



STRANMILLIS UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
A College of Queen's University Belfast

ANNUAL REPORT 21-22



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CHAIR'S FOREWORD



On behalf of the Governing Body of Stranmillis University College, it gives me much pleasure to introduce this report to all our stakeholders on the performance of the University College during the Academic Year 2021-22.

This was a year of adjustment as society began to emerge from the worst months of the pandemic. Our evaluation of the University College's response to the pandemic demonstrated the importance of risk assessment and planning, being able to swiftly respond to and adapt to change; and bringing staff and students with us on every step of that journey. Lessons learned have also been vital in preparing for any future events. Under the leadership of the Principal, staff responded with resilience and determination to mitigate the impact of the pandemic on students, students and staff demonstrated their adaptability to change and as a Governing Body we thank each and every person within the University College community for their contribution to steering Stranmillis through the significant disruption to College life.

As we embark on our Centenary year in

2022-23, we are proud of our achievements and as a Governing Body we will provide whatever support and encouragement that is necessary to ensure the ongoing success of the University College. Excellence in teaching and research and support for our students and staff and collaboration with our partners are at the heart of everything we do and we are grateful to our sponsor Department, the Department for the Economy, for their continuing support and guidance.

As recorded by the Principal in his Report, there were many positive achievements throughout the year. We acknowledge those achievements and the good performance against targets in the 2021-22 Transitional Plan.

As the College moves forward into the next academic year, it looks forward to a new normality and greater face-to-face engagement with students. As a Governing Body we hope to engage more with students and staff and look forward to hearing more about students' and staff experiences.



The University College's Corporate Plan for the next three years, 2022-2025 sets a clear path for the immediate future. The plan demonstrates our ongoing and resolute commitment to the delivery of outstanding student experiences, to be an employer of choice, to be financially and environmentally sustainable and to impact wider society. We will use this document to inform our annual planning decisions and to measure our progress towards the achievement of our aims, as well as prioritising our actions. We will move forward with a shared sense of purpose and values and an ongoing commitment to excellence.

We will continue to maintain and develop further our relationships with Queen's University Belfast, our sister University College - St Mary's, as well as our relationships with our partner FE colleges as well as the Department for the Economy, and the Department for Education (DE) and other potential stakeholders, who have an interest in the University College's continuing success. We will also build upon other existing partnerships as well as developing new collaborations with local, national and international stakeholders.

We remain confident that we have strong governance and management arrangements in place that will continue to serve us well into the future. However, in the current economic climate, there will undoubtedly be many new challenges ahead.

Edgar Jardine CB
Chair of the Governing Body



PRINCIPAL'S REPORT



Over the last two years, the COVID-19 pandemic has been the most significant worldwide disruption that we have faced in our lifetimes and the impact of the resultant mitigations across society presented a number of significant challenges that could easily have hindered us from achieving our core purpose. However, through the skills, agility and resilience of our governors, staff and students, as well as the support provided by our sponsor department, the Department for the Economy (DfE), we have been able to prevail over the key challenges that the pandemic presented. New ways of working, teaching, learning and assessing were developed and embraced and some of these new practices will be retained, at least in part, going forward.

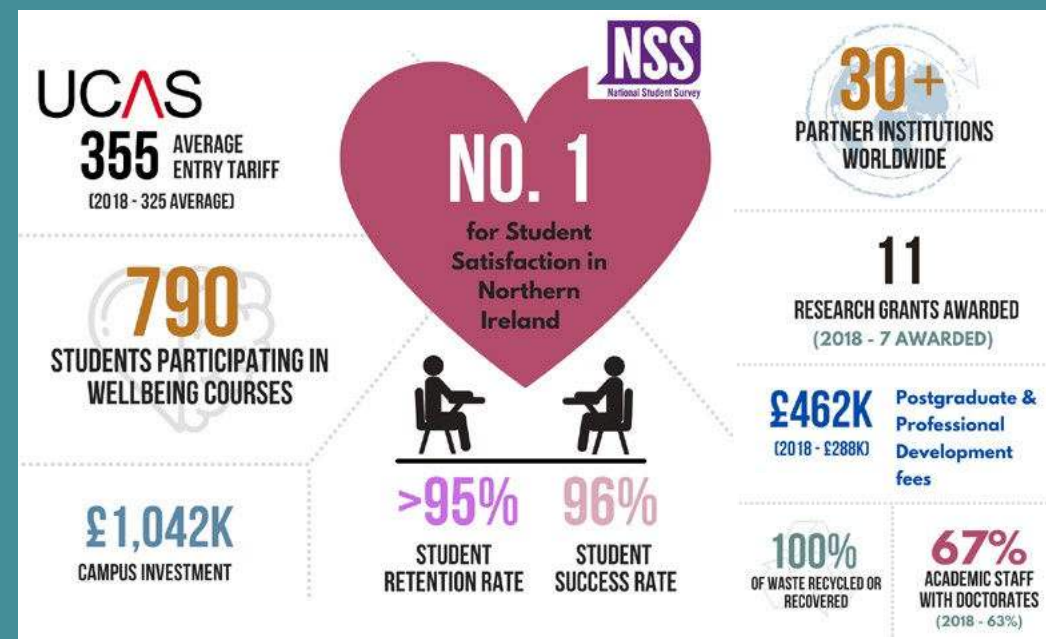
As we enter a new planning cycle, and the College returns to the new normal, we are faced with ongoing challenges ahead, including pressure on budgets, the slow uptake of Hospitality and Conferencing

events and increased running costs, which are being impacted by current world events. As in the midst of the pandemic, we will respond positively to these challenges, and will maximise opportunities to develop and diversify our income streams where possible, in order to reduce the impact of these challenges on the University College and ensure that we continue to thrive.

That ability to innovate and respond to challenges can be clearly seen in our success against Key Performance Indicators for our 2021-2022 College Business Plan (Transitional Plan), over the past 12 months. Out of the 34 individual KPIs, a summary of the results shows that:

- 94% of the KPIs were either achieved (76%) or substantially achieved (18%);
- 3% (1 target) is likely to be achieved with some delay; and
- the data in respect of 1 target (3%) is not yet available.

KEY OUTCOMES 2018-2022



There is a proud heritage at Stranmillis of excellence in teaching, learning, scholarship and research and in developing mutually beneficial and impact focussed partnerships locally, nationally and internationally.

The College's strong ethos of respect, ambition and support - valuing, encouraging and developing our students and staff - along with its commitment to enhancing the environment in which learning takes place, contributes to the dynamic and welcoming learning community which our students, staff and those who visit our campus, enjoy. These qualities provide the foundation of our core values, which will serve to guide the entire College community to move forward with a shared sense of purpose. This is particularly apposite as we celebrate one hundred years of shaping education within Northern Ireland and beyond as well as embarking on the next stage of the University College's journey.

As we look back on the year, we have much to celebrate and across all areas of college life and in the achievement and progress we have made against our aims and objectives.

Professor Jonathan Heggarty
MBE, BSc (Hons), PhD, PGCFHE, MCGI

Principal and CEO

TEACHING & LEARNING



Teaching and learning during 2021/2022 was a blend of on-campus and remote provision in response to changing government regulations throughout the academic year. Large scale examinations resumed on campus in May 2022. Staff from across the University College have worked exceptionally hard this year to make the online and blended delivery of learning and teaching possible and to ensure that students could complete the academic year.

Placements, which are an integral element of all of our undergraduate programmes, proved less problematic this year with all placements taking place in person as planned.

Although the plan for the 2022/2023 academic year is a full return to in-person teaching, we will retain the best use of technology where it enhances provision. We will also retain much of the blended learning approach to assessment

administration such as online submission of coursework and more engagement with external examiners without them having to be present on site.

During the year, work on creating a Doctorate in Educational Professional Practice has progressed and the validation documentation for the new doctorate was submitted to QUB in June 2022.

The National Student Survey gives students the opportunity to speak out on everything from the teaching on their course to access to resources and equipment, and even about the student voice. The College was delighted to again be ranked first for Overall Student Satisfaction amongst all HEIs in Northern Ireland; a strong endorsement of the quality of our teaching and



learning and student support. The College also continues to attract and develop the highest calibre of staff with 67% of academic staff qualified to doctorate level (up from 63% in 2018).

This academic year we have undergone two successful Periodic Reviews. The Foundation Degree in Health, Physical Activity and Sport, a collaborative programme with St Mary's University College and Belfast Met, underwent review in February. The Review Panel commended the College for their commitment to, and success of, the programme and the students who were satisfied with the programme and the preparation for further study.

The review of the part-time BA Early Childhood Studies with Southern Regional College also took place in February. The Panel commended the College and the Programme Co-ordinator for ensuring very effective programme and quality management across multiple providers, which is an exemplar of good practice; for the excellent engagement with students and incorporating their feedback into curriculum design; and for the value the students place on the pastoral support and the opportunity to undertake the programme locally on a part time basis.

RESEARCH & SCHOLARSHIP



The research environment at Stranmillis has been impacted in many ways as a result of COVID-19, and some of these impacts are still present, two years after the first UK lockdown:

- Access to schools to carry out face-to-face research activity with teachers and pupils was halted following the first closure of schools in March 2020 so that all research activity was carried out online. More recently, however, we have begun to see a return to near normal research data gathering conditions. In some cases, researchers have elected to carry out their research online as this can reduce costs, and make it easier for participants to join interviews, especially when coming from a range of settings over long distance.
- Since March 2020, staff have been unable to gain experience of presenting or avail of networking opportunities through travelling to national/ international research conferences or through taking advantage of Erasmus+ staff mobilities. Most conferences moved online which significantly reduced the cost, but also the opportunities for networking. Some conferences are now being delivered face-to-face again.
- The College's internal writing retreat, which in recent years has led to the publication of numerous research articles, was unable to take place in June 2020 and June 2021 but did take place at the end of June 2022.

While our Centre for Educational Underachievement thrived during Covid-19 as we responded quickly to the social inequities highlighted through the pandemic, most other College-wide research activity slowed down as staff, understandably, had to focus on online teaching and learning.

Despite the challenges, however, the 2021/2022 year has been a hugely successful year for research funding, with the Research Office and Centre for Educational Underachievement securing £182,377 of research funding for Stranmillis, a 103% increase on 2020/2021.

In May, the results of REF2021 were published and the College was pleased to report that, overall, 78% of our research activity was deemed to be 'recognised internationally' in terms of originality,

significance and rigour (up from 72% in 2014) and 22% was deemed to be at the very highest levels of 'internationally excellent' or 'world leading' research. The fact that 100% of our research impact was deemed to be 'recognised internationally' is a clear demonstration that our research is making a significant difference in terms of educational policy and practice as well as being reflected in our teaching. REF2021 also demonstrated the growth of our research and scholarship capacity, with the number of staff submitted this time more than doubled from 5 staff members in 2014 to 12 staff members in 2021.



RESEARCH & SCHOLARSHIP

Blog post

Purdy, N. (2022) 'A Kestrel for a Knave – lessons on educational disadvantage' CREU blog post (14th April). Available online at <https://www.stran.ac.uk/creu-blog-kestrel/>

Book (Author)

McCullagh, J. (2021) Using Digital Video in Initial Teacher Education. St Albans: Critical Publishing

Book chapters

Purdy, N. and McClelland, D. (2022) 'A focus on provision for ECEC in Northern Ireland 1921-2021' [chapter 11] in T. Walsh and N. Hayes (eds.) Early Childhood Education and Care in Ireland: Charting a Century of Developments (1921-2021). Dublin: Peter Lang.

Book foreword

Purdy, N. (2022) Foreword to the Report of the Review of School Leader Workload Impact on School Leaders (part of The Workforce Review Project). Bangor: Department of Education Northern Ireland.

Conference paper/presentation

Harris, J. (2021) 'Educational Underachievement' in Northern Ireland: a political economy perspective". Presentation to the Annual Conference of the RGS-IBG, 31st August 2021

Purdy, N. and Campbell, M. (2021) 'Assessing the value of SCOTENS as a cross-border professional learning network in Ireland north and south'. Workshop presentation at the UCET Annual Conference (online). 3rd November 2021.

Forde, D. and Purdy, N. (2021) 'Contested Spaces and Special Educational Needs: Policy and Practice, Rights and Reality'. Paper presented (online) at the Annual Conference of the Australian Association for Research in Education, 30th November 2021.

Guarini, A., Mameli, C., Menabò, L., Brighi, A., Menin, D., Culbert, C., Hamilton, J., Scheithauer, H., Smith, P.K., Völlink, T., Willems, R.A., Purdy, N. (2022) 'Students' Comics to describe cyberbullying: a European Co-Participatory Project'. Paper presentation, 26th Annual Conference of the ISSBD (International Society for the Study of Behavioural Development), Rhodes, Greece 19-23 June 2022.

Walsh, G. (2021) 'A professional workforce for the Early Years: Policy, practice and sector responses", BERA presentation as part of BERA Workshop entitled Competing Discourses in Early Years Education and Care: Tensions, Impacts and Democratic Alternatives, Wednesday 15th September.

Invited presentation/keynote

Purdy, N. (2021) 'Educational Underachievement in Northern Ireland'. Invited Panel Presentation and Discussion as part of Shared Island Dialogue on Learning from each other – the future of education on a shared island. Friday 1st October 2021.

Purdy, N. (2021) 'The Future of Education in Northern Ireland: identifying and addressing the key challenges ahead'. Invited Presentation for BBC Digital Teach Meet Wednesday 6th October 2021.

Purdy, N. (2021) 'Key Findings from the Expert Panel and priorities for addressing educational underachievement'. Invited Keynote Presentation for Policy Forum

for Northern Ireland Online Conference. Monday 11th October 2021.

Purdy, N. (2021) 'A Fair Start – Just another report on educational underachievement in NI?' Keynote presentation to the NAHT(NI) Policy Conference, 22nd October 2021, Stormont Hotel, Belfast.

Purdy, N. (2021) 'A Fair Start – Final Report and Action Plan'. Invited presentation to the Education & Training Inspectorate Staff Development Conference on Educational Disadvantage (online), Monday 6th December 2021.

Purdy, N. (2021) 'A Fair Start – Overview and Actions'. Invited presentation to the CCEA All Staff Away Day (online), Friday 17th December 2021.

Marshall, D. and Purdy, N. (2022) 'How to be an effective peer reviewer'. Online webinar for Taylor & Francis/Pastoral Care in Education 23rd February 2022.

Purdy, N. (2022) 'A Fair Start? A Policy Development Case Study from Northern Ireland'. Guest Lecture and Q&A to M.Ed. Psychology of Education, Trinity College, Dublin, Saturday 5th March 2022.

Purdy, N. (2022) 'Beyond the Stereotype: Approaches to educational (under) achievement in the controlled sector in Northern Ireland – Key Findings'. Keynote presentation to TRC dissemination event, Seagoe Parish Centre, Portadown (25th March 2022).

Purdy, N. (2022) 'A Fair Start – Implications for curriculum and assessment'. Invited presentation to CCEA Council, Thursday 31st March 2022.

Purdy, N. (2022) 'Lessons from Northern Ireland's legislative process'. Invited Presentation to Steering Committee to Review the 2013 Action Plan on Bullying (Ireland – Department of Education). 14th June 2022.

Purdy, N. (2022) Invited Panelist for National Association of Pastoral Care in Education Annual Conference (online session), 16th June 2022.

Journal article (peer-reviewed)

Ievers, M., Cummins, B. & Ballentine, M. (2022) 'The Impact of COVID-19 Restrictions upon Transversal Skills Development amongst Higher Education Students', TEAN journal, 13(2). <https://ojs.cumbria.ac.uk/index.php/TEAN/article/view/639/721>

Ievers, M. and McGeown, K. (2020) 'STEM education in Northern Ireland: is it an example of systemic failure?', TEAN journal, 12(1), pp. 38-47.

Mameli, C., Menabò, L., Brighi, A., Menin, D., Culbert, C., Hamilton, J., Scheithauer, H., Smith, P.K., Völlink, T., Willems, R.A., Purdy, N., Guarini, A. (2022) 'Stay safe and strong: Characteristics, roles and emotions of student-produced comics related to cyberbullying' submitted to Computers in Human Behavior. 19(14), p.8776-8797.

Purdy, N. (2022) 'Addressing Educational Disadvantage in Northern Ireland 1921-2021: a history of squandered opportunities?', Special Issue of Irish Educational Studies on Educational Disadvantage. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0323315.2022.2085762>

Sproule, L., Walsh, G. and McGuinness, C. (2021) 'Signalling Playfulness: Disguising work as play in the early years classroom', International Journal of Play, 10 (3): 228-242. Doi: 10.1080/21594937.2021.1959232



RESEARCH & SCHOLARSHIP



Journal Editorial

McConnell, B. (2021) Practice editorial, PRACTICE, 3:2, 73-75, DOI: 10.1080/25783858.2021.2006999

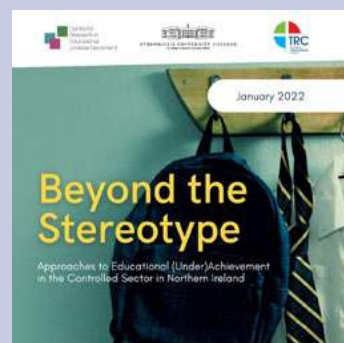
Purdy, N. (2022) 'Building back better in 2022 – with a renewed focus on pastoral care, emotional health and wellbeing for all' (Editorial), Pastoral Care in Education, 40:1, 1-3, DOI:10.1080/02643944.2022.2036419

Purdy, N. (2022) 'The Enduring Centrality of Pastoral Care in Education' (Editorial), Pastoral Care in Education, vol. 40, issue 2. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02643944.2022.2073727>

Practitioner journal/professional periodical

McCullagh J. (2021) How can digital video support initial teacher education? Media & Learning Newsletter. September 2021

Purdy, N. (2022) 'A Kestrel for a Knave – Reflections on Pastoral Care'. Article for National Association of Pastoral Care in Education Members' Newsletter. Feb 2022. Available at <https://www.napce.org.uk/tag/napce-newsletter/>



Research reports

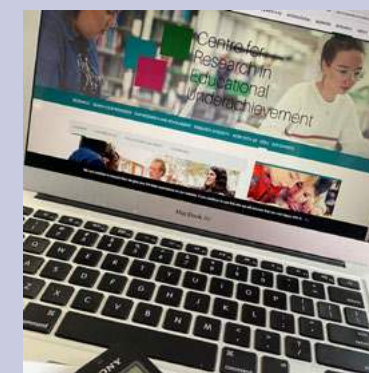
Bell, I., Csizmadia, A. and Dimitriadis, Y. (2021) Digital Schoolhouse: An inclusive approach to teaching computing? <https://www.digitalschoolhouse.org.uk/media/Documents-and-reports/dsh-diversity-and-inclusion-report-2021.pdf>

Purdy, N., Harris, J. and Winter, F. (2022) Beyond the Stereotype: Approaches to Educational Underachievement in the Controlled Sector in Northern Ireland. Research Report. Stranmillis University College, Belfast: CREU.

Bloomer, S., Purdy, N., Gibson, K. and Orr, K. (2022) The Assessment of Vocational Education and Training Qualifications: a review of European policy and practice. Report commissioned by the Department for the Economy, Belfast: Centre for Research in Educational Underachievement, Stranmillis University College, Belfast.

Purdy, N., Gibson, K., Orr, K., Tsang, K. (2022) Perceptions of Level 4 & 5 Qualifications in Northern Ireland. Belfast: Centre for Research in Educational Underachievement (CREU)

Georgeson, J., Robert Holmes, G., Campbell-Barr, V., Archer, N., Fung Lee, S., Gulliver, K., Street, M., Walsh, G. and Waters-Davies, J. (2021) Competing Discourses in Early Childhood Education and Care: Tensions, Impacts and Democratic Alternatives across the UK.



STUDENT SUPPORT & ENGAGEMENT



Covid-19 has hugely impacted the readiness for students transitioning from school to higher education. The College's successful bid for funding from the Department for the Economy to deliver a programme, STran@Stran, to provide a package of support initiatives to enhance student transition into higher education and strengthen the emotional, psychological and physical wellbeing of the students. A three-day Residential Induction Programme was offered to all new students, with almost 100% of students engaging with the programme. It is encouraging to note that 83.3% of the respondents to a feedback survey were less anxious about starting Stranmillis as a result of the Induction Residential and that 92.5% felt more confident about knowing where to get help if they needed it.

To support the programme throughout the year, a dedicated Student Engagement Officer was recruited and an innovative programme of workshops, courses and activities has been delivered, with over 790 places on student wellbeing courses taken up during the year.

The current economic environment has put increased financial pressure on many students. In addition to administering additional government support for students, the College's Student Support Fund has financially supported over 73 students experiencing financial hardship this year.



Student success and retention rates continue to remain very high at 96% and 95% respectively. Furthermore, the Graduate Outcomes survey, which is managed by the Higher Education Statistical Agency and examines the employment status of graduates, showed that 96% of our graduates were in employment or engaged in further study fifteen months after graduation.

Our Degree Enhancement programme, which encourages students to undertake additional skill-based courses, volunteer on community initiatives and play an active role in supporting the College community, continues to perform well and add to the overall student experience. This year, 123 students (50% of graduating students) received degree enhancement awards (target of 30% of students).

In April, Ernst and Young conducted a review and audit of our Student Support provision to identify and assess the effectiveness of key controls in operation to support the delivery of the Student Wellbeing and Support Services. The audit reported the highest possible outcomes for our system of governance, risk management and control, and also has recognised the high quality of the student communications issued throughout the period of the Covid-19 pandemic.

STUDENT RECRUITMENT & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



The College continues to attract the highest calibre of undergraduate students and fills its MASN quota. The average UCAS entry tariff for undergraduate admission this year was 144 (some 14 points above target). To support our widening participation targets, the College's Access to HE programme has continued apace and new widening participation partnerships have continued to be established this year, including a 5-day drama programme and production on campus, which was supported in-school by 8 student volunteers. Performance against key widening performance targets such as MDM quintile and disabilities was strong with 85 students from MDM Quintile 1 (target 90) and 44 students involved in the DSA process (target 45).

Postgraduate and professional development fees are vital income streams for the College. The development of new professional development courses and M-Level modules (plus the introduction of a summer intake on the MTeach programme), together with a focused approach to student recruitment, have seen enrolments to the programmes increase significantly over the past few years, with fee income increasing to £462k last year.

The 2021/2022 academic year saw a welcome return to student mobility with 126 Stranmillis and international students once again being able to benefit academically and personally from having the opportunity to undertake a study abroad experience.

- 56 outgoing Stranmillis students
- 42 incoming Erasmus exchange students
- 28 Study Abroad, IFSA and Baylor University (new partnership) incoming students from USA

CORPORATE & CAMPUS DEVELOPMENT

The College campus is one of our major assets. During the year, the College continued to invest significantly on campus developments, resources and facilities, with over £1m invested to develop and sustain a high-quality learning and working environment. Major projects completed during the year included the boundary wall, campus lighting, resurfacing of the roads and remedial work to the Henry Garrett Building. New social spaces and improved kitchen facilities in Halls, together with the upgrading of facilities in Scholars, have added significantly to the College's hospitality and accommodation offering.

Over the past number of years, the College has invested significantly in the development and implementation of new IT systems and resources including timetabling and student placement systems and a virtual learning environment to support a high-quality teaching and learning environment. Despite the scale and complexity of the changes, a 98% uptime was achieved, providing reliable, stable and secure access to IT Systems and Services for staff and students (target uptime was 93%).

This continued investment demonstrates our ongoing commitment to providing world-class facilities and resources for our students, staff and the wider campus community.

In an increasing challenging financial environment, it is essential that the College continues to deliver a regulatory environment that optimises the opportunities for developing income generation strategies, while also protecting consumers and workers.

Despite a very challenging environment for conferencing and room hire as a result of Covid-19, our Halls, Accommodation and Conferencing income of £1.93m exceeded its target, with full occupancy achieved (target £1.76m). Income from part-time enrolment on our postgraduate, CPD and Lifelong Learning programmes also exceeded target at £785k (target £764k).

Significantly, the College generated 63% of its income from non-Department for the Economy core and research funding, against a target of 53%.

Another key achievement this year was the College meeting its target of 100% of waste being recycled or recovered.



THE PURPOSE OF STRANMILLIS UNIVERSITY COLLEGE



The purpose of the College is to deliver on Our Mission, Our Vision and Our Values.

Our Mission

To transform the lives of children, young people and communities, through excellence in teaching, research and scholarship.

Our Vision

To be a leading institution with a reputation for excellence in the field of teacher education and related professions; driving innovative professional practice that will:

- Shape education
- Unlock potential
- Connect locally and globally and
- Build better futures

Our Values

Our core values, which are described below, underpin the culture and our behaviours within the University College and will support us in meeting our aims and objectives. They will provide the foundation for achieving our mission.

STUDENT-FOCUSED

Nurturing, developing and maximising the potential of every student.

PURSUING EXCELLENCE

Demonstrating leadership in teaching, scholarship, research and professional practice.

CHAMPIONING COLLABORATION

Creating effective partnerships locally, nationally and internationally.

PROMOTING SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND RESPECT

Listening to and working with colleagues and the wider College community.

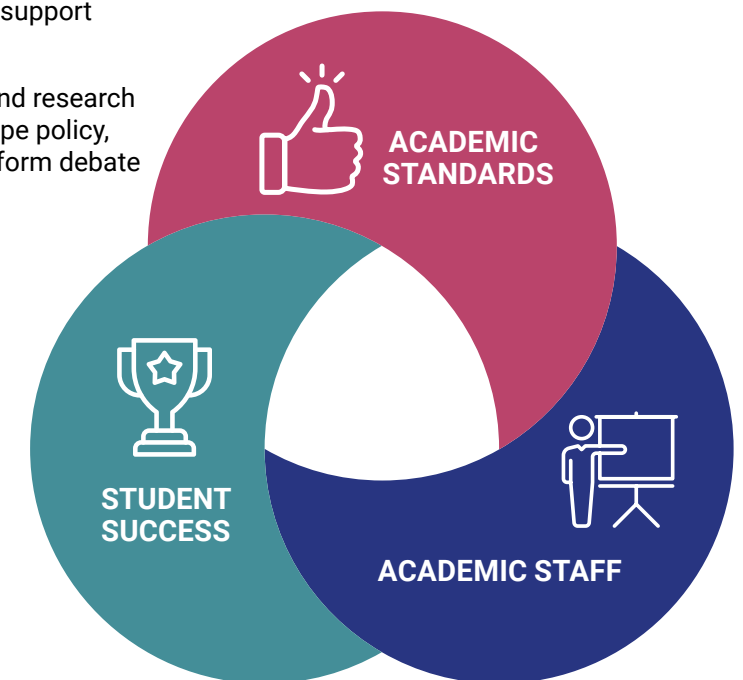
PROMOTING ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Delivering innovative programmes and projects, growing income generation and promoting good governance.

OUR STRATEGIC AIMS

Over the past year, in line with the Corporate Plan for the Transition Year 2021/2022, the College's focus was the full continuum of teacher education and related professional fields, including the professional support services which underpin this work, and on progressing its key strategic aims:

- delivering high-quality teaching and learning that is informed by scholarship and research, promotes critical enquiry and is recognised at regional, national and international level
- attracting and retaining students who are best suited to the undergraduate programmes and the needs of the sector as a whole, and improving accessibility, particularly for those currently under-represented in Higher Education
- enabling all learners, from entry to employment, to achieve their full potential through the provision of appropriate and timely support services
- focusing scholarship and research to inform teaching, shape policy, change practice and inform debate
- developing and sustaining collaborative partnerships, locally, nationally and internationally which promote the concept of learning communities and sharing resources
- embedding the concept of lifelong learning through the promotion of professional development at all levels
- attracting, retaining and developing high calibre staff
- creating a safe and attractive working environment to support the College community
- maximising income generation to ensure financial sustainability
- improving communication to demonstrate impact to both internal and external stakeholders



DELIVERING OUTSTANDING STUDENT EXPERIENCES



Laptop Loan Scheme

The College successfully secured funding from DfE to support students experiencing restricted access to appropriate and adequate IT provision to fully engage and succeed in their academic studies. Designed to address the needs of students in digital poverty, the Laptop Loan Scheme provides laptops to student who are, for example, working from a tablet or phone to access lectures and teaching material, sharing a device with other members of their household or who are using a device which is not fit for purpose.

Student Support Fund

The current economic environment has put increased financial pressure on many students. In addition to administering additional government support for students, the College's Hardship Fund, bursaries and other funds have supported students experiencing financial hardship this year.

First for Student Satisfaction

In the 2022 National Student Survey, Stranmillis University College was ranked the number one higher education institution in Northern Ireland for student satisfaction. The results recognise the commitment of all of our staff to providing an outstanding learning experience. The College scored well on Learning Community, highlighting the valued contribution everyone makes to our students' College experience.



Student Re-engagement Programme

Over the past 2 years, Covid-19 has hugely impacted the readiness for students transitioning to higher education. As part of the College's Re-engagement Strategy to support students moving from secondary-level education to third-level study, our new first year students took part in a very successful three-day on-campus residential prior to the start of the academic year. This has resulted in learners being able to integrate into Higher Education with greater confidence as well as having an opportunity to meet lecturing staff and fellow students prior to the official start of the year.

Student Engagement Coordinator

To support student engagement and wellbeing, the College appointed a dedicated Student Engagement Coordinator to provide academic and wellbeing support for all students. Throughout the year, workshops, training programmes and supporting activities have been organised and delivered in areas such as preparing for examinations, planning for coursework, dealing with anxiety, physical health, mental wellbeing and mental health first aid training.

AN EMPLOYER OF CHOICE



Staff Engagement

As we have returned to more normal operating conditions, there has been excellent opportunity for the new Principal, along with the Senior Management Team, to meet with all teams across the College on a number of occasions throughout the year. This allowed teams to discuss achievements and challenges within their own areas and to raise opportunities and any issues that they have identified. Engagement sessions across the University College were also vital to the development of the Corporate Plan 2022-2025.

Recognition for Staff

A number of our academic staff have been recognised for outstanding contributions during the year. Dr Trisha Eaton has been made a Principal Fellow of the Higher Education Academy (PFHEA) - a status that is awarded to just 1% of the 150,000 HEA fellows globally; Dr Irene Bell was presented with the 'Outstanding Contribution Award' by The Chartered Institute for IT; and Diane McClelland, who co-led the SCoTENS 'Contested Childhoods Across Borders and Boundaries' research project, was named the joint winner of the prestigious John Coolahan Award 2022.



Successful Periodic Reviews

Our outstanding undergraduate programmes in Early Childhood Studies and Health, Physical Education and Sport continue to add hugely to the College's education pedigree and, during this academic year, both programmes achieved successful outcomes in their respective Periodic Reviews.

Staff Development Days

Our two Staff Development Days provided a great opportunity for staff to reconnect, get up to date on new technologies and systems being introduced, as well as plans for the 2022/2023 academic year, and to also enjoy some fun team building and staff wellbeing activities.

International Travel and Conferences

During the year, the College witnessed the return of staff and students being able to undertake travel to conferences and partner institutions. Fifty international

students and staff were also able to visit us. This exchange demonstrates the partnerships that Stranmillis has developed over many years and its return is most welcome to all.

Lunchtime Research Seminars

Throughout the year, staff enjoyed the opportunity to hear colleagues from Stranmillis and further afield present their recent research. This sharing of research and scholarship is another example of Stranmillis' supportive research environment.

OUR IMPACT ON WIDER SOCIETY



Daily Mile Nation

To mark Children's Mental Health Week, the College was delighted to host a special Daily Mile event at Stormont to encourage Ministers and MLAs to sign a pledge to make Northern Ireland a 'Daily Mile Nation.' The Daily Mile founder, Elaine Wyllie and Lady Mary Peters were joined by children from across NI to walk their daily mile to Parliament Buildings where they were met by Ministers, Education Committee members and MLAs to discuss making Northern Ireland a Daily Mile Nation.

Daily Mile Does Football

Building on the success of the Daily Mile in schools, the Daily Mile Nation Northern Ireland initiative (which is being supported by Ministers and politicians across all parties) has been forging a new partnership with Irish Premiership club Crusaders, where 300+ children took to the pitch at half-time in the Crusaders vs. Warrenpoint match to do their Daily Mile.

Coding it Up

Lough Road Learning Centre provides education for young people who are unable to be managed in mainstream school. In a joint project with St Mary's, students from the Centre completed a course in HTML web design and coding. Coding is a hugely important digital skill, and partnerships like this are vital if we are to support, inspire and encourage young people to maximise their potential.

New Community Partnerships

Strong widening participation and community engagement programmes and partnerships are essential to the realisation of the College's Access to Higher Education goals. To support that ambition, the College has fostered a number of new partnerships with Aspire NI, Willowfield Community Association, New Irish Arts and Barnardo's Asylum Children's Education Support Project.



Research Success

Staff from across the College have been extremely busy recently making research funding applications. During the year we enjoyed a great deal of success in attracting funding for the following projects:

- "Buddies" Shared Island/SCoTENS funded project (Stranmillis, UCD, Marino)
- CRITERiA" Shared Island/SCoTENS funded project (Stranmillis, DCU, NUIG, QUB)
- Student Teachers Supporting Primary Science in Primary Schools (Royal Society of Chemistry)
- Safer Borrowing Project (Consumer Council NI)

- Consultation with babies, toddlers and young children (National Council for Curriculum and Assessment)
- Perceptions of Level 4 and 5 qualifications in NI (Department for the Economy)
- Review of Assessment in Vocational Qualifications in NI (Department for the Economy)
- Beyond the Stereotype – Approaches to Educational Underachievement in the Controlled Sector in NI (Transferors' Representative Council)
- Review of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme (Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth)

CRiTERiA

The CRiTERiA project, (Cultural Responsivity in Teacher Education: Research in Action) is a significant Shared Island/SCoTENS project, examining the challenges and opportunities for the preparation of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) students to teach in culturally diverse environments. The project is being led by Stranmillis in partnership with Dublin City University, National University of Ireland (Galway) and Queen's University, Belfast.

Action Plan on Bullying 2022

Dr Noel Purdy has been appointed by Education Minister, Norma Foley TD, as Chair of the Irish Government's Steering Committee to review its 2013 Action Plan on Bullying. The Review will consider areas such as cyber-bullying, gender-based bullying and sexual harassment. The Steering Committee comprises senior Department of Education officials, external experts and representatives of advocacy organisations. The new Action Plan on Bullying will be launched on 1 December 2022.

Teaching During War

Stranmillis University College and St Mary's University College jointly hosted a seminar with academics and students from Lesya Ukrainka University, Lutsk, Ukraine. The seminar included powerful presentations looking at how university teaching and learning has been affected by the invasion of Ukraine and reflections by five Ukrainian students on how the war has changed their lives. The open discussion at the end focused on supporting partners during this conflict, rebuilding life post-war in Ukraine and the role that universities can play in this process.

Wellbeing and Early Childhood

The Early Childhood Studies (ECS) team was delighted to welcome key stakeholders from the sector to an event centred around 'wellbeing', where our work in this vital area was shared. The stakeholder group was also briefed on the work of the ECS team in promoting 'The Daily Mile' and on the ongoing development of our 'BA Graduate Competencies Framework' followed by engaging and encouraging discussions aimed at continuing to shape wellbeing provision across the sector.

REF2021 Success for Stranmillis

The Research Excellence Framework (REF) is the UK's system for assessing the quality of research in UK higher education institutions. The REF2021 results showed that 78% of our research activity was deemed to be 'recognised internationally' in terms of originality, significance and rigour (up from 72% in REF2014) and 22% was judged to be at the very highest levels of 'internationally excellent' or 'world leading'. 100% of our research impact being 'recognised internationally' is a reflection of the College's commitment to changing policy and practice in classrooms and improving educational outcomes for children.

Be the Change

A team of 20 students from Stranmillis and St Mary's partnered with local educational charity, Saphara, for a week-long creative project, Be the Change. P7 pupils from a wide range of cultural and linguistic backgrounds were involved in the initiative. In addition to supporting this innovative project, the students fundraised to support the education of marginalised children in the Saphara schools in India.

Come Onboard!

Our PGCE students created some memorable and 'magical' experiences for local school children at our annual PGCE play workshops, bringing "The Polar Express", "A Winter Wonderland" and "The Gingerbread Family" to life. These play workshops have a special place in the PGCE calendar, getting bigger and better every year.

Parent Friendly Schools

The College has been supporting Parentkind NI in developing a blueprint for 'Parent-Friendly Schools', which aims to enhance and improve partnership, collaboration and parental engagement in our communities, particularly when tackling underachievement. The 'blueprint' was launched at Parliament buildings, sponsored by Chris Lyttle, MLA and Chair of the Stormont All-Party Group for Parental Engagement and Chair of the Education Committee.

Saving Lives

In a joint initiative with CCEA, the Education Authority and the four teacher education universities, The Northern Ireland Ambulance Service launched a new initiative to integrate a "train the trainer" model for Emergency Life Support, including CPR, into the teacher education curriculum. The aim of the partnership is to create and deliver "Lifesaver Ambassador" training to student teachers, whereby they will bring into the school environment, as newly qualified teachers, the skills necessary to deliver Emergency Life Support skills to their pupils.



ENSURING FINANCIAL & ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY



Investing for the Future

Over the past year, the College has continued to invest significantly in campus developments, resources and facilities which are helping to create and maintain a high quality teaching and learning environment, including the non-built environment. Projects, like the boundary wall, campus lighting, resurfacing of the roads and remedial work to the Henry Garrett building are vital in maintaining the campus as a great place to study, work and live. Other major projects, such as the creation of new social spaces and improved kitchen facilities in Halls, the upgrading of facilities in Scholars, significant investment in our IT infrastructure and state-of-the-

art technology and design resources demonstrate our ongoing commitment to providing world-class facilities and resources for our students, staff and the wider campus community.

Reviewing our Energy Usage

A key activity has been initiated to look at how the University College can be even more environmentally friendly and energy efficient. A review of heating and energy usage across the campus has been undertaken to identify short, medium and long term plans for saving energy. We look forward to working with a range of partners across the public and private sector as we become even more sustainable.



Hola, Bonjour, Bongu

Internationalisation adds hugely to the life of the College, providing opportunities for an amazing experience for students. During the pandemic, the lack of incoming and outgoing international student mobility was felt. The return to international mobility this year has added greatly to the student experience with over 100 incoming international students and outgoing Stranmillis students enjoying a study abroad opportunity. This included new short programme projects with University of Tampa, Indiana University and Baylor University.

Partnering with Others

The University College has been in discussions with a range of organisations exploring how the campus can be further accessed by a wider range of groups including areas as diverse as ornithology, orienteering and horticulture. The University College is pursuing partnerships with a range of organisations and looks forward to announcing these in the near future.

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

The table below shows that an operating surplus of £402k was achieved in 2021-22 (2020-21 - £604k). However, adjusting for the impact of the FRS102 NILGOSC annual pension scheme actuarial valuation and an Exceptional Item, the University College recorded a deficit of £305k in the 2021-22 year compared with a deficit of £582k in the previous year. An Exceptional Item of £560k was recognised in the current year (2021 - £nil) due to the reversal of a prior impairment in the value of the University College land. The impact of the annual adjustment relating to the NILGOSC Pension actuarial valuation resulted in a charge of £1,267k in the year (2020-21 - £1,186k).

Total Income for the year to 31 July 2022 was £13.0m representing an increase of £805k (6.6%) on the prior year. The following is of particular note:

- Other Sponsor Department Funded Grant Income received amounted to £82k (2021 - £750k) and included £81k (2021 - £nil) in the current year in relation to the Higher Education Transition Experience Initiative. This programme was designed to aid the transition into Higher Education for

new students following the Covid-19 pandemic. The prior year Other Sponsor Department Funded Grant Income related to Sponsor Department assistance for Covid-19 pandemic mitigation measures and included a contribution of £322k towards refunded Halls of Residence student fees, assisting with the refurbishment of spaces to aid social distancing, additional funding towards student support, bursaries, and a student Digital Poverty initiative.

- Funding Grant Income also includes £10k (2021 - £186k) in relation to the University College availing of the Coronavirus Job Retention (Furlough) Scheme.
- Tuition Fee income of £4.75m increased by £289k in the year (2021 - increase of £326k) with both full-time and part-time Tuition Fee income increasing by 4.3% and 18.8% respectively. Total full-time equivalent student numbers have increased to 1,043 (2021 - 1,037). Tuition Fee income contributed 36.5% (2021 - 36.5%) of Total Income.

The following table represents the financial results for the University College for the year to 31 July 2022:

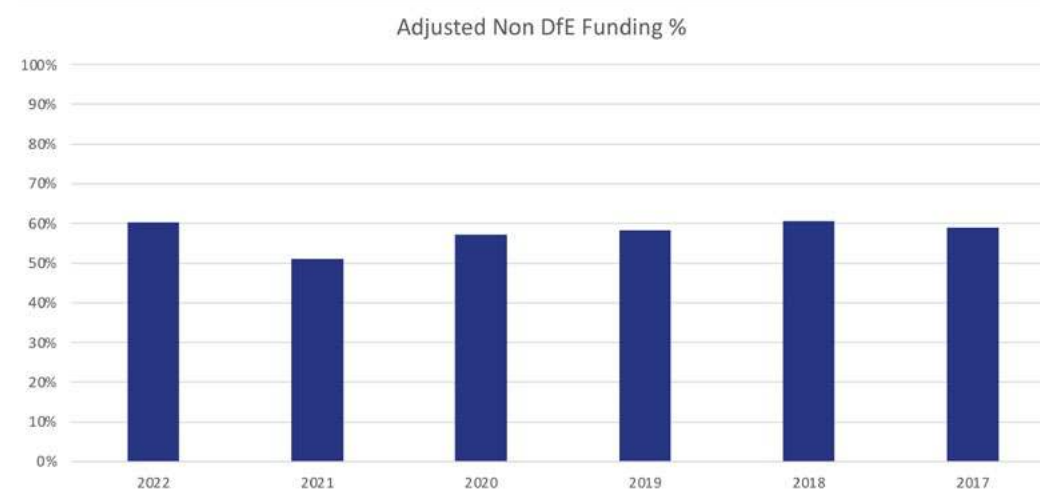
	2022	2021
	£'000	£'000
Reported Operating Deficit	(305)	(582)
NILGOSC actuarial valuation charges	1,267	1,186
Exceptional Item – partial reversal of prior impairment to College land	(560)	-
Operating Surplus after adjustments	402	604

- Halls of Residence, Catering, Conferencing and Facility Hire income, under the management of the Hospitality, Accommodation and Conferencing Services Department, contributed £2,021k or 15.5% of Total Income in the year (2021 - £608k or 5%), an increase of £1,413k or 232%. This increase in income is due to the Halls of Residence running largely at full occupancy for the full year compared with the previous year whereby a series of rent breaks were offered to students throughout the year in line the Higher Education sector response to the Covid-19 lockdown restrictions. Conferencing, catering and facility hire income has also experienced positive recovery following the pandemic.

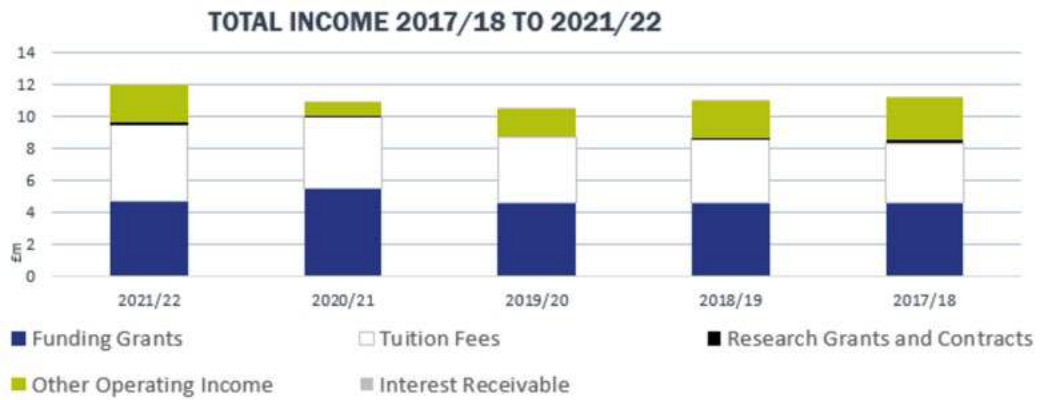
Income of £2,504k or 19.2% (2021 - £924k or 7.6%) of Total Income in the year was derived from sources other than Sponsoring Department Funding Grants and Tuition Fees. The University College remains committed to the income diversification strategy which has been successfully pursued over recent years. By taking this approach, the University College has been successful in reducing reliance on core government funding.

The figures and the graph below show the proportion of income, adjusted to remove the impact of deferred capital grant income, derived from sources other than from the Sponsor Department core grant.

	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Total Income - ex Core Grant	7,261	5,569	6,004	6,449	6,682
Income adjusted for impact of DCG income release	12,020	10,915	10,526	11,051	11,036
Adjusted Funding %	60%	51%	57%	58%	61%



In addition, the graph below shows the proportion of income derived by income type over the 5 years to 2022 (excluding deferred capital grants). The 2021-22 year represents the highest level of income earned in the last five years.



Expenditure

Total Expenditure for the year totalled £13.9m (before Exceptional Item) representing an increase of £1.1m (8.5%) on the prior year. The following is of particular note:

- The most significant element is Staff Costs which equates to 61% of Total Expenditure before Exceptional Item (2021 – 63%).
- Excluding the FRS102 NILGOSC pension scheme actuarial valuation adjustment, staff costs increased by £340k or 4.8% on the prior year.
- Other Operating Expenditure of £4,095k increased by £983k or 31.6% on the previous year (2021 increased by £115k and 3.8%).

The most significant increase in operating expenditure has been the increase in Hospitality, Accommodation & Conferencing Services (HACS) Operating Expenses to £920k (2021 – £401k). Costs have increased by £519k compared with the previous year due to the return to the full service following the pandemic. In the previous year, the vast majority of HACS facilities, including Halls of Residence, were closed for a

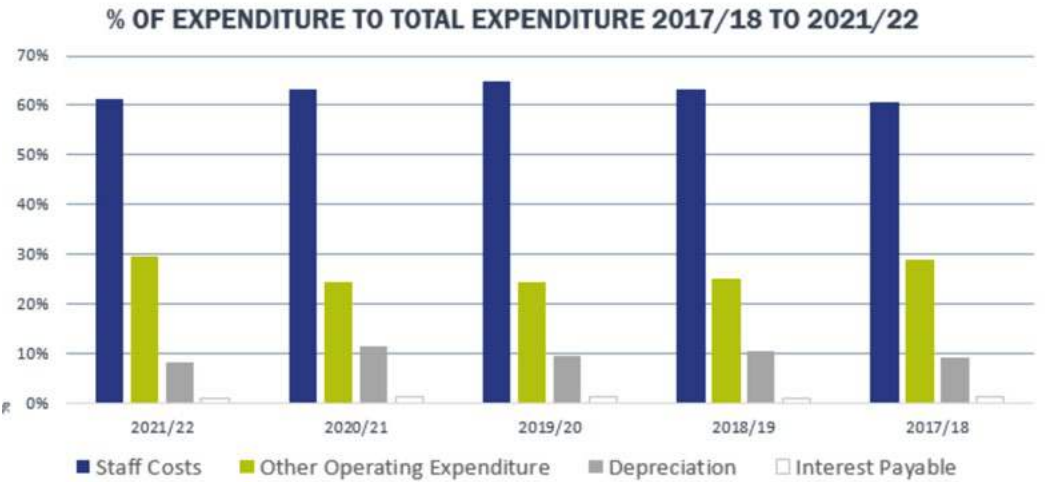
number of months because of Covid-19 restrictions resulting in operating expenditure being lower than normal. These costs also include the associated HACS energy costs which have increased significantly during the financial year due to the ongoing cost of living situation.

Non HACS energy costs have increased by £341k (112%) to £646k compared with the previous year which is due to, as noted above, the ongoing cost of living situation.

Refurbishment, Maintenance and Cleaning costs have increased by £124k to £365k due to the campus returning to full operations following the pandemic.

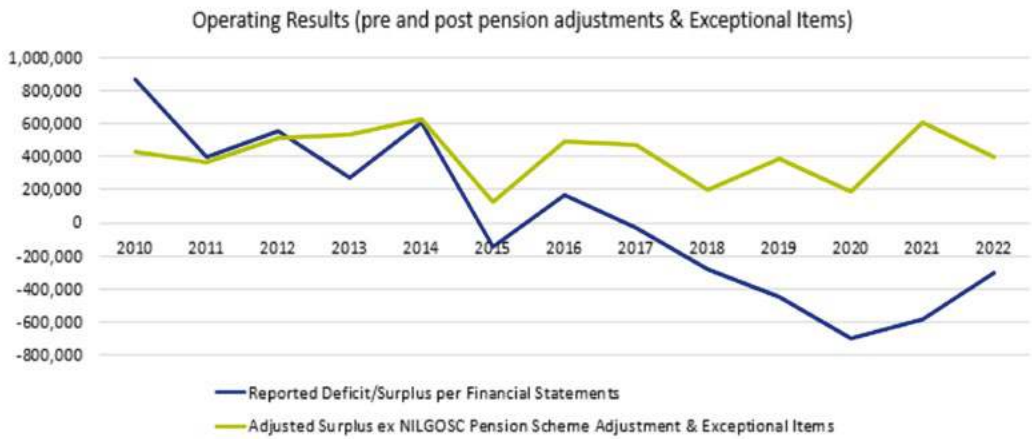
Research and Funded Project expenditure has increased by £249k to £267k compared with the previous year largely due to the return of funded research projects following the pandemic. This has included costs associated with the Diversity and Mutual Understanding, International Outreach and well as the Erasmus and Turing international student exchange programmes. Costs also include expenditure associated with the Higher Education Transition Experience Initiative and other Research Projects.

The chart below shows the breakdown of total expenditure for the last 5 years:



Operating Results

The graph below shows the operating surpluses (before NILGOSC related pension adjustments and Exceptional Items) generated over recent years compared with the reported financial deficit/surplus including the pension adjustments since 2010.



Statement of Financial Position

Overall, the Statement of Financial Position shows a Net Asset Position of £26.56m (2021 – £18.26m). The increase in Net Assets is largely as a result of the reduction in the NILGOSC Pension Scheme Liability from £7.86m in the previous year to £521k in the current year. Despite funding some further capital projects during the year, cash holdings and short-term deposits also remain strong at £5.5m (2021 - £5.3m). However, as noted above General Reserves have been strengthened by £962k (2021 - £604k) in the year to £27.08m (2021 - £26.12m) as shown below:

	2022	2021
	£'000	£'000
Reported Operating Deficit	(305)	(582)
NILGOSC Actuarial charges	1,267	1,186
Increase in General Reserves	962	604

The governors have a reasonable expectation that the University College will have adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future as the College continues to maintain significant cash balances and continues to make an operational surplus before the pension scheme adjustments. However, significant and indeterminable challenges, both in scope and duration, still lie ahead to manage the ongoing cost of living situation.

Cash Flow

The Cash Flow Statement shows a net increase in cash of £202k (2021 – £912k net increase).

SUMMARY

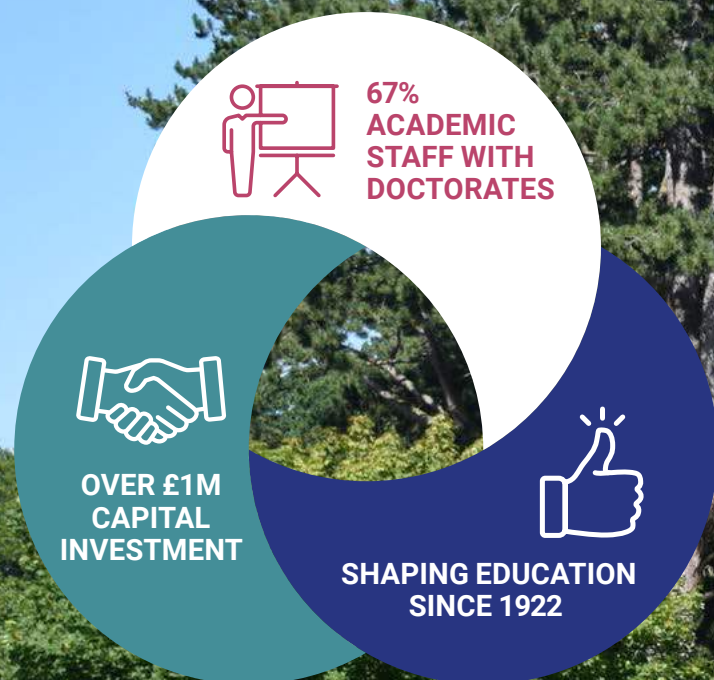
The College's financial strategy supports both investment in the campus and on-going sustainability of operations, whilst the necessity to make efficiency savings has been embraced. The financial performance reflects the Governing Body's commitment to the generation of operating surpluses and to securing the financial solvency of the College within the context of its long-term strategy and objectives.

Future Developments

It is expected that, with the support of Sponsor Department provided capital grant funding, the College will continue to invest in the upgrade of campus facilities aimed at progressing priorities identified in the most recent College Estates Strategy including the refurbishing of spaces that will be used to host Stranmillis University Centenary celebration events during the 2022-23 year. The most significant

capital projects expected to progress during 2022-23 include the completion of the campus Boundary Wall and Entrance Gates project, the completion of Equipment Upgrade projects commenced in 2021-22, a project to install more energy efficient lighting within the Halls of Residence complex and further equipment upgrades. A further Minor Works programme is also in progress across the College. In addition, the University College continues to move forward its plans for the refurbishment of the campus outdoor sports facilities. A number of other Estates projects are also at the early stages of development and it is hoped that some of these works will be partially funded by the Sponsor Department in forthcoming years. However, at present there is uncertainty as to the availability and extent of future Sponsor Department capital funding beyond the end of March 2023.







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