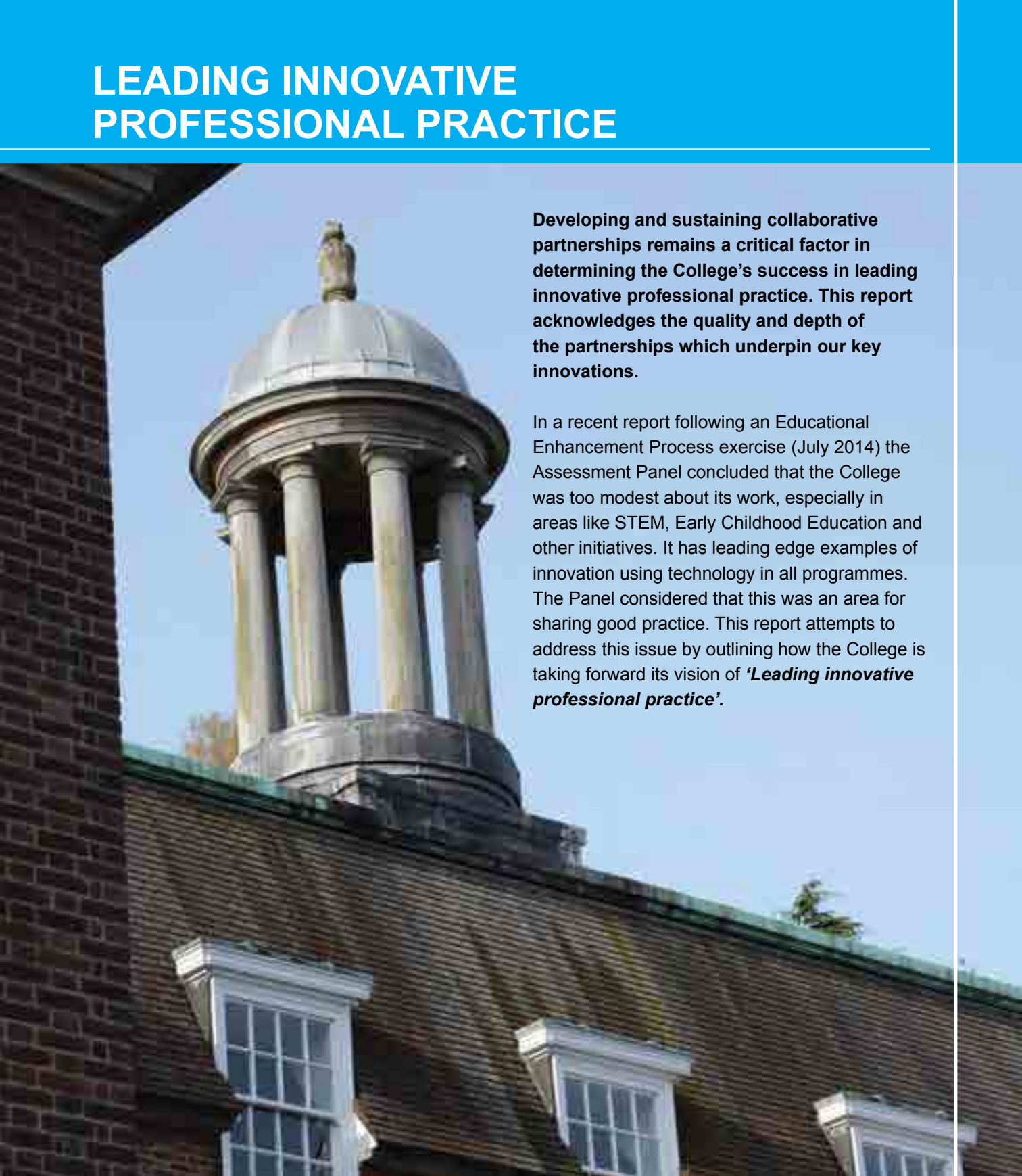
OUR STUDENT PROFILE

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

- **National Student Survey:** Results indicated an overall satisfaction rate of 89%. The College received positive scores across all 7 sections of the survey to achieve an overall score of 4.24 – which was the second highest score recorded across Northern Ireland institutions.
- **Student Entry Profile:** The overall average for all undergraduate programmes increased by two UCAS points to 317. The Primary Education tariff remained the highest at 380 followed by Post-primary at 308.
- **Undergraduate Retention:** The College maintained an outstanding student retention rate of over 96%.
- **Graduate Employment:** The College achieved a high performance in terms of graduate employment as measured by the Department for Employment and Learning performance indicators for Higher Education. The most recent published analysis for 2013-14 shows that the percentage of full-time first graduates of Stranmillis in work or study or both was 97.1% against a Northern Ireland average of 93.7%.



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'***.

VISTA Project in Dublin and Birmingham



During 2014-15, Year 1 Post-primary Science students headed to Dublin to continue to develop their teaching in schools, following the end of their professional placement earlier in the summer term. This visit was part of the 'Video in STEM Teacher Assessment' (VISTA) project funded by The Standing Conference on Teacher Education, North and South (SCoTENS). The aim of the visit was



to pilot a micro-teaching methodology designed by the students from both institutions, and to discuss what constitutes 'ideal practice' with respect to this popular initial teacher education activity.

The outcomes of the day and the preliminary findings of the project were presented at the 'Teacher Education Advancement Network' (TEAN)

conference at Aston University, Birmingham, in May 2015, and the full report will be published later in the year. The research makes a strong case for students taking greater ownership of micro-teaching activities, which they value highly and would like to engage with throughout the full academic year. The opportunity to collaborate with students from other ITE institutions was also considered to be important by both the Trinity College Dublin and Stranmillis University College groups.

Playful Technology

The Playful Technology module was developed by the Science team at the College and requires students to provide STEM experiences for children in their placement school, based on children's narratives and themes. A Year 4 BEd student was the lead in St Oliver Plunkett Primary School in the delivery of the Playful Technology project in which pupils designed and made an alarm circuit to protect the contents of the picnic basket owned by 'Eddy', a character from their story. Following a rigorous examination of the STEM knowledge that the pupils had learnt through this form of science delivery, the pupils received the Sentinus 'Award of Excellence at Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1'.



Sentinus Robotics

Year 1 BEd (Post-primary) students in Technology and Design were given the opportunity to deliver a robotics project to P6 and P7 pupils. Sentinus supplied 10 MicroBot kits for each school, along with the requisite software and hardware, and the students delivered the MicroBot project to each class as part of their School-Based Work placement. The students worked in partnership with the various schools' teachers. Sharing their technical knowledge in robotics will develop their classroom teaching skills. Students were particularly looking at the learning styles of the pupils in response to the activities associated with the project. We hope to develop this work further in 2015-16 and thus raise the profile of technology in primary schools.



Educating the Digital Generation

The College continues to drive forward the computing curriculum in schools in Northern Ireland and delivered a Public Lecture entitled 'Educating the Digital Generation' to an invited audience of special guests, staff and students. The responses following the lecture have illustrated clear support for the theme of the evening's discussion: that we need to teach our children the underlying principles, concepts, techniques and methods of computing to sustain them in a technological world that does not exist yet.



IT Ambassador Project

With the support of Kainos and Liberty IT the College established an IT Ambassador Project which is based on a partnership between Stranmillis and the IT sector. The project aims to raise awareness of the challenges of introducing and developing computer programming in schools, both at primary and Post-primary stages, and begins to address the staff development needs of the teaching profession in order to promote high quality teaching of Computer Science. A pilot project involving students from KS2 and KS3, mentors (from IT business) and 10 teachers has been established by Mr Ian Simons. It is hoped that the pilot will help inform a more comprehensive professional development strategy for teachers. Such a strategy is necessary if we are to increase the opportunities for students in Northern Ireland schools to receive training in programming skills with a view to gaining employment in the Northern Ireland IT sector.



Computing at School Conference

The second Computing at School Conference (Northern Ireland) took place in the College on 19th June 2015. It was attended by almost 100 teachers eager to engage in the variety of workshops offered and demonstrating through the numbers attending that teachers in Northern Ireland are eager to participate in computing in the classroom. As Chair of Computing at School for Northern Ireland and a member of the CAS (UK) management board, Dr Irene Bell was also delighted that this year the work of the CAS(UK) management group received 'Informatics Europe Best Practices in Education Award' (Nov 2014). The recent government report on 'Coding in Schools' (March 2015) illustrates the initiative and work being undertaken at both undergraduate and CPD level in this area.



Outstanding Practice in Primary Science



The Primary Science Teaching Trust (PSTT) at the College showcased the outstanding practice of some of its Primary BEd students across a number of projects with primary schools. Teachers,

student teachers, principals, and education stakeholders including Peter Weir MLA and representatives from ETI, CCEA, DE, and GTCNI had the opportunity to experience the innovation and creativity emerging from projects led by Stranmillis science lecturers. Since its designation as one of the PSTT's centres for excellence in curriculum development and research, Stranmillis has developed a suite of projects which seek to promote science within the primary classroom. These include: 'Playful Approaches to Science', 'Playful Technology', 'The Titanic Project', 'Digital Story-telling in Primary Science' and 'The Greenpower Project'.



Professor Colette Murphy from Trinity College Dublin gave the keynote address on behalf of the PSTT and stated:

"This event couldn't have come at a better time – in the same year as the first ever Northern Ireland Science Festival. Providing exciting opportunities for young children to learn about and appreciate science is exactly the way forward for science in Northern Ireland!"

This highly successful event promotes the key role and contribution of the Stranmillis PSTT centre to primary science in Northern Ireland.



Primary Science in an Espresso Shot

The Primary Science Teaching Trust Hub at Stranmillis contributed to the inaugural Northern Ireland Science Festival by hosting an event on Thursday 19 February 2015 entitled *'Primary Science in an Espresso Shot'*. 'Established Coffee' in Belfast's Cathedral Quarter became the alternative laboratory for the evening, offering a relevant space to explore concepts such as density, insulation, and filtration processes... and the baristas also made sure attendees were well caffeinated throughout the evening! The interactive session began with a 'meet and greet' over coffee, followed by a discussion of playful approaches to science teaching, after which the participants stepped into their pupils' shoes and attempted a range of experiments based on the children's narrative — *You Wouldn't Like Me Without My Coffee*.



Innovation and Learning Award



The College, in partnership with Nerve Belfast Creative Learning Centre, received the DCAL Innovation & Learning 'STEAM' award for their *'Digital Storytelling in Enquiry Based Science project'*. The project, funded and supported by the Primary Science Teaching Trust, involved BEd (Primary) student teachers using iPads in the classroom to make science more accessible and engaging across local primary schools. The award was presented at a special ceremony at the Playhouse Theatre in Derry/Londonderry on Wednesday 17 June 2015. This project builds on the work of the Primary Science Teaching Trust's Stranmillis Centre for Research and Innovation in Science Education, and supports its aim of raising the quality of provision in schools across Northern Ireland. The award highlights the value of using digital technology for recording and communicating in primary science and shows how a digital narrative can develop enquiry, literacy and ICT skills alike.

Early Childhood Studies

During 2014-15, the College ran a successful CPD course which was designed and delivered as a result of the ETI report 'An Evaluation of the Role of The Early Years Specialist' (Feb. 2014) which highlighted the need for increased awareness amongst Early Years Specialists as to their role in leading change in settings. The course attracted a strong cohort of current Early Years Specialists from the preschool sector who all appreciated the strong emphasis on mentorship within the course.

The employability skills of Early Childhood Studies (ECS) students continue to be enriched through a variety of degree enhancement programmes. The academic year 2014-15 saw a wider range of courses being developed by team members, so that the appeal of the topic areas being covered could be broadened. For example, Fostering

Network NI afforded students the opportunity to take part in volunteering opportunities which were accredited within the degree enhancement programme.

In addition, ECS students engaged with a community arts-based organisation, *Young At Art*, to undertake a course, '*All About Plays*', designed to enhance their skills in dramatic performance with young children.

Students also availed of the opportunity to gain an accredited certificate in Paediatric First Aid.

The College co-ordinates a major partnership in Early Childhood Studies involving five of the 6 Regional College in Northern Ireland. The Foundation Degree in Early Childhood Studies is central to this development.



ECS Foundation Degree 'Taster' Event

In February 2015, the College hosted a one-day event to provide advice, information and a point of contact for students hoping to matriculate from the Foundation Degree in Early Childhood Studies (ECS) into the BA Hons programme at Stranmillis. The event was attended by over 50 students from all over Northern Ireland. The visitors experienced a day in the life of a Stranmillis student, including a taster lecture where students could experience the lecture content and then engage in academic debate and discussion. Following the lecture, lunch was provided and students had the opportunity to experience University hospitality. The event concluded with a final plenary and question and answer session. Many students commented that they benefited greatly from the day. One student described how her 'daunted' feeling was significantly reduced as she now feels excited and enthused about attending Stranmillis. Another student from Southern Regional College commented: *"I found the information day at Stranmillis both enjoyable and informative. I found the careers talk particularly helpful and feel I came away with a lot of relevant information"*.

ECS Outreach in Cavan and Monaghan

The College continues to progress its profile in relation to the ECS part-time, undergraduate student recruitment. The BA programme was revalidated to allow for a further recruitment of students to the partnership arrangement with Cavan and Monaghan Education and Training Board (CMETB), utilising the campus at Monaghan Institute to teach a group of part-time students. The first recruitment drive saw 14 new students recruited to this initiative.



EARLY YEARS EDUCATION (EYE)

Number Talk

Funding was received from SCoTENS to design a maths resource for young children entitled 'Number Talk'. This resource has proven very attractive to primary school practitioners and Dr Pamela Moffett is currently seeking some additional research funding to enable the College to evaluate the resource in practice.



Playful Science

Innovative research and practice on Playful Science is continuing with the Primary Science Teaching Trust. The College is one of 7 hubs from across the UK and the playful science project is one of a range of projects ongoing at the moment. Funding for the Hub is £84,900 for three years, and it is hoped that this funding cycle will continue on a 3 year basis.

'Playful' Outreach to the RoI



Perhaps one of the most notable events has been the impact of the concept of playful learning and teaching on policy in the

context of the Republic of Ireland, where the College's work on the concept of playful teaching and learning has been drawn upon to inform the new primary curriculum for infant classes. In addition, the College was invited to speak to the Early Childhood and Primary team at The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) about its work on playful approaches to teaching and learning and to review both the draft discussion paper, '*The Primary Curriculum: New Pathways for Teachers and Children in Infant Classes*' and their draft Language Curriculum for junior infants to second class. The College has also been involved in developing support material on '*Playfulness in Teaching and Learning*', along with a Year 2 teacher from Kilmaine Primary School, to be included in the new Primary Language Curriculum. The College has also created a Podcast on the topic of playfulness in teaching and learning for the online *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework* toolkit.

PG Students See Outstanding Practice

During 2014-15 the PGCE professional workshops continued, where students visited an array of outstanding nursery and primary settings, not only to observe practice, but to gain insights on a number of professional issues relating to EYE. Some of the nurseries visited included Magherafelt Nursery School, Glendhu Nursery School, Pondpark Nursery School, Windmill Integrated Nursery School and Kilmaine Primary School.

PG Students in the Outdoors

The Early Years PGCE group also got a taste of the outdoors and the Forest School approach during a session on the College campus. After an initial presentation by Brian Poots from the NI Forest Schools Association, the students, lecturers and Brian donned coats and good footwear and went out to the area of the campus near the pond. There students were asked to put themselves into the mind of a primary school pupil, and engaged in a series of very interesting and exciting outdoor challenges. At the end of the session the group were joined by the vice-principal of Hazelwood Integrated Primary School, who led an outdoor group activity where the students constructed skeletons of 3-D shapes made of cut twigs. The learning gains of creativity and teamwork were much in evidence!



NI/ Norway Seminar

On the 25 March 2015, EYE and the Research Office at the College organised a very successful seminar with Queen's University Belfast and Stord University College, Norway, entitled '*Sharing Research and Practice in Early Years Education and Primary Education*' across Northern Ireland and Norway. The focus of the session was on sharing and having conversations about early years and primary education in Northern Ireland and Norway and considering what we can learn from research, best practice and continuing collaboration in both contexts.

The event ended with an open discussion focusing on current issues being confronted within the field of early years and primary education in both contexts and ideas for possible future collaboration. The event was warmly received by all concerned.



HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Following extensive work with key stakeholders, employers and current students, the College changed the title of both its BSc and Foundation Degree from Health and Leisure Studies to Health, Physical Activity and Sport. Commenting on the change the Head of Health and Physical Education, Dr David McKee, reported:

"This is an exciting development for Stranmillis, making the title more reflective of the course content and aligned to current strategies in health and sport. I am confident that the new title will be more attractive to potential students, thus helping to ensure we attract the brightest and most capable students."

The provision of high quality teaching and learning remains at the core of Health and Physical Education. The BSc programme received positive feedback from the programme's External Examiner who identified the wide variety of assessments used, choice of assessment within and between modules, and the application of theory to practice as particular strengths of the programme, as well as exemplary practice in students' meaningful engagement with recent and relevant peer reviewed research.



To support student retention, and in particular Year 1 student retention, the BSc programme in 2014-15 embarked on a bi-phasic induction programme of an outdoor education residential experience early in Semester 1, followed up by an intensive one day team building course in College late in Semester 1. Feedback from the Year 1 students on the programme was universally complimentary with students reporting that both elements of the programme helped them to make the transition to third level study.

International Physical Literacy Association (IPLA)

Following the College's involvement in the UK-based Physical Literacy Steering Group, the International Physical Literacy Association (IPLA) was formally constituted as a charity in August 2014. The College's on-going involvement in the IPLA has provided opportunities for the College to be invited as an international adviser on policy-making groups, including the Canadian Physical Literacy Consensus Statement Steering Group, and to deliver keynote presentations, for example at the 2nd Summit on Sport & Human Development in Sao Paulo



Melanie McKee (vice-chair, IPLA) at the launch of the Canada's Physical Literacy Consensus Statement in Vancouver, June 2015.

ARTS AND HUMANITIES

In the Arts and Humanities Academic Area examples of innovative practice included a focus on outdoor learning, on thinking skills and personal capabilities with primary Geography/History specialists, on active learning and teaching methods with primary drama specialists and an increased engagement with the use of iPads in the classroom for primary Literacy students. Drama was re-introduced into primary Arts courses as was English Literature as a Post-primary subsidiary subject.

For those primary specialists undertaking the Level 3 *Leadership in Learning and Teaching* modules there was an opportunity to engage with coordinators of the World Around Us and Art and Music, and for Drama students, the chance to design and deliver a Theatre-in-Education event with pupils on campus. Post-primary RE students were provided with the ability to micro-teach in a local grammar school. This year also saw the second cohort move from the Certificate in Music

Teaching to the Advanced Certificate, work on which was completed and assessed by a panel of experts in June.

The academic area has continued to work with a range of partners in a variety of ways. The Stranmillis/BELB Partnership project saw final year students work with schools situated in socially disadvantaged areas of Belfast, whilst Art specialists delivered support in one such school. A range of visits were undertaken in which students were enabled to engage with educational partners *in situ*, and courses similarly benefitted from specialist lectures delivered on a wide range of topics.

The Arts and Humanities team worked with the student body to organise the College's two major community events: 'Christmas in Words and Music' held in St Bartholomew's and the May Concert held in the College's Drama Theatre.



Year 1 BEd students on an autumn walk around the campus with pupils from Stranmillis Primary School

Pictures from the 'Celebration of Christmas' and 'Music@Stran' events



EDUCATION STUDIES

Education Studies is at the core of the BEd degree programmes at Stranmillis.

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 the new Master's modules in Education Studies (*Critical Perspectives on Disadvantage and the Impact on Children and Young People*: 16 students) and the now well established specialist option in Pastoral Care (*International Perspectives on Bullying*: 16 students; *Safeguarding Children and Young People*: 19 students). External examiner and student feedback from these Master's modules as well as the portfolio of undergraduate modules is consistently positive.

This year saw innovative new module content on the needs of Looked after Children, applied case study assessment in relation to children with ASD, and a study visit to work alongside children with Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties in Donard Special School, Banbridge.

Within Education Studies contemporary educational themes are critically examined in a rigorous manner, allowing students to move beyond parochial boundaries and see the “bigger picture” of education on a global stage.

In the past year the range of undergraduate and postgraduate taught modules, professional development courses, degree enhancement opportunities and partnerships with external agencies have been consolidated and extended further. For instance in 2014-15 a Degree Enhancement course on *Primary Movement in the Classroom*, developed in collaboration with QUB,

was piloted with 20 BEd students and extended to the PGCE Early Years cohort. A Master's module is planned for 2015-16.

Education Studies engages with a wide range of stakeholders. On 28 May 2015 the sixth annual Special Educational Needs Stakeholder Group meeting was held. The event was well attended with representatives from CCEA, Mencap, Middletown Centre for Autism, staff from local schools, as well as College staff and students. The Stakeholder Group feedback was overwhelmingly positive concerning the breadth and depth of the preparation which students receive in this important area.



A visit to Donard Special School, Banbridge

We continue 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.

THE NEWLY REFURBISHED MAIN BUILDING



CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CPD)

CPD is central to the College's vision of leading innovative professional practice. In providing support for the teaching profession and indeed the wider educational community the College has demonstrated its ability to play a significant role in shaping educational practice. CPD courses provide the opportunity for practitioners to avail of the expertise of Stranmillis staff, particularly their expertise in practice shaped by and contributing to innovative research.

This theme was developed at the Annual CPD Lecture and presentation of certificates when a keynote address on "The Purpose and Value of CPD" was given by Dr Aileen Kennedy of Moray House School of Education, University of Edinburgh. This highlighted the importance of teaching as a learning profession and explored the connections between CPD and Master's level learning.

Many educational practitioners chose to continue their professional development journey through Master's level study. In May 2015, students who recently graduated with a Master's degree came back to College for a Celebration event and shared their experiences with those embarking on the final stage of M-level study. This was also an opportunity to hear student views on plans to review Master's level courses and ensure greater cohesion and collaboration between the three M-level programmes, allowing students to benefit from a wide range of expertise across the College.



The CPD Annual Lecture

The College engagement in the CPD arena has had an undoubted impact on policy. The funded projects of CREDIT and SEN have clearly driven investment in these areas and Stranmillis is now a key provider in the provision of professional CPD in Northern Ireland. The year 2014-15 saw a 17% increase in numbers taking CPD short courses at Stranmillis, and 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.

Partnerships and Community Engagement are central to the concept of CPD. Our Learning Hubs in particular provide an opportunity for schools across Northern Ireland to avail of Stranmillis Continuing Professional Development opportunities as regional host schools. These schools then act as a hub for their local schools to come together to learn. In this way we are able to build strategic relationships with a number of schools across Northern Ireland, and develop and sustain collaborative partnerships, promoting the concept of learning communities.



Dr Glenda Walsh delivering a Learning Hub session

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The College continued to embed its International Development strategy in 2014-15 by consolidating and developing international partnerships, including a number of specific partnerships in teacher education, and promoting student and staff mobility.

IFSA–Butler Partnership

The College continues to foster collaborative partnerships with a broad range of academic partners to promote the (IFSA)-Butler Programme at regional and national/international level. In 2014-15, as part of our successful partnership with the Institute for Study Abroad (Butler University) and US University Faculty, we welcomed 17 US teacher education students from: University of Virginia; Virginia Wesleyan College; Drake University, Iowa; St Martin's University, WA; and Austin College, Texas. In addition to following a programme of academic study, including reflective workshops exploring 'Working Creatively with Difference in the Classroom' and 'Managing Controversy Arising From Diversity', the students spent time on placement in local schools and participated in College clubs and societies. They also took the chance to explore Northern Ireland and beyond.

During their final week on campus the students attended a 'Graduation' event where they were

presented with a Stranmillis University College golden 'stole' and a certificate of achievement. The College was also delighted to welcome Professor Sir Desmond Rea, Chair of the Governing Body, Mr Matt Goshko from the American Consulate and some of the students' friends and family members who were in Belfast to attend the event.

In recognition of their significant contribution to the success of the programme, principals from partner schools were presented with a plaque generously provided by our partners from the IFSA Dublin Office.

The Malaysian Partnership

The long-established partnership with Tenby Schools in Malaysia entered its seventh year in 2014-15. This was a particularly exciting year for this project as it saw the completion of the first year of the new PGCE (International) programme for Malaysian teachers in the Tenby schools. This programme has been developed as part of a tripartite arrangement between Stranmillis University College, Tenby Schools, Malaysia and Queen's University. Six Malaysian teachers successfully completed the PGCE(i) Primary.



BUTLER/MALAYSIA



US students at their 'graduation ceremony



Staff from Stranmillis, QUB and Tenby Schools and PGCEi graduating teachers and students.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT MOBILITY

Once again the University College not only met but exceeded the targets for student mobility with over 30% of our penultimate year students embracing the global dimension in education by spending a period of one semester studying and undertaking placements at one of our partner institutions in Europe or further afield. Stranmillis regularly hosts around fifty reciprocal students on an annual basis and this year we welcomed sixty.

Through the College's flourishing Erasmus programme, forty-one students had the opportunity to spend their study/placement semester at one of our thirty European partner institutions, whilst, through the International programme, fifteen BEd students had the opportunity to visit Hong Kong, The People's Republic of China, the United States,

or Zambia. New to our international portfolio this year was Drury University in Springfield, Missouri who welcomed their first Stranmillis students in January and who are intending to send two reciprocal students next year.

A Year 3 BEd student spent three weeks in The Doane Stuart School, New York State, whilst five students were selected for, and took part in, the Study China programme at Easter.

Online blogs, produced by all students undertaking Erasmus, International or Malaysian placements, may be accessed within the International Development section of the University College website.



INTERNATIONAL STAFF MOBILITY



The Erasmus programme provides opportunities for staff to visit partner universities in Europe and we would normally receive visits from approximately five European academics per year. With regard to the latter, in 2014-15 we also exceeded our targets and welcomed some twelve visiting lecturers to the University College, from a wide range of European countries including Spain, Austria, Germany, Denmark, Finland, Switzerland and the Czech Republic. Internationally, Professors Tom Russo and Kris Wiley from Drury University, Missouri (our new American partners) visited in October whilst in November we welcomed a group of 20 head teachers and educational administrators from Brazil and provided a short seminar programme on the education system of Northern Ireland.

With regard to outgoing staff mobility, in 2014-15 four members of staff undertook mobility visits to partner institutions in Austria, Poland and Germany.

Stranmillis has partnered with the Hong Kong Institute of Education (HKIEd) since 2003 and since then we have welcomed a great many students from Hong Kong to study at the University College and we have also sent Stranmillis students each year to study at the Hong Kong Institute and to undertake placements in local schools. It is a great opportunity for students (in both directions), made available through the thriving International programme at Stranmillis.

During one of the celebratory dinners to mark the HKIEd's 20th anniversary in October, and as part of a grand gift-awarding ceremony traditional in Chinese culture, The College presented a Tyrone Crystal, Stranmillis-engraved rose bowl to Prof Stephen Cheung, President of the Hong Kong Institute, on behalf of the Governing Body, Principal, staff and students of Stranmillis.

SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS

Stranmillis is committed to a model of collaborative partnership that embraces sharing strategic responsibility with professional colleagues at every level.

The Associate Placement Assessors (APA) scheme has been expanded following a pilot in 2013 -14. In the past year this scheme was extended to include all Year 3 and 4 students on the BEd programme. The principals welcomed the opportunity to be meaningfully engaged in this partnership. Student feedback was as positive this year as it was last year.

We have sought opportunities for student teachers to have exposure to centres of excellence in schools and other educational settings. For example the PGCE programme has benefitted from visits to a variety of Nursery schools that have been recognised by the ETI as being 'outstanding'.

The College continues to invite teachers and principals who have been recognised by the ETI as 'outstanding' as keynote speakers in various professional studies modules. Student teachers

are appreciative of the speakers' recent and relevant practice and teachers welcome this form of involvement and partnership.



SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS CONT.

We have continued to participate in the North/South Student Teacher Exchange Project with other colleges across Ireland. Our numbers of participating students increased to three this year and we hosted ten students from the Republic of Ireland in Belfast schools and Halls on their three week placement. This project grew out of peace and reconciliation funding from Europe. This longstanding project contributes to the realisation of government policy on 'a shared future' as the way forward for Northern Ireland.

As a result of a continued strategic partnership with Kent in England we organised placements for final year BEd students for the past number of years. This has raised awareness of opportunities to teach in England and there is a growing willingness by

newly qualified teachers to take up teaching posts there. Following a joint visit to Kent by the Head of Professional Studies and the Head of Education at St. Mary's in mid-July 2014, we hosted a joint event with St. Mary's on teaching opportunities in Kent.

Along with our sister college, St. Mary's University College, we have sent a Year 3 student representative to Doane Stuart school in Albany USA for a 3 week placement. Staff and students paid the College a visit on 12 February 2015.



Students from Doane Stuart School in New York State enjoy some Stranmillis hospitality!

WIDENING PARTICIPATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community Interventions Exhibition

A successful Community Interventions Exhibition aimed to raise awareness of the community interventions available to support educational professionals in their practice. Representatives from local organisations attended what has now become an annual event at Stranmillis University College. A number of organisations attended, including The Fostering Network NI. There were also a number of new partnership organisations in attendance

this year including The Early Intervention Lisburn Partnership, Colin Neighbourhood Partnership and Voices of Young People in Care (VOYPIC). While the event was open to all students and staff, students in the Year 4 Education Studies module *Working with Disadvantaged Children* were required to investigate, select and reflect on one of the interventions provided at the exhibition as part of their coursework.



‘Tick the Box’ Campaign for Looked After Children and Care Leavers



At the end of October 2014 in the Crescent Centre, Belfast, the “Tick the Box” campaign was hosted by The Fostering Network NI during the National Care Leavers Week. This campaign provides care experienced students with a range of additional support at university. At the event the College presented the difficulties facing looked after children and care leavers and informed the audience about the College’s Buttle UK Quality Mark Award which provides the students with various forms of support: academic, practical and financial.

Making Music@ Uni

After a previous successful year of the “Making Music Workshop” a further programme was organised in February and April 2015. This year there were pupils from six different schools who came to the College to take part in a unique event – a chance to write, shape and record their own song with professional musicians. The schools worked in collaboration with the ‘Making Music Workshop’

in the recital room in the Music Department. The Making Music Workshop is designed to bring a real musical experience to participants while maintaining the ethos that learning can be fun. It provides access to experiencing musical performance through the delivery of a range of high quality music services. Each student got the opportunity to be involved in the writing of the lyrics to their song, composing the music and recording the track. The various students brought their own musical talents to the making of the music ranging from singing, playing the guitar or playing the drums. It was a very successful and lively six sessions, and the number of songs created showed the hard work and enthusiasm from the students.



Stranmillis Enterprise Challenge

In June 2014, Stranmillis hosted an enterprise event facilitated by Year 2 Business and Enterprise students. Over 40 pupils from Ashfield Girls' High School and Ashfield Boys' High School attended the event. Stranmillis students planned an engaging enterprise programme, based on the theme of 'Healthy Snacks', which aimed to help the pupils

develop important enterprising skills such as creativity, decision making and team work. Pupils were challenged to create a prototype of their finished product alongside making important marketing decisions. Some great ideas were created and the competitive spirit of the pupils became very evident as the day progressed.



Our Past... Your Future

In June 2015 Year 9 pupils from two Limavady schools, St Mary's and Limavady High School travelled to Stranmillis to become history students for the day. The focus was on a re-enactment of the Battle of the Boyne which both groups of students were studying in school. The event was delivered by the Museum of Orange Heritage. The project aims to create understanding, education, tolerance, and mutual respect through two 'shared space' educational and resource centres. The day consisted of an introduction to the Stranmillis campus and what it is like to be a university student, followed by a dramatic video portraying a first-hand account of a soldier before and during the battle. The pupils then had a chance to experience four different 'battle stations'. Feedback was positive and showed that pupils and staff from both schools thoroughly enjoyed the day, with one student stating:

"It was a fun activity and Stranmillis seems like a good university. I would definitely like to go there!"



Maths Week 2014

Over 300 primary and Post-primary school pupils attended mathematics events at Stranmillis in celebration of Maths Week Ireland 2014.

Steve Humble, known as 'Dr Maths', delighted pupils from Ashfield Boys' High School, Laurelhill Community College and Newtownbreda High School with his show entitled 'And now for SUM thing different!' This helped develop maths skills in a fun way by investigating number superstitions, number predictions and a bit of magic.

Doug Buchanan engaged Key Stage 2 pupils from Cairnshill, Currie, Donegall Road and Holy Family primary schools in a lively 'Puzzling Mathematical Show', aimed at making mathematics enjoyable and intriguing as the pupils worked together to solve various puzzles.



STEM Events

Several STEM events in support of the College's Widening participation policy were also implemented. The GCSE Mathematics Revision Programme supported Year 12 pupils hoping to achieve Grade 'C' and was delivered through a combination of tutor and Post-primary Maths/Science undergraduates.

Throughout the year pupils from different Key Stages were inspired to take their first steps in computing. These events not only provided the pupils with experience in university life but opened up new career ideas in the IT world for these young people.

ILiAD

The ILiAD research project was commissioned in 2011 by OFMDFM to investigate the factors behind differential educational achievement in areas of deprivation across Northern Ireland. Throughout its 3-year commission, the College has been a member of the seven-strong research team led by Professor Ruth Leitch at Queen's. The ILiAD project finishes in 2015-16 with reports totalling in the region of 700,000 words. A number of follow-up academic papers are now planned. Findings will inform future policy and strategic development in education.

SCHOLARSHIP AND RESEARCH

In terms of Scholarship and Research, the 2014-15 academic year was dominated by the publication of the national Research Excellence Framework (REF) results in December 2014.

Following years of intense preparation by academic and administrative staff and support by Visiting Professors, the results of the REF were published at the end of 2014, and they were very encouraging:

- 72% of the College's research activity was judged to be of internationally recognised standard,
- 30% of the research publications were given the highest 4* rating (world-leading).

The panel reported high-quality outputs across the submission, but highlighted "notable strengths" in inclusion and play in early years and primary schooling. The panel's report also noted that the College had been successful in attracting two of the largest funding awards in recent years in Northern Ireland, the DE-funded *SEN Literacy Project* (£4million) and the IFI-funded *Classrooms Re-imagined: Education in Diversity and Inclusion for Teachers* (CREDIT) Programme (€1 million), working on both occasions as joint partners with St Mary's University College.



Visiting Professors – Professor Colleen McLaughlin and Professor Liz Wood joining with Dr Heaslett and some of the REF-returned staff to celebrate the College's success in REF 2014

Dr Noel Purdy was appointed Director of Scholarship and Research in January 2015, and heads up the Research Leadership Team. In June 2015 the Governing Body approved the new Scholarship and Research Strategic Plan which sets out the College's research mission to extend its reputation and performance as a regional, national and international centre of scholarship and research in Education.

Scholarship and research highlights in the 2014-15 academic year included:

- The conclusion of the SEN Literacy project jointly led with St Mary's University College. The ETI Report is available at the following link - www.etini.gov.uk
- Ongoing innovative primary science collaborative work as a Primary Science Teaching Trust (PSTT) Hub

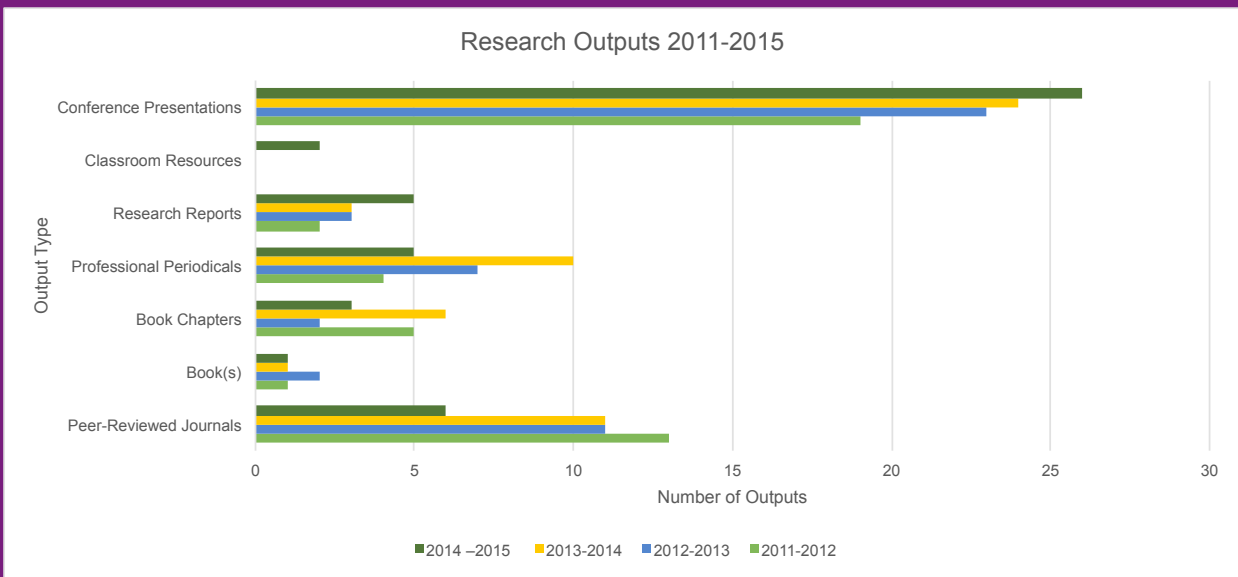
- Continuing involvement of College staff in several other research projects such as a BELB-funded evaluation of the use of portable devices in primary schools
- Involvement in an OFMDFM-funded research project on Investigating Links in Achievement and Deprivation (ILiAD)
- Contribution to the development of Canada's Physical Literacy Consensus Statement (June, 2015) – a clarification document aspiring to facilitate alignment and consistency in policy, research and practice within and between the multiple sectors in the physical literacy community including health, education and sport. The College was also invited to present on Physical Literacy at two international conferences: Summit on Sport & Human Development, Sao Paulo, Brazil (November 2014) and the International Physical Literacy Conference, Vancouver, Canada (June 2015).



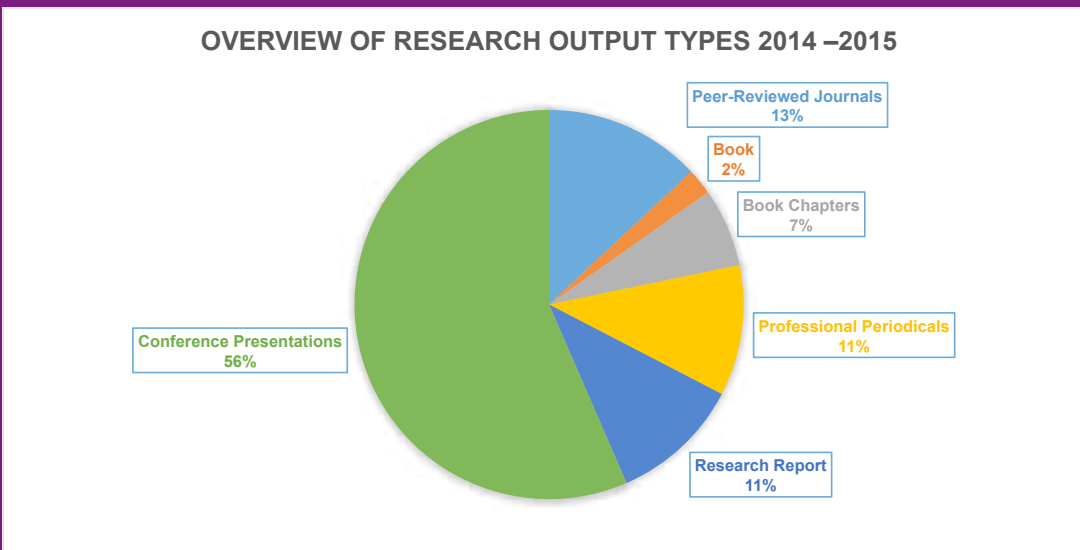
At the SEN Literacy final event in the Whittla Hall at Queen's



Following the publication of the 2014 REF results, in 2014-2015 the Research Office recorded an encouraging increase in the delivery of research conference presentations and in the publication of research reports and classroom resources. The post-REF dip in the number of peer-reviewed journal articles published is to be expected.



This pie chart illustrates how research and scholarly activity was distributed across all output types in 2014-2015.



Peer Reviewed Journal Articles

Dunn, J, Niens, U and McMillan, D (2014) "Cos he's my favourite character!" A children's rights approach to the use of popular culture in the teaching of literacy. *Literacy*, 48(1) pp 23-31.

Dolan, A, Waldron, F, Pike, S and Greenwood, R (2015) 'Learning to teach primary geography in the context of school placement: lessons from an all-Ireland study'. *European Journal of Teacher Education*. (published online).

McMillan D, McConnell B and O'Sullivan H (2014) 'Continuing professional development – why bother? Perceptions and motivations of teachers in Ireland'. *Professional Development in Education* <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/19415257.2014.952044>

McMurray, S and McVeigh, C. (2014). The case for frequency sensitivity in orthographic learning. *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs*, 15 September 2014.

Purdy, N and McGuckin, C (2014) 'Disablist Bullying in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland: An investigation of student teachers' knowledge, experience, and confidence', *European Journal of Special Needs Education*. 29 (4) pp. 446-456.

Purdy, N and McGuckin, C (2015) 'Disablist bullying in schools: giving a voice to student teachers'. *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs*. 15, pp. 202-210.

Books

MacBlain, S, Long, L, and Dunn, J (2015) *Dyslexia, Literacy and Inclusion: Child-centred perspectives*, London: Sage.

Book Chapters

McCullagh, J, Doherty, A, and Murphy, C 'Developing reflective practice through coteaching'. In: Susan Rodrigues (ed.) (2014) *Handbook for Teacher Educators*. Rotterdam: Sense.

McMillan Dorothy J (2014) 'Teacher Education in a Changing Society'. In: Hřbl J (ed.) *Jan Amos Comenius: Unchanging Legacy in Changing Society*. Usti nad Labem, Czech Republic: Jan E Purkyne University.

Richardson, N (2015) 'Issues and Dilemmas in Religious Education and Human Rights: Perspectives on applying the Toledo Guiding Principles to a divided society'. In: Pirner, M., Lähnemann, J. & Bielefeldt, H. (eds), *Menschenrechte und inter-religiöse Bildung*. Berlin: EB-Verlag.

Professional Periodical Articles

Moffett, P (2014). 'Percy learns to count'. *Early Years Educator*, 16 (6), 32-34.

Moffett, P (2015). 'The sum of parent power'. *Early Years Educator*, 16 (10), 21-23.

Mitchell, D, Dunn, J and Leathem, T (2015) 'The Popcorn Initiative: Using Kindles to Motivate Boys to Read'. *Literacy News* (Spring 2015).

Purdy, N (2015) 'Across the Water – an overview of the SEN scene in Northern Ireland'. *Special* (NASEN publication) May 2015 Issue.

Richardson, N (2015) 'Inside the Tent?', *RE Today*, January 2015.



Dr Jill Dunn with fellow authors Sean McBlain and Louise Long

Research Reports

Crawford S, McKee, D, Wallace, S, Marron S (2015) *Examining Fundamental Movement Skill Training in Initial Teacher Education in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland*: Report for SCoTENS.

Eaton, P., Gardiner, J., Gray, C., McConnell, B., McKenzie, L., Quinn, L. & Walsh, G. (2015) *Diversity and Inclusion: Start Young: Supporting and encouraging Early Years practitioners to develop knowledge and confidence in dealing with issues of diversity and inclusion*. Belfast: Stranmillis University College.



Gray, C (2015) *Managing Early Years Inclusive Transition Practices*: Report for SCoTENS. Stranmillis University College, Belfast.

McKee, B E (2015) Preventative Education in the Early Years Classroom: *Helping children 'draw' conclusions about keeping safe*. Belfast: DHSSPS.

Classroom Resources

Boyd, F & Richardson, N (2014) *Religious Education in the Primary School: Non-Statutory Guidance Materials*, Belfast: CCEA



Cassery, A M, Moffett, P and Tiernan, B (2014) *Number Talk: A resource to promote understanding and use of early number language*.

Conference Presentations

Bell, I: 'Educating the Digital Generation'. Public lecture delivered at Stranmillis University College, Nov 2014

Dunn, J: Involving a Children's Research Advisory Group in gathering children's views on using Popular Culture to teach Writing in the Primary Classroom. Paper presented at the Reading Association of Ireland Conference (RAI), Dublin, September 2014.

Eaton, P, Horn, C, Liston, M, Oldham, E, and O'Reilly, M: 'From learner to teacher: using reflection to develop mathematical teacher identity.' Paper presented at 2014

ATEE (Association for Teacher Education in Europe) Conference in University of Minho, Braga, Portugal 25-27 August 2014.

Eaton, P and Hagan, M: 'Professionalism' and the Governance of Teacher Education: a Northern Irish Perspective. Paper presented at ECER 2014, University of Porto, Portugal symposium: 'Professionalism' and the Governance of Teacher Education across the British Isles, 2-5 September 2014.

Eaton, P, Horn, C, Liston, M, Oldham, E and O'Reilly, M: (2015) 'Using Narrative to Access Mathematical Identity: An overview informed by an empirical study in five third level institutions in Ireland British Society for Research into Learning Mathematics (BSRLM),' Mathematics Education Ireland (MEI) Joint Conference, St. Patrick's Drumcondra, 27 - 28 February 2015.

Greenwood, R: 'Using Images in Primary Geography Activities.' Paper presented at Charney Manor Primary Geography Conference, Oxfordshire 27 Feb – 1st Mar 2015.

McKee, M: 'Physical Literacy: The value of body experiences to human development'. Keynote lecture presented at II Summit on Sport and Human Development: Sport, Physical Activity and Active Leisure Across the Lifespan, Sao Paulo, Brazil, 26-27 November, 2014.

McKee, M: 'Physical literacy in NI – The Journey so Far'. Paper presented at International Physical Literacy Conference convened by Canadian Sport for Life, Vancouver, Canada, 12-19 June 2015.

McMillan, D J, Walsh, G and Doherty, A: 'Us and Them: Experiences of a Shared Early Years Training Programme in Ireland.' Paper presented at International Professional Development Association (IPDA) Conference: Aston University, Birmingham. 28 November 2014.

McMurray, S, O'Neill, S and Thompson R: 'An Innovative Model of Professional Development'. Paper presented at the 8th Inclusive and Supportive Education Congress - ISEC2015, University of Lisbon, Portugal, July 26th – 29th, 2015.

McMurray, S and Thompson, R: 'Issues in Inclusion and Individual Learning Needs: Learning to Read'. Paper presented at the 8th Inclusive and Supportive Education Congress - ISEC2015, University of Lisbon, Portugal, July 26–29, 2015.

McMurray, S & Thompson, R: 'Inclusion, Curriculum and the Rights of the Child', Paper presented at the 8th Inclusive and Supportive Education Congress - ISEC2015, University of Lisbon, Portugal, July 26–29, 2015.

Moffett, P: Reforming the algebra classroom through lesson study. Paper presented at the BSRLM-MEI Joint Research Conference, St Patrick's College, Drumcondra, Dublin, 27-28 February, 2015.

Moffett, P & Beck, G: Making sense of mathematics: Identifying and addressing difficulties in the primary classroom. Presentation at the NASEN NI Conference, Stranmillis University College, Belfast 18 April, 2015.

Purdy, N and McGuckin, C: 'Disablist Bullying: what do trainee teachers know and how do they plan to respond?'. Paper presented at the JORSEN Invitation Research Seminar "Bullying: Hidden Voices", 10 October 2014, Nottingham.

Purdy, N: 'Disablist Bullying: a North/South study of student teachers' knowledge and confidence'. Research Presentation at St Mary's University College, Belfast. 21 January 2015.

Purdy, N: 'A content analysis of school anti-bullying policies in Northern Ireland'. Research presentation given at the Annual Conference of the British Psychological Society Northern Ireland Branch, Armagh, 21 May 2015.

Ryan, A, O'Toole, L and Purdy, N: 'Rhetoric or Reality? A Consideration of the Theory/Practice Nexus and its Implications for Approaches to Teacher Education.' Paper presented at the annual SCoTENS Conference, Enniskillen 21-22 October 2014.

Richardson, N: 'Education & Religion in Northern Ireland – Challenges and Opportunities', Paper presented at Didactics of Dialogue & Reconciliation (DIDAR) conference, UCC Copenhagen 4-6 November 2014.

Richardson, N: Collective Worship in Northern Ireland – an initial overview paper presented at Collective Worship in Schools: An Evaluation of Law and Policy in the United Kingdom, – 1st Research Seminar at the University of Bangor (Project funded by AHRC).

Richardson, N: 'Religious Diversity in the Formation of Teachers of Religious Education'. Paper presented at the International Seminar on Religious Education and Values (ISREV) Session XIX, at the University of York St. John.

Richardson, N: 'Dealing with Religious and Cultural Diversity in Schools'. Workshop presented at Didactics of Dialogue & Reconciliation (DIDAR) conference, UCC Copenhagen 4-6 November 2014.

Richardson, N: 'Division, diversity and vision - challenges for religion in education: a case-study from Northern Ireland.' Public lecture at the Institute of Education, London, 27 November, 2014.

Richardson, N: 'Faith and Faith Schools in Northern Ireland.' Paper presented Weekend Meeting of the Commission on Religion and Belief in British Public Life – community, diversity and the public good: Religion and Belief in Education & Training, Charney Manor, Oxfordshire. 30 January–1 February, 2015.

Richardson, N and Hunter, A: Collective Worship Beyond Obituary – An Educational Perspective. Paper presented at 2nd Seminar of the AHRC Collective Worship Research Network: Collective Worship in Schools: An Evaluation of Law and Policy in the United Kingdom, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, 12-13 March 2015.

York, L and N Purdy: 'A critical investigation of the nature and extent of cyberbullying in Post-primary schools in Northern Ireland'. Research presentation given at the Annual Conference of the British Psychological Society Northern Ireland Branch, Armagh, 21 May 2015.

STAFF ACHIEVEMENTS AND APPOINTMENTS

Staff achievements have been recognised through nationally-recognised awards and appointments to professional bodies.

Fellowships



Dr Noel Purdy, recognised as a Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy (SFHEA).



Mrs Gillian Beck and Dr Sharon Jones both recognised as Fellows of the Higher Education Academy (FHEA).



Dr Patricia Eaton was recognised as a Fellow of the Leadership Foundation.



Dr John McCullagh has been made a Fellow of the Royal Society of Chemistry in recognition for his contribution to curriculum development in Chemistry Education.

Degrees & Postgraduate Qualifications



Ms Rosemarie McQuaid received a LLB degree from Nottingham Trent University.



Miss Rebecca Molloy received a first class honours degree from Ulster University in Human Resources Management.



Mrs Ciara Love received a Postgraduate Diploma, with distinction, in Career Guidance and Development from the University of the West of Scotland (UWS).

Professional Qualifications

Miss Jacinta Brankin received a Level 3 Award in Supervising Food Safety.

Mr Marshall Calder received a Level 3 Award in HACCP in Catering.

Mrs Gillian McDowell received a Level 3 Award in Supervising Food Safety.

Mrs Hilary Cowan received a Level 3 Award in Supervising Food Safety.

Mrs Hilary Cowan received a certificate in First Aid at Work.

Mr Marshall Calder received a certificate in First Aid at Work.

Appointments to Professional Bodies

Mr Andy Brown was appointed to the Executive Committee of the Transferors' Representative Council, and Convenor of the State Education Committee of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

Ms Audrey Curry was appointed as the Transferors' Representative on the Board of Governors of Stranmillis Primary School.

Dr Michael Ievers has been appointed External Examiner for Technology and Design Education at Sheffield Hallam University.

Dr Noel Purdy was appointed President of NASEN in Northern Ireland from 2014-2016. NASEN is a UK-wide organisation supporting those who work with or care for children and young people with special and additional educational needs and disabilities.

Dr Sharon Jones was appointed as an inaugural member of the executive committee of the newly formed Northern Ireland Language Council.

Ms Melanie McKee was elected as Vice-Chair, Executive Board Member and Head of International Development of the International Physical Literacy Association (IPLA). Melanie is one of eight trustees of the IPLA and Stranmillis University College is formally recognised as a co-founder of the Association.

Ms Sheelagh Carville was invited to join the Childcare Partnership Regional Workforce and Training group, thus affording Stranmillis University College the opportunity to put forward its perspectives in relation to the training and professional development of early years

practitioners in the field of social care.

Ms Paula Carlin has joined the Board of *Parenting NI*.

Ms Sheelagh Carville was appointed to the Board of Queen's University Institute of Theology in order to bring her particular expertise in quality assurance and collaborative provision to bear on their work with a broad range of theological institutions.

Dr Irene Bell has been appointed to the DigiSkillsNI Steering Group.

Dr Irene Bell has been appointed the Awards Examiner for the Faculty of Education in Manchester Metropolitan University.

Dr Ken Gibson appointed panel member on both the QUB Academic Offence Committee and the QUB Central Student Appeals Committee.



Special Awards

Dr John McCullagh and Dr Andrea Doherty won the STEAM category of the Department of Culture Arts & Learning (DCAL) Award for the project 'Digital Storytelling in Enquiry Based Science project'

Dr Irene Bell's work in the area of STEM has led to Stranmillis University College being recognized as a 'Chapter' within the International Association of STEM Leaders (IASL). The International Association for STEM Leaders 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 pre-kindergarten through to adult students.



Dr Irene Bell and Dr Usha Rajdev from Marymount University, Virginia, USA, a member of the panel for the International Association for STEM Leaders

Dr Michael levers' one-act play entitled, 'Sharkey' was performed on the Irish Festival circuit and won through to the Northern Ireland finals, where the production finished in the runner-up position. He also finished in 3rd place in a UK-wide play-writing award. In recognition of his work in the amateur drama movement in Northern Ireland he was invited in June to an audience with the President of Ireland, Dr Michael D Higgins.



Dr Michael levers



LIFELONG LEARNING



The year 2014-15 saw a further broadening and refinement of our Lifelong Learning Programme with a range of new courses in History, Anglo-Irish Literature, Irish Archaeology, Languages, History of Art, Digital Photography and Health and Leisure. In particular the public were offered a greatly

extended series of historical and cultural day tours with guided visits to Joyce's Dublin, Yeats Country, 'Drogheda and the Pale' and North Down and the Ards. The result was a dramatic rise in enrolments.

During the year the College's profile was greatly enhanced by extensive media coverage in the local press and BBC Radio Ulster and U-105. In spring our annual series of Lunchtime Talks attracted record numbers of the general public and also favourable media publicity. Among the guest speakers was former heart surgeon and philosophy tutor, Dr Gianfranco Campalani who enthralled his audience with a talk on his career and recent advances in medical science. The year ended with an evening of celebration of the 'coming of age' of our unique Stranmillis adult education brand – now completing its eighth season. This included splendid renditions on the harp and flute and an interesting talk by local novelist and literary critic, Dr Sophie Hillan.



STUDENT SUPPORT AND WELLBEING

Dr Ken Gibson in his role as Head of Student Support Services led the development and implementation of a Student Support and Wellbeing Strategy -

“Ready, Willing and Able to Learn – Striving for Success in a Supportive Learning Community”.

This strategy, which was informed by international best practice, seeks to place the student at the centre of the College community, providing high quality support services and experience for all students, ensuring equality of opportunity for all students, and making available support to all students. The importance of caring for all of our student members in a friendly and welcoming environment recognises that students are much more likely to achieve their full potential when they feel emotionally, physically, socially, psychologically, mentally, and spiritually secure. Consequently when students feel happy, secure and safe they will be in a much better position to contribute to their own success.

A suite of Student Support and Wellbeing Services has been relocated to the ground floor of Stranmillis House. The Students' Union Office has also successfully relocated from Central Building to the ground floor of Stranmillis House following the completion of a refurbishment project, and now sits alongside other student services such as Careers, Student Support and Occupational Health.

The Students' Union plays a crucial role in supporting students and promoting wellbeing. The Union organised a successful 'Wellbeing Week' which was comprised of free workshops and activities for students, catering for various aspects of wellbeing – mental, physical and social. The Students' Union successfully ran PIPS Suicide Awareness and Prevention Training sessions for staff and students.



Staff and students in the Student Support and Wellbeing Centre

CAREERS EDUCATION: PREPARING OUR STUDENTS FOR THE WORLD OF WORK

As an institution we are very conscious of the need to prepare our students for the graduate employment market. A range of lectures, seminars, workshops and one-to-one clinics are provided for the students throughout their time at the College. Career development workshops focus on areas such as writing CVs, preparing application forms and writing high quality personal statements, and all students are encouraged to think how best they might develop and enhance their own career profiles. We are very grateful to a significant

number of stakeholders and outside agencies who so willingly give of their time in many different ways such as conducting 'mock' interviews with our students or providing them with very informative support and advice sessions. This year once again a very successful Careers Fair was organised at which over 60 different graduate employers, from a wide range of different organisations, were present.



An interview in progress!

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENTS

Sport NI Dissertation Prize

John Allen (pictured below) a 2014-15 BSc final year student completed a dissertation on forest schools which was commended by the External Examiner for the use of novel methodology and was awarded the Sport NI prize for Dissertation Excellence.



Undergraduate Awards

Leah Proctor (B.Ed. Primary 2014) was “highly commended” for her essay submitted to the Undergraduate Awards in August 2014. Her essay was based on the Education Studies module “Contemporary Issues in Pastoral Care”.

Greenpower Electric Car Project



BEd students from both the Primary and Post-primary programmes who specialise in STEM subjects built a Formula 24+ racing car under the guidance of Dr Irene Bell, Head of Maths, Science and Technology.

Following an incredibly successful event at Nutts Corner Race track, Andrew Davis, Peter Soutar, Anthony McGill and Ryan Litter qualified for a grid position in the International Finals at Rockingham Motor Speedway on Sunday 11 October 2015. The students, who called themselves ‘Docendo Racing’, were the UK’s first racing team of student teachers. They built the IET Greenpower Formula 24+ kit single seated electric car in a project that highlighted the importance of presenting STEM subjects in a fascinating, relevant and dynamic manner.

This recent success brings a further dimension to the partnership of Greenpower Education Trust and Stranmillis STEM ITE students, who have now impacted upon the Greenpower project through developing learning resources at Primary level, supporting Post-primary school vehicle construction and now showing that it is not only the pupils who enjoy racing but also the future teachers!

BeITech Award

Year 4 BEd student Victoria Cahoon, a Music specialist student, won the Student Teacher category of a competition organised by the Belfast Telegraph, in creating a web site. Her website was aimed for Key Stage 2 pupils and was based on instruments from the different sections of an orchestra - brass, woodwind, percussion and string. From the homepage the pupils could click on a page link to navigate to the different sections of the orchestra, the main features of these instruments and external links to videos of the instruments being played.



FRONTER Competition iPad Winners

Emma Fleck and Naomi Boyd were the Stranmillis winners in the 'Fronter Room' competition sponsored by C2K and Capita, each receiving an iPad Air.

The iPads were presented to the students at a ceremony hosted by Ulster University at Jordanstown as reward for their winning Fronter entries. Fronter is the primary online learning tool for schools in Northern Ireland. For the competition the students were required to create an interactive online course, called a 'room', within Fronter which could then be adapted for use by other teachers.





AUTUMN ON CAMPUS

STUDENT SPORTING ACHIEVEMENTS

Stran Ladies' Soccer Report

Stranmillis Ladies' Soccer team was entered into the Uni 5's competition at the end of November, and finished a creditable third.



Gaelic Football Success.

Gaelic football has been steadily on the rise around Stranmillis, with both men's and ladies' teams fielding in their respective leagues.

The ladies' team were put in a very challenging group with UU Magee, UU Coleraine and Cavan IT. While they failed to progress out of the group stages, the two sides they were beaten by reached the All-Ireland League semi-finals. The men's team was in a group with BMC, UUJ 3's and QUB 3's. They topped the group unbeaten and progressed into the All-Ireland quarter final where they met NWRC, Derry.



Irish Universities Hammer Champion

Robert Moffett became Irish Universities hammer champion with a new record throw of 60.85m. Having achieved success at this level, Robert worked towards obtaining the qualification standard for the European Under 23 Championships in Tallinn, Estonia 2015 and the World University Championships in Gwangju, South Korea 2015.



Teachers' Credit Union Student Awards

Students at Stranmillis and St Mary's University Colleges recently received bursary awards sponsored by Teachers' Credit Union. The successful winners received £500 for each year of study on the BEd programme.



Sixth Form Essay Competition

There was a healthy response this year to the annual Sixth Form Essay Competition where pupils had to submit an original 1500 word response to Nelson Mandela's maxim that "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world". The winner was Blanaid Kearney (St Dominic's Grammar School, Belfast) and runners-up were Lauren Robinson (Ballymena Academy) and Florentyna Syperek (Lumen Christi College, Derry/Londonderry).

Chemistry Competition



This year's A-level Chemistry Competition took on a pharmaceutical theme, with the 12 participating schools tasked with the analysis of vitamin C tablets and confirming the purity of a sample of aspirin by both titrimetric and colorimetric methods. This annual event, organised

by the Analytical Division of the Royal Society of Chemistry and sponsored by Warner Chilcott UK, aims to highlight the importance of chemistry within the pharmaceutical and food industries and plays a vital role in directing pupils towards careers in STEM subjects. The winning team from Lumen Christi College in Derry acquitted themselves well representing the region in the UK final at the Robert Gordon University in Aberdeen in June 2015.



Competition winners Lumen Christi

STUDENTS' UNION ACTIVITIES

A highlight of the year was the opening of a fabulous new Scholars Bar and Social Space Facility. The Students' Union organised a very successful programme of events throughout the year. This included a special International Takeover Night!

The night provided a tremendous insight into a great variety of cultures and prompted many students' thoughts regarding the International and Erasmus placement offered by Stranmillis, not to mention the fact that it was a chance to spend some quality time with some amazing people from around the world!



The new Scholars Bar

Charities



Each year the Students' Union choose to support one child-centred charity for the year. For 2014-2015 the work of 'Make A Wish Foundation UK' was chosen. Funds were raised through a diverse range of activities including a SkyDive , a 12-hour-danceathon by outgoing Students' Union President, Michael Pollock, and participation in the Belfast City Marathon. A total of £2406.53 was raised for charity in 2014-15.

International Welcome

The Students' Union played a critical role in welcoming and supporting international students. A programme of social events including the annual day trip to the North Coast for the Erasmus/ International students at Easter was organised.



Stranmillis Panto

The famed Stranmillis Panto had another very successful year, with 'Cinderella' playing to hundreds of Primary, Post-primary and special school pupils as well as teachers, students, friends and family. Every year a large number of students give up many hours of their spare time to make the production possible - the principals and the rest of the cast, the chorus, band, backstage crew, costume team, sound and light team, and of course a front-of-house team. Producer David Crothers said: 'To hear so many children screaming at once, and to watch them all get excited brings a smile to all our faces!!'



Students' Union Formal

The 2014-15 academic year was rounded off by the Students' Union Formal, attended by not only Stranmillis students, but students from other universities who live on campus.



All photos by Annabel Graham

CORPORATE SERVICES DEVELOPMENTS

Estates and Infrastructure

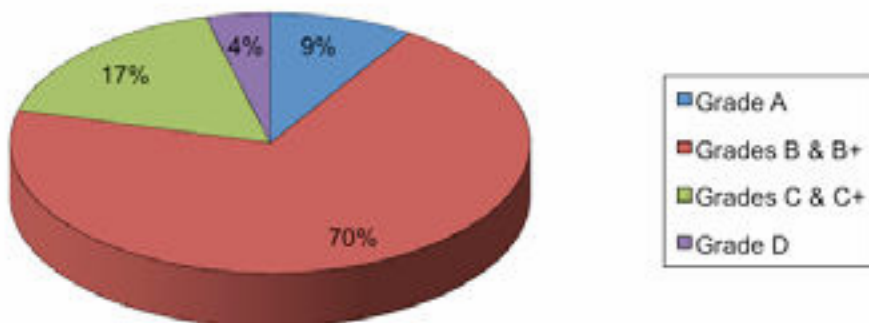
The College has an ambitious Estates Strategy which is regularly updated to reflect investments made and newly identified priorities. The Strategy seeks to improve the standard of the buildings across the campus, many of which are listed and several are of significant historical importance, whilst making the buildings safe and suitable for teaching, learning and related purposes.

As part of the updating of the Estates Strategy an updated assessment of the physical condition of each of 23 building of the campus was made (last updated March 2015) and is summarised in Figure

The 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

**% of Buildings in Each Category
2014-15**



Investment in recent years has significantly improved the proportion of College buildings which are graded B or above. The 2014-15 year saw the completion of works to the Main Building and a first phase of works to the Refectory Building, whilst a second phase of works to the Refectory and works to upgrade the Central Building foyer also commenced in the year.

The table below shows the significant investment in College buildings over the past 5 years to 31 July 2015. This investment has enabled the College to make significant progress in addressing the backlog of maintenance on the campus.

Capital Spend Trends	Total £k	2015 £k	2014 £k	2013 £k	2012 £k	2011 £k
Total Capital Investment						
Main Building	3,195	2,614	581			
Refectory Building Phase 1	1,112	49	1,063			
Refectory Building Phase 2	877	877				
Stranmillis House	1,155	-13	818	350		
Halls of Residences	343	0	-30	319	54	
Orchard Building	78	0	0	19	10	49
Central Building - first floor	1,127	0	8	42	528	549
Central Foyer Project	214	150	64			
All Weather Sports Pitch	4	4				
Total Capital Investment	8,105	3,681	2,504	730	592	598
Refurbishment & Maintenance Spend	3,651	555	874	629	788	805

During the 2014-15 financial year the College invested £3.68m in building works, compared to £2.50m in the previous year, demonstrating the continued investment made by the College, supported by DEL with grants of £2.9m in the year, in the upgrade and refurbishment of its complex estate in schemes which enhance the teaching and learning environment for staff and students.

The College has also invested heavily in a range of other refurbishment projects over the same five year period as demonstrated in the table above. The refurbishments have included a programme of upgrades within the Halls of Residence, reconfiguration and upgrading of teaching space and the demolition of several buildings which were past their economic life.



Energy Efficiency

The recent capital investment projects over the last 3 years are expected to yield significant efficiencies in energy usage.

The **Main Building Project** included the installation of thermal insulation which had never previously been in place. The project also included the complete 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.

Similarly the new lighting installation incorporates the latest energy efficient lighting technology with automatic switch off and the use of low energy LED lamps.

The second phase of the **Refectory Building Project** focussed on the complete replacement of all the original 1960s aluminium framed single glazed units with new energy efficient double glazed units. The amount of glazing was also reduced to further reduce the thermal losses. Similarly all remaining vertical faces of the building were thermally insulated and either over clad or rendered to increase the thermal retention properties of the building.

The proposed third phase of the **Stranmillis House Project** includes incorporation of similar heating controls and thermal insulation as described above for the Main Building. It is hoped that this work will be undertaken during the summer of 2016 on approval of the business case.

Recycling

In the calendar year 2014, the College produced 93.38 tonnes of waste via 2 separate waste management contracts. One waste stream from administration & teaching buildings was sent for recycling. The other waste stream from the Halls of Residence and Refectory Building went directly to landfill. The split between these two streams meant that only 40.38 tonnes (43.24%) of waste was recovered.

From August 2015, the two streams were merged and a single waste management contractor appointed to deal with all waste. It is anticipated that the amount of waste recovered will increase to at least 85% in the first year of this new contract as a consequence.

HOSPITALITY & ACCOMMODATION SERVICES

The refurbishment of Halls and the investment in new social spaces and facilities has ensured that the College exceeded its occupancy target for the Halls of Residence. The occupancy percentage in 2014-15 was 98.5%. Despite the fact that a number of key facilities, such as parts of the Refectory Building and the Main Building including the conference hall, were out of commission due to major refurbishment projects and the current challenging financial climate, Hospitality & Accommodation Services income has remained strong.

Overall Hospitality & Accommodation Services achieved a net margin of 19% which is in line with the prior year. 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 the student experience.



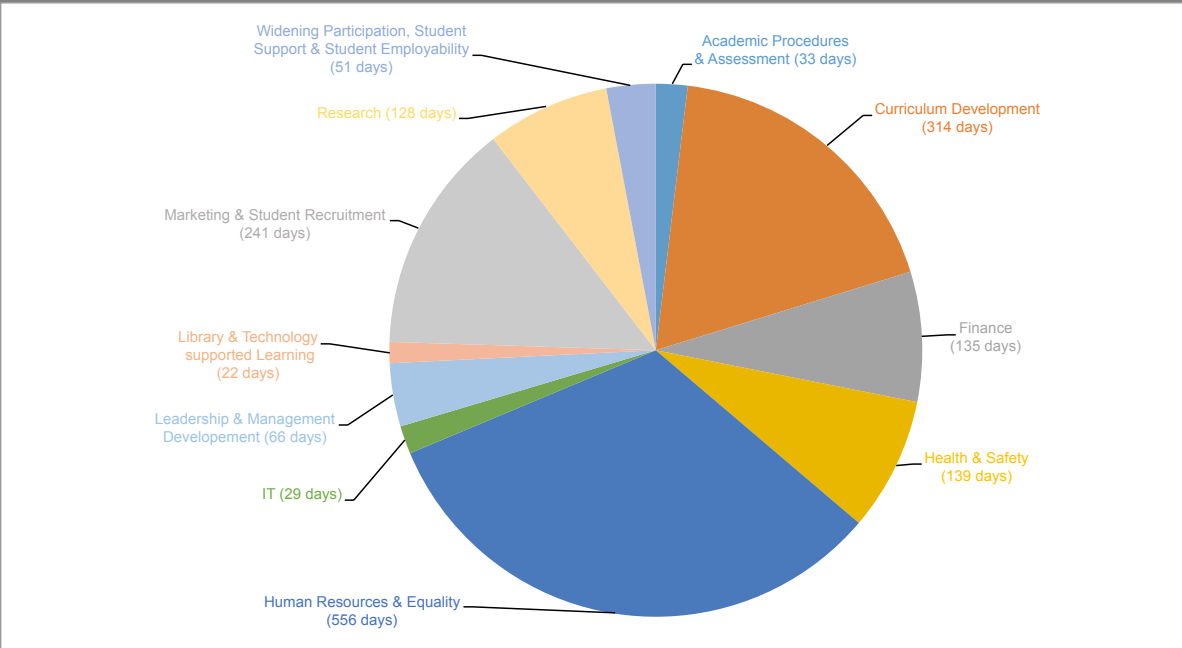
PEOPLE DEVELOPMENT

Staff Development

The College invested £57k in providing staff development for staff across all teams in the year to 31 July 2015. The College has exceeded its target of having 60% of its academic staff qualified to doctorate level. Support was provided to several members of academic staff in attaining Fellowship status of the Higher Education Academy, providing international recognition of their commitment to professionalism in teaching and learning in higher education.

Funding was also provided to a number of professional support staff to undertake professional qualifications in corporate functional areas. Staff were supported to attend events to suit their individual development needs and to attend courses which were provided to all staff, aligned to the objectives set out in the Corporate Plan. Staff were also supported to present their research at regional, national and international research conferences.

Working Days Spent on Development Attendance by Staff Development



The College developed a new Staff Development Policy, approval and recording process which will ensure that going forward staff development activity is closely aligned to priorities set out in the operational plan, that approval and record keeping processes are more streamlined and that the impact of the investment in staff development can be analysed.

Staff Health and Wellbeing

The College undertook some initial work in the area of staff health and wellbeing. A new Alcohol and Substance Misuse Policy was introduced and a successful event was held to mark National No-Smoking Day which resulted in a number of staff signing up to smoking cessation classes. In recognition of the importance of the emotional well-being of staff, staff were provided with access to workshops in this area. Workshops in teamwork and communication were delivered to all staff focusing on the importance of good working relationships amongst staff and improving communication within and between teams.

People Strategy

Work commenced during 2014-15 to develop a new People Strategy to align with the College's Corporate Plan 2015-18. This will provide the basis for our Human Resource activities going forward.



FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

A surplus of £263k was recorded in the year to 31 July 2015, further strengthening the financial position of the College.

Total income reduced in the year by £800k or 5.6% compared with the previous year, reflecting continued reductions in Core Grant Funding from the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) which has reduced by £215k and £263k in the two years ending 31 July 2015 respectively. Consequently the DEL Recurrent Grant represented 32.6% of total income received in the year. In addition 2015 saw the ending of a further major project which consequently generated some £795k less income than in 2014.

Tuition fee income increased by 3.5%, contributing 26.6% of total income, with inflationary increases and a new tripartite partnership with Tenby Schools in Malaysia and Queen's University Belfast which has further enhanced the College's International Tuition fee generation strategy.

The College continues to build and grow income generated by its Accommodation, Catering and Conferencing business which contributed £2,098k or 15.6% of total income in the year. This steady performance represents a continuance of the very positive results that have been achieved in recent years, despite the very challenging economic climate.

The College continued to implement its innovative Joint Graduate Internship Programme funded by external partners and delivered in partnership with schools in Tullycarnet and Newtownabbey. Successful graduating student transition to full time employment reduced the pool of newly graduated students available for taking up internship positions in 2015.

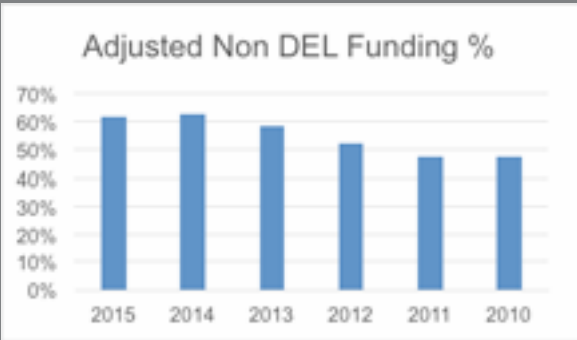
The College also commenced a new partnership with local IT firms which aims to promote the teaching of programming skills in schools in order to meet the skill and employment needs of the sector.

The College continues to expand its Lifelong Learning programme and offers its Continuing Professional Development programme via innovative outreach arrangements in hubs based in partner schools.

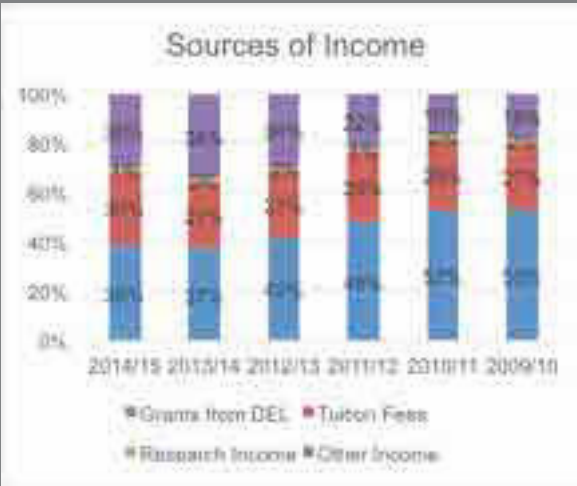


The table and graph below show the proportion of income, adjusted to remove the distorting impact of deferred capital grants on assets transferred to the College on incorporation in 2005, derived from Non DEL sources.

	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Total Income - ex DEL Grants	7,271	7,959	6,931	5,718	4,975	5,098
Income adjusted for impact of DCG release	11,753	12,657	11,893	10,997	10,458	10,800
Adjusted Non DEL Funding %	62%	63%	58%	52%	48%	47%



The chart on the left shows the proportion of income derived by income type over the six years to 2015 (excluding the deferred capital grants).



It is evident from these results that the University College’s strategy in recent years to diversify the sources of its income has been successful, therefore reducing reliance on lower levels of core government funding.

Expenditure

Overall the College saw expenditure reduce by 3.4% in the year, again reflecting partly the ending of the SEN Literacy Project in March 2015 and the ending of the CREDIT Project in December 2013 which resulted in a reduction in related major project expenditure (and related income) of £795k in the year.

Whilst staff costs (adjusted for the impact of FRS 17) increased by £143k, the College has sought to make long term staffing efficiencies, achieved by restructuring and reconfiguring service delivery, which resulted in voluntary redundancy costs of £317k being incurred in the year.

Unadjusted staff costs represented 58.7% of total expenditure, which is below the Northern Ireland HE sector average (as reported by HESA – staff costs in 2013-14 represented 60.1% of total expenditure).

A PDF document detailing the Annual Accounts can be accessed by going to <http://www.stran.ac.uk/media/media,543795,en.pdf>.









Stranmillis University College

Stranmillis Road,

Belfast BT9 5DY

Northern Ireland

Tel: 028 9038 1271

email: registry@stran.ac.uk

www.stran.ac.uk



STRANMILLIS UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
A College of Queen's University Belfast