Memoir of a Privileged Time

A personal history of the development of the University of Limerick 1972-2012
and pre-history 1862-1972

By President Emeritus John O'Connor.
This memoir arose from interviews conducted as part of the University of Limerick Oral History Project (ULOHP). I am very grateful to my Editors Tanya Ní Céirín (Kerin) and to Dr. Catherine O’ Connor, ULOHP Project Officer, for their assistance in its preparation.
# Memoir of a Privileged Time

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Acknowledgements

I wish to thank Dr. Edward Walsh, Founding President of the University of Limerick, for his outstanding dedication and lifetime commitment to the achievement of UL, from the time of his appointment to the then NIHE in November 1969. Over the course of the next twenty eight years, he realised what sometimes seemed an impossible dream in the dramatic development of a world class university under his leadership and it was my honour to work alongside him throughout. In supportive partnership was Ed’s wonderful wife, Stephanie. I wish to especially thank her for her immense contribution and the friendships she created across the evolving campus community. To Ed’s family I extend my thanks for a lifetime of support and understanding of his vital role as Founding President. Indeed the fruits of his efforts continue to be reaped today. My thanks also to his successor Professor Roger Downer who was a pleasure to work with. The advancement of UL as a leading world class university continues today under the most capable leadership of UL President Don Barry who has continued and grown the success story of UL.

Special mention must be made of the original members of the Limerick University Project Committee whose determined and civic minded efforts eventually achieved success with the establishment of NIHE. The pioneering students and staff of the NIHE Limerick are to be commended for their courage in joining a fledgling Institute and bravely joining in the transformation of third level education in Ireland. They believed in the vision of an institution serving a national need at a time of new opportunity; looking towards Europe in anticipation of our membership of the European Community (the then EEC), producing science, technology and business graduates who would take on leadership roles internationally. This vision has been successfully achieved and I wish to thank everyone who had the faith to join us and follow the dream.

Shaping the future of the fledgling Institute was the original NIHE Planning Board, 1970–’75. Led by Ed Walsh, it consisted of Margaret Lyddy, Jim Lyons, Finbarr O’Callaghan, Anne Sadlier, Paul Quigley, Phillip Hilliard and Declan O’Keefe. The NIHE Planning Board essentially drew up the early blueprint for the success story that
would become UL. In 1975, the new Governing Body was set up. It’s Founding Chairman, Paul Quigley, is appropriately remembered by a memorial plaque at the Quigley (student) Residence, located on the North Campus, where he is described as an ‘enduring footprint, inspirational visionary, eminent thinker, enlightened leader’. UL continued to be blessed by visionary members of the Governing Body down through the years and I would like to thank each and every one for their contribution to establishing a world class university, often amidst much adversary.

UL was similarly honoured by the Chairpersons of the University of Limerick Foundation, established in 1989, among them the remarkable Chuck Feeney, Lew Glucksman and Loretta Brennan Glucksman. Their extraordinary talents and resources benefited the development of UL; when other universities were surviving, UL was thriving. Their global experience and knowledge supported UL’s development and provided essential assistance in optimising international connections for the development of key projects. Special mention must go to John Healy of Chuck Feeney’s Atlantic Philanthropies who always believed in UL and played a significant role in advancing the University.

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The UL Capital Programme Review Submission to the HEA in 2003 played a pivotal role in securing funding for UL and the group members behind this submission deserve my special thanks for their hard work and perseverance. They were John Moroney, Callista Bennis and Mary Killing.

It is one thing to have the vision and the ability to fund campus expansion, but UL critically needed to purchase the adjacent lands necessary to develop UL. To this end John Moroney played a pivotal role, convincing landowners who did not want to sell or were persuaded by another offer, to sell these vital lands to UL. Indeed his negotiation abilities ensured that once purchased, the lands were developed as intended despite the inevitable planning objections to a mutually satisfactory outcome.

Another major accomplishment during my career was the development of Health Sciences at UL and I was blessed with a brilliant team to bring this to fruition. Bernie Quilllan was a significant driving force, who over time took charge of the project as Head of Nursing Education Programme. My thanks also to David Conway, UL Finance Department, for his continued dedicated support of research funding essential to the academic advancement of UL.

Essential to the successful development of a world class campus were several key external construction professionals who brought the necessary skills and professional experience to create a world class university campus at UL. The spectacular campus before us today is in no small part thanks to the talented architect Pat Whelan who gave generously of his time at crucial times throughout his career from the very first days of NIHE. The outstanding lifetime contribution also made by Tom Kerin, Kerin Contract Management, merits special mention. His engineering and project management expertise were key to the development of the fledgling Institute from the early days and every major project in UL bears his hallmark of excellence. A founding member of Plassey Campus Centre Ltd., he was joined by architect John Quinn and together they brought the necessary creative vision and persistence to accomplish UL’s ambitious vision of the first student campus residences in Ireland. I am also most thankful to Jim Lyons for the sound legal advice he provided which was essential to the success of this early PCC Ltd. Its success has propelled UL into a new
stage of development which continues today through PCC Ltd., supporting the
development of a vibrant campus community through student residences, restaurants,
café-bars and retail services. Linda Stevens and Niall Murphy have been key players
in maintaining the company’s self-funding ethos and both deserve a special mention
for their years of work and dedication.

Over the years I built up good working relations with a number of individuals at the
Department of Education and I would particularly like to acknowledge the support of
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sympathetic ear to my representations on behalf of UL.

My heartfelt thanks to my own family whose support has meant my career has been
long lived and enjoyable. My beloved wife, Seosaimhín, whose patience knows no
end, thank you for waiting so patiently for my retirement or semi-retirement as you
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The friends and family of UL number many and are dotted across the world. My
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Finally, in compiling this memoir, I wish to express my sincere thanks to Tanya Ní
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Eamonn Cregan of Corporate Affairs. My sincere thanks to all for your help.
Background

1 BOHERBUE AND PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE 1945 – 1972

Childhood Years

Born on the 1 January 1945 in Islandave, Boherbue, County Cork, son of Denis and Ellen (Murphy) O’Connor, I was the fourth child in a family of six boys. The family were keen farmers. My father was particularly industrious and built up a reputation for inventiveness and creativity in the development of the farm and in making use of the latest agricultural technology. His farming developments included:

- Development of silage for cattle feed - one of the first farmers in Munster to do so.
- Made use of the powered milking machine before the ESB provided rural electrification - an experience rare in Munster at that time.
- Gave continuous focus to the improvement of grass quality across all fields in the farm through the use of latest grass seed technology.
- Gave long term focus to the improvement of his dairy herd by the acquisition of new and improved breeds of dairy cattle.
- Made significant improvements in the level and quality of pig production.

In 1954 my father received a national award given for the quality of his farming and the Minister for Agriculture, Mr James Dillon, T.D., visited the farm to inspect the range of innovative developments.

During my youth, I imbibed a lot of knowledge from the day to day experiences I encountered from being close to my father on the farm. Of particular relevance was all the time I spent closely observing my father as he traded farm produce. These early formative educational experiences have remained in my subconscious and I have certainly drawn on them in response to the challenges I encountered in my future and varied career.
School

In 1949 I started my primary education at the Boherbue National School. The school was one mile from my home. In keeping with the custom of the time as described by my cousin Alice Taylor in her book, *To School Through The Fields*, I walked to and from the school each day, barefoot for most of the year, as was the custom in rural Ireland at that time. We would carry turf or some contribution to the school fire in the winter and of course our milk bottles for refreshment, which we would leave warming by the fireside.

As there was no secondary school in the region, upon completion of my primary education in 1957, I was enrolled in a Redemptorist boarding school in Limerick – St Clement's College, or the Juvenate as it was then known. The College was particularly progressive, providing a good liberal education by excellent teachers. All students boarded and came from all four provinces of Ireland. The College was more focussed on the educational output than on exam results. The current focus on points at Leaving Cert had not yet become a reality. My favourite subjects were Maths, History and Latin. There was no corporal punishment and the food was excellent.

My time in the College helped me to escape the restrictions I was beginning to experience in the small rural environment of Boherbue where social contacts were limited in such a small rural parish. I enjoyed my five years at St Clement's College and created wonderful friendships with fellow students from across a wide range of county and social backgrounds.
Redemptorist seminary and University education

Upon completion of my Leaving Cert in 1962 I decided to commence the process of joining the Redemptorist congregation. This entailed spending a preparatory year at the Redemptorist novitiate at Esker, Athenry, Co Galway. Following the completion of the novitiate year in September 1963, I transferred to the Redemptorist Seminary, at Cluain Mhuire, Galway and enrolled in the Bachelor of Arts Programme at University College Galway (UCG), graduating with an honours BA degree in History, Latin and Philosophy (Metaphysics) in October 1966. Following my graduation I continued my studies in Galway for a further two years focusing on Philosophy and Theology. These studies took place in UCG and in the Redemptorist Seminary in Galway.

Career Review

On Friday 5 April 1968, following a review and re-evaluation of my chosen career, I decided to leave the Redemptorist seminary and return home to consider my career possibilities. During the first two days at home in Boherbue, I thought and dreamed about possible career structures. The education I received at the Juvenate in Limerick, at the Redemptorist seminary and at University College Galway was valuable, liberal and particularly enjoyable.

While I relished these studies and knew that I would always be interested in keeping abreast of them privately, I did not envisage however that they would be core to my career. In my future career, I wished to make developments happen. However, to make this career vision a reality, I realised that new skills and additional experiences were required. The liberal education I had pursued between 1957 – 1968, while of significant educational and artistic value, had not equipped me with the range of skills and expertise I would need for my future career; a career focused on making a pragmatic contribution to society. I felt confused and was experiencing a dilemma.
Over the course of this weekend of contemplation back home, I was fortunate to receive a telephone call from a wise cousin – Peig O’Brien. I explained my dilemma to her. Peig responded with an invitation to Dublin and requested I join her for a week at her home in Clontarf. I set off by train to Dublin the following morning on Monday 8 April. That very evening she introduced me to an experienced and successful Chartered Accountant who was a partner in a firm of a chartered accountants in Dublin. He gave me a detailed briefing on the role of a chartered accountant, the skills and expertise that were core to the profession and the study programme and work experience involved in the process of graduating as a Chartered Accountant. This was a most illuminating discovery for me and I immediately saw the relevance of such a profession for the career plan I was now envisaging.

Recognising my interest in pursuing a career in the accountancy profession, my friendly chartered accountant introduced me to the Institute of Chartered Accountants and advised me on the special role this centre plays for postgraduate students committed to qualifying as a chartered accountant. I followed this most informative session with a meeting at the Institute of Chartered Accountants located at 7 Fitzwilliam Place, Dublin 2 the next morning.

The Manager of the centre briefed me in detail on the programme for over an hour, detailing the essential developments, educational features and work requirements necessary for qualification.

This structure comprised of a three year contract of employment with a firm of chartered accountants and the successful completion of five levels of academic programme exams. Happily I was exempt from the first level exam. And in response to my query I was informed that the second and third levels could be completed in the current year, 1968; although it had not been done before. However I saw no reason I
could not be the first to do so as it would simply entail completing both level 2 and 3 exams within seven months. I found this very attractive as it would provide me with a full year in 1969 to complete the fourth level and a full year in 1970 to complete the fifth and final level of the programme.

As obtaining a three year contract of employment in a firm of chartered accountants was an immediate requirement, I launched a search for such a position that very day. Armed with enthusiasm and valuable information from both meetings, my search for a suitable position within a chartered accountancy firm took just two more days. I successfully obtained a three year contract of employment in a particularly attractive location in Lower Baggot Street, central Dublin. I was scheduled to commence employment within two days on Monday 15 April 1968 on a full time basis. I also enrolled as a student with the Institute of Chartered Accountants in the three year Chartered Accountancy Programme.

My first responsibility was to develop my Article Clerk expertise and advance professionally as a chartered accountant at work. My second responsibility was to commence a serious study programme to prepare for the two exam levels I was scheduled to sit in November 1968. These studies were correspondence studies with the Glasgow College of Accountancy. I studied in the evenings after the office work day. In November 1968, I sat both level 2 and 3 exams and passed both. This was a unique achievement in the history of the Institute of Chartered Accountants. Over the two and a half years period April 1968 to November 1970, I successfully progressed through my accountancy study and exam programme. In November 1969 and November 1970 I successfully sat my fourth and final exam, Levels 4 and 5. With these exam achievements I had now completed the academic standard required for qualification as a Professional Chartered Accountant in record time. In April 1971, following the
completion of the three year accountancy contract, I joined Price Waterhouse to further deepen my finance experience.

**Career development**

By mid-1972 I was looking for change in my work experience. Since 1968 when I left the Redemptorist seminary in Galway it had been my overriding objective to pursue a career focussed on the development and management of services that made a significant contribution to society. In September 1972, an opportunity presented itself. The National Institute for Higher Education (NIHE) was being established in Limerick and had an immediate requirement for an accountant to develop and manage the finances of the new Institute. Such was my interest in the development at Limerick, I decided to apply, despite the position being on a temporary basis only. Soon after applying, I was offered the appointment at the newly established NIHE.
2 THE HISTORY OF LIMERICK'S CAMPAIGN FOR A UNIVERSITY

Considering the turbulent history of establishing universities in Ireland, the establishment of such an institution in its totality at Limerick was challenging. While the foundation date of the University of Limerick is regarded as September 1972 when the first cohort of 100 students enrolled; its establishment dates back to 1969 when the government announced its decision to create a university level institute in Limerick. There had been a long drawn out campaign in Limerick for a university. The initiation of this campaign dates back to nearly two hundred years ago - just prior to the Great Famine of 1845-1850.

At that time, Trinity College was the only university in the country and as an exclusively Protestant institution was effectively closed to the majority Catholic population. As F.S.L. Lyons described:

From a political, as well as an educational standpoint it was unsatisfactory, if not actually dangerous, to have one institution virtually monopolising higher education for the benefit of a small and privileged minority. Official opinion, from the 1830s onwards, had begun to harden into a firm belief in the virtues of that ‘mixed’ education of which the National School system was intended to be a demonstration, was inclined towards the solution that would allow Catholics and Protestants to meet within the confines of the same university.¹

There were three significant developments in the expansion of access to third level education in Ireland. The first concerned Trinity College which had been established by Royal Charter in 1592. Any attempts to open up Trinity College's strict access policy by introducing a federal or conglomerate structure had been resisted as the privileged classes fought hard to keep it as a flagship of the Ascendancy, purely for the upper classes of the Anglican Church of Ireland. Eventually Trinity College developed and moved to waive religious based entry exams and opened its gates to all by putting a system of Fellowships and Scholarships in place in 1873. In terms of developing wider access to third level education across denominations, this official attempt to broaden Trinity College intake had a negligible effect and the college remained aloof from mainstream Irish life.

There was growing opinion within officialdom that the solution to the lack of third level educational opportunities for Catholics and Presbyterians at that time was best solved by the provision of a new equal access university where Catholics, Presbyterians and Protestants would meet as equals.

**The Queen's University**

The 1845 Colleges (Ireland) Act provided a second strand of development to provide third level education access to the Catholic and Presbyterian student population. It established three theoretically non-denominational colleges for ‘the advancement of learning’ in Ireland: Queen's College Cork, Queen's College Galway and Queen's College Belfast. These Colleges were linked together under the name Queen's Colleges; later renamed as Queen's University. The Prime Minister responsible for this development was Sir Robert Peel (1788 - 1850). In this era of high political unrest in Ireland, Prime Minister Peel passed a number of conciliatory measures in 1845 in an attempt to appease Catholic opinion including The Colleges (Ireland) Act.

This new university experienced turbulence on its launch on the eve of the Famine when O'Connell, The Liberator, denounced its establishment in the borrowed phrase, ‘godless colleges’. More ominous was the denouncement of these colleges by Catholic Church hierarchy as the Pope issued a Papal Rescript in 1847 condemning the Queen's Colleges as ‘detrimental to religion’, and proposed the foundation of a Catholic University, modelled on Louvain, to the Irish bishops. By decree of the Catholic Bishops Synod of Thurles in 1850, guided by Louvain, the papal proposal of a Catholic University was accepted. The 1845

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2 Lyons, *Ireland Since The Famine*, p.94.

The term ‘godless colleges’ used by Daniel O Connell is borrowed from High Tory Sir Robert Inglis, and reflects the mostly negative reaction to the attempt to provide an equal denominational focus between Catholics, Protestants and Presbyterians with the establishment of The Queen's Colleges in Cork, Galway and Belfast. Cardinal Cullen forbade Catholics to attend these ‘godless colleges’.

Daniel O’ Connell used to travel to the House of Lords from Derrynane, Kerry, via coach to Limerick and by canal to Plassey, across the Black Bridge, and by canal from Killaloe to Dublin.
Famine and dissent amongst Catholics quickly negated any hoped for political gains Sir Robert Peel's Conservative government's conciliatory measures sought to make.

**The Catholic University**

On 12 November 1851, John Henry Newman (later to be Cardinal) was appointed first Rector of the Catholic University, an institution founded and funded independently of the State. Cardinal Newman's Catholic University opened on St Stephen's Green, Dublin on 3rd November 1854, with its Medical School opening in The Cecilia Street Medical School (established 1837) just off Dames Street - a stone's throw from Trinity College. Newman was the author of the famous discourse *The Idea of A University*, but unfortunately the Catholic University struggled to make any real impact. As it was an exclusively single denomination private college, it did not qualify for any public funds and so struggled financially to survive let alone realise Newman's vision. The Cecilia Street Medical School on the other hand, prospered having also established benefical links with the Royal College of Surgeons Ireland. Disenchanted, Newman himself left the post of Rector in 1858.

In Limerick, the Diocesan Seminary, St Munchin's College or Mungret College as it was then known, became an affiliate college to the Catholic University in 1856. The college was built on the lands of the old St Munget Monastery which had been a revered seat of international learning as far back as the tenth century. Mungret College became a secondary Jesuit lay school, providing Bachelor of Arts level courses to students who had already completed their second level education.

So strong was Limerick’s interest in university education, that in 1860, Limerick Corporation unanimously passed a resolution seeking a royal charter for the new Catholic University which had already granted affiliate status to Mungret College, Limerick. Without a charter the Catholic University could not confer degrees to its affiliate colleges. Mungret College faced difficulties awarding degrees and now required a final university examination and graduation process for these students. To advance its case a deputation from Limerick Corporation proceeded to Dublin to deliver their resolution to James Hamilton, Lord Lieutenant, at his residence in Phoenix Park. On arriving in Dublin, robes were donned and the Limerick deputation
marched to his residence and presented its resolution. The response from the Viceroy was quite dismissive.

**The University Education Act 1879**

The difficulty being experienced by Mungret College in the awarding of degrees to their students who had successfully pursued Bachelor of Arts level courses was finally resolved when Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli passed the University Education (Ireland) Act in 1879. The Act abolished the Queen’s University and replaced it with an examining body, the Royal University.

The Royal University was empowered to confer degrees upon all who had passed its prescribed examinations. Under this Act the Catholic University was reconstituted to comprise all Catholic colleges deemed to rank as institutions of higher learning, at that time the list of such institutions included the following:

- Mungret College, (later known as St Munchins College) Limerick,
- Blackrock College (locally known as The French College), Dublin,
- Maynooth College, Kildare,
- Cecilia Street Medical School, Dame Street, Dublin, (now the University College Dublin Medical School)
- St Patrick's College, Carlow,
- Holy Cross College, Clonliffe, Dublin;
- St Kieran's College, Kilkenny;
- The Carmelite College, Terenure, Dublin
- St Ignatius's Temple Street, Dublin.

Student enrolment and resulting examinations across these Catholic Colleges rose from the date of establishment from 746 to 2,638 in 1900.

By the early 1900s, Mungret College was among the top performing Royal University degree colleges with the total numbers of passes secured in the University Examinations (First Arts, Second Arts, and B.A.), as follows: Galway, 351; Mungret, 225; Cork, 199; Magee, 198. Of these totals, the actual number of degrees awarded
were: Galway, 72; Mungret, 44; Cork, 41; Magee, 38. In addition, on two occasions, in 1888 and 1908, Mungret gained more distinctions in the Examinations of the University than either Queen's College, Cork, or Queen's College, Galway. Indeed the success of Mungret College prompted the Presiding Vice Chancellor, Lord Emly, to speak in glowing terms of the college at the public conferring of degrees of the Royal University on 31 October, 1888.

The Queen's Colleges in Cork, Galway and Belfast continued to exist by the Act of 1845, but had no special status in relation to the Royal University, nor any effective share in framing its policy or drawing up its courses. Throughout the period there was a severe fall in enrolments. By 1900, fifty-five years after the establishment of Queen’s University, annual enrolment decreased at the Cork College from 404 to 171 students, at the Galway College from 208 to 83 students and at the Belfast College from 567 to 347 students.

The National University of Ireland

The Irish Universities Act, 1908 established the following two new universities:

- The National University of Ireland
- The Queen's University of Belfast.

The Royal University was dissolved on 31 October 1909. Under the Act, the National University became a federal University with its seat in Dublin and three Constituent Colleges in Dublin, Cork and Galway. Limerick's Mungret College did not receive the affiliation it sought despite its authorities' early interventions for affiliation to the new university before the Second Reading of the Bill back in 1908. A delegation from Limerick made strenuous efforts to have an amendment inserted in the NUI Bill providing Limerick with a Constituent College. The amendment was rejected and Limerick launched its campaign for a university.

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3 ‘The University Examinations’, Mungret Annual 1907, pages 88, 89.
4 Lyons, Ireland Since The Famine, p. 97
1910 Campaign

In 1910 further efforts were made to advance Limerick's case for a university. The President of the UCC, Dr Bertram Windle, was lobbied to get the UCC Governing Body to give support for a Limerick College to become a recognised College of UCC. Dr Windle responded that; ‘the Governing Body of University College Cork would disapprove of anything which might lead to the setting up of a recognised College either in Limerick or elsewhere in Munster.’

1940s Campaign

The demand for a university level institution in Limerick continued to be deeply felt and strongly expressed during the subsequent thirty years. As the Second World War was concluding, Limerick City Council established a University sub-committee to progress the case for a University in Limerick. The committee put forward a submission to An Taoiseach, Eamonn de Valera, setting out the case for the establishment of a constituent college of NUI in Limerick and requesting the Taoiseach to meet a deputation from the Committee. De Valera's Private Secretary replied to the Committee’s request that :

at the moment nothing would be gained by a reception of the proposed deputation from your committee … The Taoiseach thinks that your Committee should in the first instance get in touch with the authorities of University College Cork, whose interests would be most immediately affected.  

Following this discouraging response from An Taoiseach, the committee wrote directly to the President of UCC, Dr Alfred O’Rahilly, seeking his support and requesting that the Governing Body meet a deputation of the committee. Dr. O’Rahilly replied, stating that the three colleges of the NUI, Dublin, Cork and Galway and the Senate of NUI were ‘unanimously opposed to the erection of any further constituent Colleges’ and stressed that UCC’s Governing Body had a veto on any such development in Limerick. This reply severely disheartened the committee and effectively finished this phase of a campaign for a university in Limerick.

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When the Committee informed Dr O’Rahilly of their decision to discontinue their pursuit of a University, they were baffled by the intriguing reply; ‘I am sorry that you have given up the idea about a University institution in Limerick. I personally am most sympathetic to such [an Institution].’

1950s Campaign

In the 1950s a further phase of the campaign for a University in Limerick was launched. The target continued to be the establishment of an NUI constituent college in Limerick. The response from NUI when approached remained generally negative with the strongest objection now coming from the President of UCD. The Limerick campaign was now being opposed on the grounds that it would represent decentralisation of university education and would in the view of UCD, create difficulties in recruiting lecturers for the new venture, which would impact on recruitment to the existing University Colleges.

1960s Campaign

In 1959, a new and final phase of the campaign was launched with establishment by concerned citizens of a Limerick University Project Committee (LUPC). Its stated objective was to establish a university in Limerick – not just an NUI college which had been the objective of previous campaigns. The campaign focus of the new Committee was no longer UCC or NUI. This time the focus was the Department of Education and the Government. The Committee immediately launched an aggressive publicity and political campaigns. At the same time as progressing its' public campaign, the Committee developed a convincing case for the achievement of their objectives and had several meetings with the Minister for Education.

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Finally, in March 1960, the Committee obtained an undertaking from the Minister for Education, Dr Patrick Hillery, to refer the Limerick university question for consideration to the recently established Commission on Higher Education headed by the Chief Justice Cearbhall Ó'Dálaigh. The submission prepared by the LUPC was considered by the Commission in 1961.

The Commission report regarding the Limerick university question was expected by the end of 1961. It took six more years before a report was issued. During this period of waiting the Committee felt restrained from any major public action lest this action might be perceived as lobbying and so damage their case. After the long wait, the publication of the Commission’s report in 1967 proved to be a false dawn. It did recommend a new college for Limerick but its power was limited to awarding only pass degrees, with enrolling students requiring lower academic entrance standards than those of the existing universities. The Limerick University Project Committee had no alternative but to reject this and re-launch its campaign, intensifying its action with Government which ultimately bore fruit.
By 1969, the establishment of a university level, higher education institute at Limerick, to become known as the National Institute for Higher Education (NIHE), was finally approved by government and clearance was provided to commence the appointment process for its founding President.

**Higher Education Policy 1960s**

In addition to Limerick’s lengthy campaign for a university, another factor that influenced the Government's decision in sanctioning a university for Limerick, was its emerging policy that there was a national need to expand higher education and to develop a new type of university education in Ireland, a university more focused on the country’s economic and social developments. This policy was no doubt influenced by developments across the western world. In the ’50s, ’60s and ’70s, new universities were established across the western world which had quite different missions from the traditional universities. These new universities were more focused than their predecessors on the national development needs of the country.
3 ECONOMIC & SOCIAL PROFILE OF 1960S IRELAND

To fully appreciate the challenge facing the new higher education institute that had been approved for establishment in 1969, an understanding of the economic and social profile of Ireland in the 1960s is useful. In the 1960s, Ireland was one of the poorest countries in Europe with the lowest per capita GNP across the European Economic Community. Unique to Europe, Ireland’s population was in a continuous decline since the 1840s. The population of the Ireland which was 6.4 million across the 26 counties in 1841 had fallen to 3.4 million by 1922 at the time of the establishment of the Irish Free State. Over the next 40 years, following the foundation of the State, the population continued to decrease. By the mid-1960s when population decline finally came to a halt, the population of the country had fallen by a further 16% to 2.8 million.\(^7\)

During the same period, economic activity in Ireland could be best described as stagnant, unlike the experience of the rest of the western world. We had limited industrial activity and what activity there was experienced a higher level of protection through import tariffs than our neighbours. Finally, arising from this economic and social stagnation, funding in the impoverished State was inevitably limited. It wasn’t the best timing to establish a new University, another hungry organisation seeking State funds from an already impoverished purse.

However, this dreary account of the 1960s in Ireland doesn’t tell the full story. The 60s was also a decade that initiated a period of great confidence both internationally and nationally. Those who were teenagers during those years have exciting memories of the decade. These vibrant memories are not just based on wonderful new music such as Elvis Presley and the Beatles, or on new styles of dress with the arrival of jeans, the mini skirt and the bikini. It was a great time to be young. In 1967, second level education became free in Ireland and available to all. It was a period that produced an exciting sense of confidence in ourselves and in the future of the country. Irish politics began to look to the outer world for the first time rather than inward to

the traditional nationalism that had dominated the past. Ireland had committed itself to joining the European Economic Community and was beginning to develop a capability to enable it to compete in the open EEC market with a population of 200 million people. We had put in place an exciting programme to encourage foreign industrial investment into Ireland particularly focused on North American investment. By 1969 this programme was proving effective. To quote Charles Dickens, the 1960s was ‘both the worst of times and the best of times’ for the establishment of a new university.\footnote{Charles Dickens, \textit{A Tale of Two Cities} (London, 1859), p.1. http://www.gutenberg.org/files/98/98-h/98-h.htm}
The National Institute for Higher Education (NIHE) 1970-89

4 APPOINTMENT OF PRESIDENT OF NIHE.

By 1969, the establishment of a university level Higher Education Institute to be named The National Institute for Higher Education, NIHE, was finally approved by government. The process of appointing its founding president could now commence. This is a key appointment for any university but for the founding of a new university at such a challenging time, it was a particularly critical appointment.

In November 1969 Dr Edward Walsh was appointed as the Founding President of the new higher education institute at the relatively young age of twenty-nine. It was a fortuitous appointment. Walsh had graduated from University College Cork in 1961. Following his undergraduate studies Edward Walsh left Ireland for America to advance his academic career and studies in America. While progressing his academic career through the American university system, Walsh developed an in-depth understanding of the essential ingredients that have resulted in so many of the world's top ranking universities being American. But maybe more relevant to the challenge facing him in Limerick, given the limited economic and social development of the country at the time; was his appreciation of the unique role played by the Land Grant Universities in the economic and social development of each State across North America and thereby of the whole nation. Walsh had the ability to develop an inspiring mission relevant to Ireland for the fledgling National Institute of Higher Education, later to become the University of Limerick. His mission was that teaching, research and scholarship programmes were to be guided by their relevance to the economic, social and cultural development of Ireland. Most importantly, he had the leadership capacity to set and deliver ambitious goals. But of equal significance was the fact that he was prepared to devote a virtual
lifetime’s commitment to leading the establishment and advancement of the University of Limerick for twenty-eight years - virtually a full career.

5 MISSION OF THE NEW UNIVERSITY

Core to the mission of the new University developed in 1970 was a requirement that it’s teaching, research and scholarship programmes be constantly guided by their relevance to the economic social and cultural development of Ireland. This type of mission was new to Ireland in the 1970s and indeed for some decades later. The educational philosophy underpinning this mission was inspired by the Land Grant Universities established across individual American states under the Morill Act in 1862. The mission of these new universities was to focus their teaching and research programmes on the economic development of the individual states. The initial programmes rolled out under their mission were initially very specific and relevant to economic and social developments of the time. These universities, which include Cornell and MIT, made a major contribution from the nineteenth century onwards to the economic success story of America.

6 RESPONSE FROM EXISTING UNIVERSITIES

Since its establishment in 1845, UCC regarded itself as the university of Munster and regarded Limerick as part of its natural hinterland from where it attracted students and to where it was the dominant and sole provider of university services. Shortly after the government decision granting a university level institution, UCC decided to establish a full time postgraduate programme in education in Limerick. This programme was delivered at Mary Immaculate College and commenced in 1971. This was the first such university programme that UCC had established in Limerick since its foundation. UCC was protecting its territory. The other universities, particularly UCD, privately expressed concern that the establishment of a university level institute in Limerick would result in the new institute taking the lion’s share of any state funding allocated to university education development.
7 ARRIVAL AT PLASSEY HOUSE

I entered Plassey House for the first time on 2 October 1972 and became a member of staff of the new institute that had just been established with the rather lengthy name of the National Institute for Higher Education, (NIHE), Limerick.

During the previous week NIHE had been officially opened by An Taoiseach, Jack Lynch. This ceremony, pictured above, included a rather unique ecumenical blessing at which the Catholic Bishop of Limerick, the Church of Ireland Bishop of Limerick and the Chief Rabbi of Ireland officiated. This liturgical arrangement subsequently gave rise to some public debate at the initiation of Dr Jeremiah Newman, the then President of Maynooth College and later the Bishop of Limerick.

The day I arrived, the scheduled lectures commenced for the first 114 students who had been enrolled across five programmes – Business Studies, Electronic Engineering, European Studies, Applied Science and Secretarial Science. It didn’t take long to meet and get to know the small staff cohort of the new Institute. The number of faculty and staff then numbered fifty-two.

The overriding objective of this fledgling Institute was to develop a new University – the first such development to be created in Ireland since the foundation of the State. I quickly formed the impression that staff were highly motivated, highly enthusiastic and dedicated to the establishment of a University. Many of them displayed a commitment to old fashioned hard work in their day to day work patterns.
The first person I met when I arrived on the campus in 1972 was the Director and later Founding President, Dr. Edward Walsh. He made an immediate impact on me. He had a clear and detailed vision for NIHE and for its future development, combined with outstanding leadership ability, but was impatient at the ineffective and delaying bureaucracy. As we got to know each other I discovered that once he had established confidence in potential projects I put forward for development, he was prone to delegate their implementation, virtually in their entirety, back to me. I soon learned that the source of the vision guiding Walsh in his development strategy for NIHE came from his in depth knowledge acquired during his academic career in North America over the previous decade. Prior to this discovery any inspiration I had acquired of university development strategy came from John Henry Newman’s book *The Idea of a University*. I discovered this book while a student at UCG and was inspired by it and made use of Newman’s philosophy in the interview for the position I now held. I believe it significantly helped me in convincing the selection board that I had the outline of a strategy, a John Henry Newman like strategy, for the development of the new Institute into a full university. Walsh now presented another vision and development strategy for a university. I was greatly influenced by this discovery. I immediately set about a desk study of the history of North American universities, paying special attention to the Land Grant universities which were developed across each State from 1862 onwards. The mission and strategy being adopted by NIHE in 1972 was significantly inspired by these US developments.

Over subsequent decades, when new projects reached development phase, it became standard practice to study models of similar projects across North American universities and higher education institutions. This led to regular visits to the USA to evaluate the relevant North American higher education institutes. On numerous occasions it resulted in the development of close working relationships with the staff and consultants from such institutions.

The second staff member I met when I arrived was Mary McGuire, to whom I was reporting. She was a Department of Education official who had been transferred in 1971 by the Department to act as NIHE Administrator prior to its own administrative role.

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staff being appointed. She was responsible for managing the day to day administrative operations, supporting the newly appointed President and ensuring that the evolving Institute complied with Department regulations. Mary McGuire, while a first rate administrator, was quintessentially a Department person. Where there was conflict between Departmental guidelines and what was best administratively for NIHE she would be inclined to favour the Departmental guidelines. During McGuire’s three years at NIHE there were occasions of some conflict between her as Administrator and Ed Walsh. For example:

- Walsh made the IBM Golf ball typewriter the standard for NIHE, the standard in the Department was the old fashioned Underwood typewriter. McGuire and the Department officials were critical of Walsh’s ‘extravagant purchase decision’.
- Walsh arranged for the development of quality NIHE notepaper using three colours, gold, maroon and black. The Department of Education notepaper had one colour: black. McGuire and Department officials were critical.
- Walsh and the Planning Board went on study tours across British and Continental European universities. The Department and Mary McGuire were critical that there was no prior approval from Dublin.

Socially, Mary McGuire mixed well with other staff and was a delightful person. In 1974, when the core administrative staff were appointed to NIHE, McGuire was recalled back to Dublin by the Department.

The third person I met on that first day on the 2 October and with whom I had a close working relationship for the following thirty plus years was Leo Colgan – the founding Registrar.

Soon after my arrival in Limerick, I was especially blessed with meeting Seosaimhín Lynch from Enniscorthy, Co Wexford, a beautiful young HDip. graduate of Mary Immaculate College and to my delight she later agreed to be my wife! Limerick was to be a happy home to us and our family of four wonderful children, Áine, John, Muireann and Hugh.
Plassey, the parkland estate that became the campus of the new NIHE on its establishment included a single development, Plassey House. This majestic estate house predates the University by more than two centuries. When I arrived, it had undergone a major restoration to its former glory and provided all the basic teaching and administrative services to NIHE in its first two years 1972 -1974. It is now the administrative heart of the university providing offices for the President and his core team, together with accommodation for art galleries, university club and meeting rooms. This house has had a significantly greater role in the development of the University than the operational functions it provides. As a result of its interesting history and quality of design, from the outset, it enabled the university to make an impact on the key players who were invited to visit the fledgling institute before it had any evidence based performance record. These key players included potential employees, potential students, industrial leaders, government decision makers, academic assessors of the university’s programmes, and donors. To this wide ranging community, the first impression they formed of the fledgling Institute was of a university that demonstrated quality, confidence and success even though there was no independent record yet to confirm it.
The provision of a campus for the new Institute was launched in 1970 with the acquisition of the seventy acres (28 hectares) majestic Plassey estate located on the south bank of the River Shannon, four kilometres from Limerick. By 1972, prior to the enrolment of students, the campus was further expanded with the acquisition of ninety-seven acres (39 hectares) of additional lands immediately west of the Plassey estate along the banks of the River Shannon. This 167 acres (67 hectares), of riverside parkland, not only enjoyed quality physical development potential, but also supported a rich natural environment in its flora, fauna and woodlands.

The enrolment capacity of this campus was set at an 8,000 student enrolment. In arriving at this enrolment capacity, we not only took into account the development potential of the campus, but also its unique natural environmental characteristics and the overriding development strategy of the young Institute to protect and further advance the rich environmental features of the lands acquired.

In December 1970, architects were appointed for the creation of a Campus Development Plan and the design of initial academic buildings. This appointment, under a creative partnership arrangement, comprised a leading international British firm of architects, Building Design Partnership (BDP) and an Irish architect, Patrick Whelan. BDP came with particular relevant experience having been the architect for the recently established University of Surrey. In hindsight, the partnership arrangement that BDP and Patrick Whelan had put in place for the project prior to their appointment, proved particularly significant for the design and development of the Plassey Campus. Combined with their superb campus planning and architectural expertise, the team also had the necessary expertise to ensure effective management of Irish contractors and consultants as well as regular reporting to the Department of Education.

The initial priority of the architects was the refurbishment of Plassey House and the creation of a twenty year Campus Development Plan for the new National Institute for Higher Education based on a target enrolment of 8,000 students. When these projects
were at an advanced outline design stage, development work was commenced on the first campus academic building – the Phase 1A Building.

When I arrived at Plassey in October 1972 the Campus Development Plan was ready for public launch and the laying of foundations for the 18,110m² Phase 1A Building was nearing completion by the main contractor, P.J. Walls, managed by Tom Kerin, whose project management expertise I relied on over the following decades.

![Phase 1A, Main Building Blocks A & B as viewed from central courtyard Main Building](image)

This project was funded via World Bank loan funds which were provided to the State on particularly favourable terms. These terms were negotiated by the World Bank under the leadership of Dr Richard Teare, Dean of Engineering, Carnegie Mellon University. The team visited the Campus in April 1973 and carried out an in depth evaluation of the project.

Following this evaluation and the resulting amendment, the World Bank Team approved the development. In this approval particular attention was given by the team to confirming that sufficient funds were provided to ensure the fifty laboratories in the project would be equipped to world class standards.
10 FIRST GRADUATION 1977

When the NIHE was formally founded in 1972, Government strategy provided that the recently established National Council for Education Awards (NCEA) would be its academic awarding body both for sub-degree and degree programmes. In 1973, there was a change of government. This government had three academics in the cabinet: Garret FitzGerald, Justin Keating and Conor Cruise O’Brien who, along with the new Minister for Education, Dick Burke, took a close interest in the NIHE project. They formed the view that all degrees should be awarded by the existing two universities, National University of Ireland (NUI) or Dublin University while the recently established NCEA should be limited to academic awards to sub-degree programmes.

Under this new Government strategy University College Cork (UCC) on behalf of NUI, was assigned responsibility for evaluating NIHE degree programmes and determining the title and level of degree to be awarded. There was consternation in NIHE with the announcement of this decision. The decision meant that NIHE would be a recognised college of the NUI and effectively subject to all its statutes and academic structures. Under the new arrangement, UCC would have a central controlling role in the development of the academic programmes of NIHE. Many of the unique academic characteristics which NIHE had introduced would not be recognised under the new arrangement.

Initially the campus community, including students, staff and governors, rejected this formal government decision. The Minister advised the President that he would exercise the extensive powers he had over the Institute including the power to dismiss the Governing Body if there was not full compliance with the implementation of the government's decision. Eventually, after long debates at Governing Body, Academic Council and other forums as well as a student and staff strike, NIHE did comply with government policy but it continued a robust campaign to repeal the government policy that was intrinsically destructive to the operation and development of the recently founded NIHE.

The students were slower to accept the government decision. They publicly burned the student matriculation forms which they were required to complete so that they
would be students of NUI/ UCC and thereby have the potential to be awarded an NUI degree. Eventually the students complied under protest with the government decision. Following compliance, a UCC team of academics evaluated the degree programmes, the individual student performance and the academic structures of NIHE. A copy of this evaluation was leaked and published in the *Irish Independent*. The leaked UCC evaluation was critical of student academic performance and the NIHE academic structures. It declared that many of the students might not qualify for a degree without up to a year of additional study and questioned whether any student would qualify for a honours degree.

This was a painful and destructive episode for NIHE. The poor communication and relationship that existed between NIHE and UCC in progressing the graduation process added to the pain. No account seemed to have been taken by UCC in its evaluation of the innovative academic structures introduced into Ireland with the establishment of NIHE despite these same structures having been well tested and proven across world leading universities in North America over past decades.

*Group of first students circa 1975*

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Eventually other parties with an interest in the NIHE/UCC academic award process got involved to progress a fair and reasonable solution. Edward Walsh played a central role in promoting this wider involvement. This gave rise to a calming of waters and UCC becoming more flexible. As a result the first degrees were awarded at the first graduation in 1976.

NIHE's luck changed for the better when following the 1977 general election, the government parties of the National Coalition (Fine Gael and Labour), lost power and were replaced by Fianna Fáil, the party that had been in power in 1972 when the NIHE was established. Within the first year of the new government being formed, the policy of the previous government was abandoned and the NUI and its constituent colleges ceased to have any involvement with the academic operation and development of NIHE. The National Council for Educational Awards (NCEA) was assigned degree awarding powers. NIHE was restored the freedom and effective independence to follow its own academic strategy.

First graduates of NIHE, Class of 1973 with Faculty members, 1977.
11 PHASE 1B BUILDING 1979 – 1984

In June 1982, construction for the second academic campus facility, the Phase 1B building commenced. This development provided 17,633m² of facilities bringing total campus build space to 37,288m², student enrolment capacity to 3,400 and an additional fifty-two highly serviced laboratories.

*Phase 1B (now known as Blocks C,D,E) completed left of Main Entrance*

With this development NIHE had now reached economies of scale. The construction cost of the development was set at £25 million; £17 million in formally approved construction costs and £8 million in respect of the estimated equipment cost for the fifty-two laboratories based on a detailed study. These 1982 costs are equivalent to well over €100 million based on today's prices. This development increased the UL Campus build to 37,555m² and UL Campus capacity to 3,400 student places.
12 EUROPEAN INVESTMENT BANK

On 29 June 1983, when the construction of the Phase 1B project was well advanced, the President received a letter from the Department of Finance advising him that the State had applied to the European Investment Bank (EIB) for loan funding to finance this project. However, as the EIB funding role was restricted to economic infrastructural projects across the then European Economic Community (which preceded the EU). This was an obstacle to overcome before such funding support could be obtained.

To date, no university in Europe had received support from the EIB. The Department however, were of the view that the EIB might consider NIHE a special case because of its strong and unique links between the Institute and economic development.

We were advised that a team from EIB would visit the campus in two weeks and we were asked to have an appropriate briefing document ready to demonstrate to the Bank the unique role played by NIHE in economic development. I was assigned responsibility for the development of a comprehensive Phase 1B briefing document along the lines specified in the Department of Finance letter. We were also informed by the Department of Finance that the loan being sought was based on an estimated £25 million capital cost of the Phase 1B project. This was based on the actual £17 million already approved cost of the building, plus the laboratory equipment budget of £8 million for the fifty-two laboratories which had earlier been submitted to the Department but had not yet been formally approved. This £8 million equipment budget was arrived at following an evaluation by international academic experts from leading USA universities working in partnership with the NIHE faculty. Each of the laboratories was individually and painstakingly evaluated. In making the submission we were aware that what was being sought was state of the art, world class design standard and was beyond current Irish state funding practices.

While it was the Department of Finance's strategy to have the loan funds it was attempting to obtain from EIB for the financing of NIHE Phase 1B project based on
the estimated fund requirement set by NIHE, it was made quite clear to NIHE in its correspondence that in order to avoid future misunderstanding, the level and structure of EIB funds being provided for the financing of the NIHE Phase 1B project would not involve any departure from the existing arrangements under which exchequer finance was provided to NIHE. It was also pointed out that the overall purpose of the EIB’s participation in the financing of the project was to assist the exchequer to secure loan funding necessary to finance the Public Capital Programme. In other words, some of the funds being requested for the Phase 1B project from EIB might be assigned by the Department to other projects in the Public Capital Programme.

On Wednesday morning, 13 July 1983, thirteen days after the initial Department of Finance briefing, the EIB Team arrived on campus. The team consisted of a loan finance specialist, an economist and an EIB technical advisor. They arrived quietly and without drama. We commenced the morning session by presenting the 150 page briefing document my team and I had spent the previous twelve days (including two weekends) preparing. This briefing included an outline of UL’s mission, its academic programme strategy, enrolment levels, and how national economic development was a central focus of NIHE’s Academic Strategy. The meeting with the EIB Team went well. Convincing the Bank that the Phase 1B project could genuinely be classified as an economic infrastructure project wasn’t too difficult. Shortly afterwards, the Department of Finance loan application was approved.

This development was a breakthrough in the extension of the EIB role, not only in relation for Ireland but also across Europe. It was the first time in the European Union that the EIB provided loan finance for a university development. While processing the loan application, we built strong relations with the members of the EIB team. Without briefing from NIHE, the EIB Team were very conscious that the £8 million laboratory budget on which the loan was based might not necessarily be given in full as an approved expenditure budget. To avoid such an eventuality, the Bank came to the aid of NIHE by requiring the Department of Finance to honour the Phase 1B capital budgets on which EIB loans funds were based. In order to keep this undertaking under
review and ensure that it was not relegated to the sphere of good intentions, it was agreed that NIHE would update the EIB regularly on implementation.

Arising from the special relations we developed during the course of the process, EIB granted a IR£12.5 million (€15.8m) loan to the Exchequer for the construction and equipping of NIHE’s Phase 1B Project on the condition that matching State funds were provided by the Government. The Project was completed and came into operation in 1984, serving to increase the student enrolment capacity of the Campus to 3,400.

Back row left to right: Paddy Doran, Pat Kelly, Cyrill Berkley, Eamonn McQuade, Stuart Hampshire.

Front row left to right: Noel Mulcahy, Mary Sadlier, Leo Colgan, Ed Walsh, John O’Connor, Lucy Gibbons, Roy Hayhurst.
13 CAMPUS LIFE SERVICES

Background.

The development of Campus Life Services comprising student residences, retail services and communal services was a core medium term strategy of NIHE from its foundation in 1972. The delivery of such a strategy was a major challenge. As student enrolment levels grew with the provision of an increasing range of quality academic facilities, the need for such services became greater and we were increasingly aware of our inadequacies in this area. By 1984, NIHE had reached economy of scale size as well as the student growth level target set at foundation. This included 37,000m² of quality academic campus facilities and a student enrolment capacity of 3,400 students, numbers equivalent to the combined size of the nine new UK universities developed in the 1960s. However, in addition to the provision of a range of academic facilities similar to those provided in the NIHE, these UK universities were also provided with student residence services and a range of student retail and communal services from foundation stage through State funding.¹¹

In Ireland, state funding for these services was non-existent. Furthermore, to make implementing the NIHE Campus Life Services strategy even more challenging, the Irish Department of Education was opposed in principle to student residences on the Plassey campus. In 1979, we had explored the possibility of the Salesian Fathers of St John Bosco developing, managing and financing such residences on campus. The Salesian order had international experience in the development of such facilities and were in the process of developing a Roman Catholic parish beside the NIHE. As ownership of Plassey campus lands rested with the Department of Education, the approval of the Department was required to enable the project to proceed. The response of the Department to this request indicated its opposition in principle to student campus residences.

Since 1983, my job title had become that of Director of Finance & Physical Development as the main focus of my job shifted to the physical development of the

¹¹ The nine UK universities included eight universities in Britain and one in Northern Ireland.
campus while retaining overall responsibility for financial affairs. Notwithstanding Departmental opposition and the absence of state funding, I was convinced that through a creative funding strategy and enterprise, campus life services could still be developed. To overcome the obstacles that arose from the Department of Education's policy we needed to have the statutory powers necessary to fund, develop and manage student campus residences, retail services and communal services on a self-funding basis without recourse to State funds. These powers would include the ability to purchase land and borrow loan funds on a commercial, independent basis. The development of a special purpose company was essential. There was however, a major obstacle to the development of such a company. The National Institute for Higher Education Limerick Act of 1981 did not provide NIHE with the statutory capability to establish such a company. However, while NIHE couldn’t establish a company, it could be a member of a company established on a partnership basis with other like minded bodies with whom NIHE had a common purpose; provided it didn’t exercise formal control over that company.

Plassey Campus Centre Limited (PCC)

The required special purpose company was set up in September 1985: Plassey Campus Centre Limited (PCC Ltd). The establishment of the company was assisted by superb legal, financial and tax advice received from Frank O’Riordan of A & L Goodbody, Gerry Boland of Price Waterhouse Cooper and Finbarr O’ Callaghan, Assistant Secretary at the Department of Education and a former member of the NIHE Planning Board. As PCC Ltd. was not controlled by the NIHE, its structure complied with the 1981 National Higher Education Act. The company was limited by guarantee and was awarded charitable status in 1988.

The core objective of PCC Ltd. was to develop and manage campus life services and facilities on a self-funding basis. It would provide the necessary powers to enable land purchase and commercial loan funding. A dedicated lead management and design team was drawn up which consisted of a panel of NIHE staff and external experts with vision and with whom we had developed key working relationships over the course of the young Institutes development to date. This PCC Ltd. Design Team included;
• Tom Kerin MD of Kerin Contract Management - Project Contract Management Consultant,
• John Quinn of Quinn Savage Smith – Architect.,
• Brian Hand, the NIHE Buildings Manager, who was appointed Secretary,
• John O'Connor, the NIHE Finance Officer, who was appointed Managing Director.

We put in place an initial funding arrangement necessary for the launch of the company and the facilities being targeted for immediate development. These facilities included a café-bar, book shop, food store and student launderette. This initial funding strategy consisted of an invite to all the main Irish banks to tender for the sole banking
concession on the NIHE Campus over the twenty year period, 1985 – 2005. The funds realised from this strategy were allocated to PCC Ltd. as foundation equity funds. To further expand the funding base, the Students Union agreed to make a contribution of £5 per student – equivalent to £15,000 per annum.

While this first experience of involving students in the financing of Campus Life Service Projects had a restrictive funding impact due to its limited two year duration, similar partnership funding arrangements for PCC Ltd. projects developed in later years. These later student funding arrangements had a much greater funding impact as they comprised an agreed financial levy on each student for the funding of specific projects. Such projects included the 3,368m$^2$ Student Centre, and the 1,875m$^2$ Rowing Club facility on the banks of the River Shannon.

Following its establishment in 1985, PCC Ltd. commenced the development of a range of retail service facilities on campus. This was a relatively modest project consisting of the reconfiguration and expansion of the historic Plassey stables building which was brought to funding and construction stage with little difficulty. With the successful launch of the retail services project, we proceeded to advance the development of the more challenging student residences project. This was a more significant undertaking. It would be a first in the state since no similar development model existed at that time in Ireland.
Student Residences: Plassey Village.

The first critical element for the development of NIHE student residences was the acquisition of a suitable site, since we were prevented by the Department of Education from developing student residences on the 167 acre Plassey Campus. We were particularly fortunate that a suitable site came on the market in October 1985, consisting of nine acres of land bounding the campus at its main public entrance. Having evaluated this land we concluded that it was an ideal site for student residences. We immediately arranged for PCC to acquire the site, thereby extending Plassey campus from 167 acres to 176 acres. This land became the first over which NIHE had effective control (through PCC’s acquisition), as the rest of Plassey campus land remained under the direct control and ownership of the Department of Education.
Having acquired a suitable site, the student residence development team undertook a study tour of British universities who had developed quality student residences. This tour enabled us to create a quality brief for the project. Based on this brief, a detailed architectural design was drawn up for Plassey Village. This design provided accommodation for 430 students in a range of two storey houses. Each house consisted of single study bedrooms with a shared living room and kitchen. Each study bedroom was provided with a direct link to the NIHE computer network. A village hall and village manager's residence was located at the centre of the Village in order to provide a range of communal, pastoral and management services to the residences.

While the planning phase of the student residences proceeded, the Department of Education continued to voice concern about the project. At regular intervals it expressed doubt about its commercial viability. On 23 October 1986, we had a meeting with the Department of Education requested by Finbarr O’Callaghan, Assistant Secretary of the Department and a former member of the NIHE Planning Board. He travelled to NIHE to meet with President Ed Walsh and myself. Finbarr’s general intention was to resolve differences that had arisen with the Department regarding the development of Plassey Village. He supported the project and provided some helpful advice which enabled us to arrive at a solution. We agreed to further reduce NIHE’s formal link with PCC Ltd., thereby ensuring that the Institute had no responsibility for any potential liabilities of PCC Ltd. Following legal advice, this undertaking was given effect by transferring NIHE’s PCC Ltd. membership role to the four individuals who had been appointed as directors of the company on its establishment. These individuals, who had close involvement at a senior level with the Institute, included two NIHE Governors (Mirette Corboy and Pat O’Connor) and two NIHE senior executives (John O’Connor and Brian Hand). Under this PCC restructuring arrangement, brought into effect in December 1986, NIHE ceased formal involvement with the company.
This change to the structure of PCC Ltd. resolved the formal concerns of the Department and we were free to finalise the funding structure for the student village with a range of financial institutions. The main associated banks all rejected our initial submission. The fact that the NIHE would not and could not guarantee bank loans compounded our negotiating difficulties. Having failed to convince the main banks, we turned to a range of smaller, Dublin based commercial banks. Their response was equally negative, particularly when they discovered that there was no such similar project in Dublin. To limit the challenge, we decided to reduce the initial loan funding requirement by developing the Village on a phased basis, limiting Phase 1 to the provision of accommodation for 120 students. With this change in development strategy, a funding structure was finally agreed.

This initial development consisted of a building requirement of 1,500m$^2$ of residences for 120 students and 491m$^2$ of retail facilities. Adjusted to current price levels, the investment required for the development was over €6.5 million. This development was an immediate success and there was instant demand for further expansion. Within six months of the completion of Phase 1 of Plassey Village, funding arrangements were put in place with investors for the construction of Phase 2.
The other Irish universities also developed a keen interest in the development of campus student residences and soon followed the NIHE strategy on their individual campuses. Upon completion of Plassey Village, Linda Stevens joined the PCC team as Executive Director. Since her appointment Linda has played a critical and creative role in the development and management of Campus Life Services across the campus.

**Expansion of Student Residences**

In 1992, PCC Ltd. launched its plan for a second student residence, Kilmurry Village. In the meantime, following the appointment of Noel Lindsey as Secretary General, the Department of Education changed its policy towards PCC and no longer had concerns on issues of viability with NIHE in relation to student residences. It willingly endorsed our plan for such a development on site in the original Plassey campus.

Over the course of the subsequent twenty-five years, Campus Life Services expanded to accommodate 66,400m² of facilities across the campus resulting in non-state funded investments of €230 million.

These developments include campus residences for 2,500 students in six Villages, a Student Centre, a range of retail services, a range of sports facilities, student communal services and two bridges over the river Shannon integrating the South with the North campus.
The investments required for the funding of these developments have been generated from both commercial and philanthropic sources (the continued sourcing of such funding is the main activity of the UL Foundation Board), as well as special purpose student fees levied with student agreement for specific projects.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Year of Completion</th>
<th>Rooms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plassey Village</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>424</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kilmurry</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>525</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dromroe</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomond</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>503</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cappavilla</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quigley residence</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. UL Student Residences; name, year of completion and room capacity.
Source: Campus Life Services, Plassey Campus Centre Ltd., University of Limerick.

Aerial view Plassey Village 2012
14 LEVELLING THE PLAYING FIELD

Resolving Staff grading structures and funding inequalities experienced in UL, 1972 -1990

During NIHE’s initial pre-foundation years, 1970 – 1972 and early foundation years, 1972- 1977, recurrent funding was provided directly by the Department of Education.

This funding process was under the control of the Secretaries of the Department of Education; Seán O’Connor and Dominic O’ Laoghaire respectively, with whom we had regular meetings to discuss and negotiate recurrent budgets. However, our experience with the Department with regard to funding allocations since 1972 was not satisfactory. In determining NIHE’s annual recurrent budget, the Department didn’t follow a defined budget allocation methodology and data wasn’t available or provided that would enable us to ascertain the level of recurrent funding being allocated across the existing university colleges.

In 1977, with enrolment exceeding 1,000 full time students, NIHE became a ‘Designated Institute’ of the Higher Education Authority (HEA). This was a particularly welcome development as the HEA was the statutory state agency with responsibility for university funding and budget allocation. With this development NIHE could expect to obtain the same level of unit funding enjoyed by the existing university colleges; TCD and NUI colleges.

Following the transfer of NIHE to the HEA we had access to improved data on recurrent funding allocation across the university sector. This enabled us to estimate in outline terms the level of recurrent funding on a student unit basis being allocated to NIHE compared to fund levels allocated to the other university colleges. This exercise, while limited due to lack of detailed data regarding programme mix across the colleges, established that the existing university colleges received a significantly higher level of unit recurrent funding than the level then being received by NIHE.
Staff grading structure.

At the foundation of NIHE the salary grade structure which had been approved by the Department of Education was lower in funding requirements than the grade structure in the existing universities and gave rise to a significantly lower unit cost. The most senior academic staff salary grade was that of senior lecturer and the number of posts at this level was proportionally fewer than the number in the existing university colleges. The professorial and associated professorial grades didn’t exist at NIHE. In addition, virtually all support staff posts at medium to senior level were on lower salary grade levels than the grade levels in the existing universities and the number of such posts was also relatively fewer.

It was a core guiding strategy of NIHE / UL at its foundation that all positions should be on similar salary grades as applied across the existing universities for similar positions. However, the Department of Education rejected virtually every submission made by the NIHE/ UL to bring its staff salary grades structure into line with existing university grade structures. There were many such submissions during the first two decades following UL’s foundation. This anomalous grading structure at the launch of the new university resulted in pay costs being lower than corresponding pay costs in NUI colleges and TCD, giving rise to reduced funding levels for NIHE/UL. The lower salary levels and funding significantly affected the recruitment of new staff and created unease amongst the existing staff leading to a poor industrial relations environment. This environment gave rise to regular pay claims and low staff morale arising from the fundamental inequality of the pay structure.

To resolve the inadequacies and inequalities of the staff salary grade structure and thus address the morale and practical difficulties it was creating for the advancement of the University, a special Human Resource committee was established. Membership consisted of the Registrar, the Director of Library Services, the Director of Finance and the Personnel Manager. The core objectives of this committee was to bring the staff salary scale structure into line with the salary scale structure in the established universities, develop a vibrant industrial relations environment and restore staff morale.
To assist the committee in these objectives, the Registrar, Leo Colgan and I, as Director of Finance, undertook an in-depth study tour of the existing five universities in 1978 to establish a detailed understanding of their structures with particular focus on the staff salary grade structures. The information acquired from this study enabled us to develop appropriate pay scales for university positions and to develop a creative strategy for their implementation. When the staff trade union made pay claims which were in line with the Institute's staff pay strategy, we, the committee, agreed in principle with their claim and submitted it to the HEA/Department of Education for funding and implementation. Arising from public sector pay policy the response from the Department was virtually always in the negative. When we informed the trade union of the response their customary reaction was to accuse us of being ‘impotent’.

**Role of the Labour Court**

There was however, another option available to the trade union that could provide an independent adjudication system for their pay claim. This option was to submit the pay claim to the Labour Court following failure to reach a resolution through employer/trade union negotiation. This option was adopted by the trade union. On submission of the claim to the Labour Court, the standard practices of the Court came into operation and the employer and trade union representatives were invited to a special meeting of the Court. The employer representative who attended the Court hearing was generally a senior executive of NIHE and a member of the special Human Resource committee. As the policy positions of the trade union and employer representatives were virtually identical, a representative of the Department of Public Service also attended the Labour Court hearing for the purpose of rejecting the trade union claim. The role of the NIHE representative at the hearing was limited to outlining NIHE policy towards the claim and explaining that the Institute, in accordance with Government policy, was comparable in standing and complementary in function with the other universities. Otherwise we remained silent and the representative of the Department of the Public Service acted as the employer.
The Labour Court findings at these hearings were virtually always favourable. Following the pay claim being approved by the Labour Court, the HEA/ Department of Education approved its implementation and sanctioned the necessary additional funding. Over time, this process brought the NIHE staff salary grade structure into line with the staff grade structures in the existing universities, with the exception of the senior academic grade structure. These grades of Professor/Associate Professor posts were established through direct interaction and negotiation with the Department of Education/ Department of Public Service.
Campus Expansion: Physical Development

15 UNIVERSITY STATUS

On 12 January 1989, the then Minister for Education Mary O’Rourke visited NIHE to announce University status. The University of Limerick formally came into existence with the passing of the University of Limerick Act in June and on 14 September 1989, the University was officially inaugurated with the presentation of a silver mace by the Taoiseach Charles Haughey to the Chairman of the Governing Body to symbolise the authority of the university to award degrees.
16 UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK CAMPUS EXPANSION

Over a period of forty years, 1972-2012, the University of Limerick campus has expanded from the original seventy acre Plassey estate purchased in 1970, to a 340 acre campus boasting world class teaching, research and campus accommodation, together with outstanding sporting and cultural facilities. These facilities benefit Limerick and the surrounding counties as well as the University community. In my capacity as Director of Finance and later Director of Finance and Physical Development, I was personally involved in the completion of much of this development of the physical environment of UL. A total of forty-two various building projects increased the total campus area to over 200,000 square metres, between the years 1972-2012, and are itemised in Appendix 1: Index of Properties, Schedule of Areas and Date of Construction. This development resource strategy was facilitated by various phases of funding, including:

- World Bank, 1972-‘75
- European Investment Bank, 1979-‘84
- Atlantic Philanthropies, from 1988
- UL Foundation, from 1989
- Collaborative Funding.

Key to realising UL’s development and campus expansion strategy was the successful acquisition of the vital adjacent lands which were predominately working farmlands. UL’s John Moroney was pivotal in our successful land acquisition strategy.

Aerial view of UL campus development by 2012
17 ARRIVAL OF CHUCK FEENEY AND ATLANTIC PHILANTHROPIES

In 1987, Chuck Feeney, founder of the magnificent foundation, Atlantic Philanthropies, visited the campus on the invitation of Ed Walsh. The intervention of Chuck Feeney and his foundation can be classified as truly epoch making. The wise guidance and generous support Chuck and his team provided have enabled us not only to dream the impossible but also to make these dreams become reality. On more than one occasion his reaction to a proposal I put forward, such as that of the development of the North campus, was simply ‘let’s do it!’ Sometimes exasperated Atlantic officials would ask ‘is he funding all of it?’ to which I would reply ‘only what’s necessary!’

On counting the number of University developments that have been realised by Atlantic Philanthropies over the subsequent twenty-five years, one arrives at over forty individual projects.

These projects include:

- Concert Hall and Foundation Building,
- Library and Computer facilities,
- Irish World Academy of Music and Dance facilities,
- Graduate Entry Medical School Development,
- Campus Life Services comprising student residences and a range of communal facilities,
- Sports Arena with 50m Olympic sized pool,
- Campus expansion from 174 acres to 332 acres,
- Academic developments across a range of programmes in teaching and research.

One of the things that attracted Chuck Feeney to Limerick according to Conor O’Clery, author of *The Billionaire Who Wasn’t: How Chuck Feeney secretly made and gave away a fortune without anyone knowing*, was the ‘cocky’ attitude of its
leadership and its intolerance of bureaucratic restriction.\textsuperscript{12} He learned how the decision in the mid-1980s to raise funds and commence construction for student accommodation was met with outrage and opposition from the Department of Education in Dublin.

It was conventional wisdom that rental fees from student accommodation would be insufficient to service the building loan. John O’Connor, the University’s impish Finance Officer circumvented the Department of Education by creating a private company that being legally independent could not be issued with any directive to stop construction.\textsuperscript{13}

This first phase of student accommodation was already completed when Chuck Feeney showed up on the campus in 1987. However, Chuck took a keen interest in the project and its development history and how the circumvention of the Department of Education was achieved.

In its 2014 report, ‘Laying Foundations for Change: Capital Investments of the Atlantic Philanthropies’, it is noted by Atlantic Philanthropies that the University of Limerick was the Irish institution which most benefitted from Chuck Feeney’s vision for ‘a new, empowered Ireland, fuelled by a knowledge economy cultivated through its universities.’ The report describes how the foundation:

helped grow the University of Limerick from eleven buildings in 1987 to more than forty by 2016. The new facilities include the University Arena- which houses the first Olympic size swimming pool in the country, the Glucksman Library, and housing accommodation for 2,600 students in six quality villages across the Campus as well as the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance. These developments were made possible through being the recipient of 118.2 million euro in grants for these capital projects.\textsuperscript{14}

\textsuperscript{12} Conor O’ Clery, \textit{The Billionaire Who Wasn’t: How Chuck Feeney secretly made and gave away a fortune without anyone knowing} (New York, 2007).
\textsuperscript{13} Conor O’ Clery, \textit{The Billionaire Who Wasn’t}, p. 139.
\textsuperscript{14} Atlantic Philanthropies, ‘Laying Foundations for Change: Capital Investments of the Atlantic Philanthropies’ (2014).
18 TIME SPENT IN HARVARD

In 1988, I was lucky enough to spend time in Harvard, Massachusetts, where I participated in a six week programme organised by the Institute for Educational Management. This proved to be a formative experience. As one of only two non-American participants on the programme, I benefitted enormously from the social interaction as well as the wider educational perspectives and leadership training provided. It was a time of important self-development and growth, during which I gained confidence and self-belief.

19 ROBERT SCHUMAN BUILDING

In the late 1980s with the severe recession coming to an end and demand for student enrolment across Irish universities significantly in excess of capacity, the Government launched a funded undergraduate student expansion programme for 3,000 student places. UL put in a successful bid for 1,000 of these student places. Schuman Building

Under this programme UL was provided with recurrent funding to resource the student expansion as well as capital funds to finance the construction of academic facilities. This development increased the enrolment capacity of UL to 4,400 student places. To accommodate the additional students the 4,300m² Robert Schuman Building was constructed and completed in 1991. This increased the total UL campus build to 44,676m².
20 FOUNDATION BUILDING

The Foundation Building (1990-1993), was a major campus development of 12,436m² with 70% of the required development funds supported by Atlantic Philanthropies and 30% of matching state funding.

The project was completed in 1993 and consisted of a state of the art 1,000 seat University Concert Hall, the first such purposely designed facility in Ireland, as well as teaching and research facilities. The Foundation Building also houses important art collections such as The Irish Watercolour Society of Ireland's National Collection and the National Self Portrait Collection of Ireland. These collections are open for viewing to the large numbers of University Concert Hall audiences who gather in the Foundation Building.

Upon arrival at the Foundation Building, one is artistically engaged by the magnificent fountain's kinetic sculpture ‘Silver Pencils’ by Peter Logan which is dramatically lit by night for the large University Concert Hall audiences. On entering the building, audiences follow a trail of hanging artwork exhibitions and in particular are drawn to the awe inspiring gold leafed mosaic, ‘Sionna’ by Desmond Kinney, as well as an aerial wooden 3D reproduction of Leonardo da Vinci’s Flying Man Machine. The Foundation Building development increased UL Campus capacity to 5,000 student places and total Campus build to 57,112m².
In 1993, the Higher Education Authority recognised the need to increase the capacity of universities to expand student enrolment across computer science programmes.

To fund such a development the HEA launched a specially targeted funded programme both in annual recurrent terms and capital funding terms. In response to this programme UL expanded its enrolment capacity in computer science by 500 student places. To support this development the 4000m$^2$ Computer Science Building was developed. This development increased total campus Build to 61,112m$^2$. 
22 LEWIS AND LORETTA BRENNAN GLUCKSMAN LIBRARY

With funding support from Chuck Feeney, Lew Glucksman, the local region and matching funds from the Government, the 9,170m² Lewis & Loretto Brennan Glucksman Library was developed. The project was completed in 1997 and formally opened in 1998. The Glucksman Library opening ceremony was combined with a celebration to mark the resignation of Dr Edward Walsh as UL President following twenty-eight years of service.
23 UNIVERSITY ARENA AND NATIONAL 50M SWIMMING POOL

In 1991, following the merger of Thomond College of Education into UL, the University acquired national responsibility for Physical Education as it was the only higher institute in Ireland with such a role. Arising from this development, UL further extended its mission strategy to dramatically expand its sports facilities. This improvement in facilities would not only meet the requirement of Physical Education, but also the requirement of a Sports Science programme and those areas of professional and community sports for which facilities were not currently available. Taking into account the existing range of sports facilities on campus, many of which were in poor condition, both in design and maintenance, a high quality comprehensive sports arena incorporating latest design standards with a 50m pool designed to Olympic standards, was considered key to advancing UL’s expanded sports mission from a campus, regional and national perspective.

To progress the delivery of this challenging project, a building committee was established and an outline brief was developed based on a desk study evaluation of comparable international projects. While progressing the brief for the project we simultaneously put a fund raising strategy in place. Initially this strategy had two features. The first feature was the imposition of a small development levy of fifty pence (equivalent to €0.63) on users of the existing swimming pool. While this pool had major inadequacies it was still regularly used by the campus community and public. The second feature of the fund raising strategy was approval for a small annual pool development levy from each student. This was agreed with the student body and with Governing Authority. This levy was raised when general student fees were paid.

On developing an outline desk study brief for the project we arranged a study visit to four north American universities renowned for their quality sports facilities including Olympic standard 50m pools. The universities we visited were Virginia Tech (Virginia), University of Indianapolis (Indiana), Northwestern University (Illinois) and University of Notre Dame (Indiana). This study tour was of enormous value in the development of a quality and comprehensive brief for the sports project we were...
planning to develop. As well as meeting university specialists in each site we visited, we also met building design specialists – in particular a 50m swimming pool world class design specialist Joe Hunsaker. A world champion swimmer himself, Joe Hunsaker had progressed to swimming pool design following the end of his swimming career. He became a world leader in this area with his business partner Dr James Counsilman who was also a world renowned swimming pool designer and published significantly on the subject. Joe Hunsaker had also been a lead US Olympic Team swimming coach. He coached the US male swimming team winning nine gold medals at the 1964 Olympics including six medals by one swimmer.

Before returning home from our wonderful educational USA visit we had a particularly valuable discussion with Mr Hunsaker to ascertain his interest in working on the UL project. We were impressed with his response. Six months later, when the funding plan of the project was at a more advanced state of development, we engaged him as our specialist swimming pool design consultant.

With the information gained from our USA study tour we were able to complete a comprehensive development brief for the Sports Arena and 50m swimming pool. The final brief included:

- A 50m swimming pool designed to Olympic standards. (To extend the flexibility of the pool facility for new learners and children, a section of the pool would have a depth adjustable floating floor).
- An indoor sports hall to accommodate three basketball courts and a circular running track.
- A range of gymnasiums and fully equipped fitness studios.
- Spectator areas.
- Capacity for further expansion to incorporate a 25m warm up/training pool and an additional specialist gymnasium.

Having significantly advanced the project's design brief in 1994, the capital cost was ascertained and discussions commenced with the Department of Education to progress the funding strategy. As there was no 50m pool in Ireland, there was significant public demand for its provision. There was general acceptance that State funding was
essential for the provision for such a project. Initial responses from the Department seemed positive. As time progressed the Department interest became confined to changing the project design brief and thereby reducing cost. They seemed to have little interest in contributing to the funding of the project. The Department proposed that the pool design should be 50m in length, 18m in width and 1.5m in depth. In keeping with Olympic requirement standards, the UL design provided for pool dimensions of 50m length, 25m width and 2.2m depth. We rejected the Department’s proposal without hesitation.

While we were unsuccessfully interacting with the Department of Education seeking a state grant contribution to realise the implementation of the sports project, we briefed Chuck Feeney and John Healy of Atlantic Philanthropies on the sports project. This resulted in a generous donation to both the 50m pool and the dry sports segments of the project. This contribution combined with the results of the funding strategy put in place when the sports project was launched in 1992 meant that by 1996 processes were in place for generation of 67% of the funds required for the construction and full implementation of the project. At this stage of the sports project’s development, John Healy of Atlantic Philanthropies, while very supportive of the project, was sceptical about UL getting sufficient state funds to finance the pool segment of the sports project. In a foolish moment he offered to swim two laps naked if the 50m pool was ever constructed.

John Healy was sceptical about the ability of Finance Officer John O’Connor to procure sufficient government funds. In an unguarded moment he promised that he would come and swim two laps naked, if the fifty metre facility was ever constructed.\textsuperscript{15}

In June 1997 there was a change in government structure that was of significant value to UL and that enhanced the feasibility of funding the 50m pool and the Sports Arena project. A Minister for Sports was appointed for the first time, together with a Department of Sports. Dr Jim McDaid was the Minister. I had a meeting with him in his office to brief him on the 50m swimming pool segment of the UL sports project. The other dry sports segment of the project was virtually fully funded so we were concentrating on the 50m pool towards which no State funding had yet been provided.

\textsuperscript{15} Connor O’ Clery, \textit{The Billionaire Who Wasn’t}, p. 183.
I had a fifteen minute presentation prepared for the Minister. I was five minutes into the presentation and the Minister called a halt. He immediately told me that ‘You are a disprin for a sore head.’ I was rather stunned. The Minister then gave me a full briefing. He was a new Minister in a new Department but he had no significant projects to implement. The 50m swimming pool project that I had presented was, for the Minister, a major national project. He welcomed it and wished to support it. He assured me he would bring it to cabinet for approval and funding authorisation. In a matter of three weeks the project was submitted to cabinet.

While the 50m pool project was endorsed at cabinet, a nationwide competitive tender was required to determine the final project design and funding structure. We were initially disappointed with the response from government. We had already gone through a public tender process to establish the level of funds required for project construction and we were confident that the pool design was world class having been completed by leading world renowned 50m pool designers. We had also already raised significant funds as a contribution to the financing of its construction. All that remained was a decision from government as to the level of state grant available.

I think Minister McDaid was also somewhat disappointed. In the course of discussions with him I got the impression that another member of the cabinet (maybe from the other party in Government) welcomed or may have suggested the competitive tender process as it might result in the 50m pool project not going to UL but to his constituency.

While there was initial disappointment, we rapidly came to terms with reality. The government had decided on a tender process. We were determined to submit a tender that would win. Launching the tender process took time. UL made its submission.
Three other organisations made submissions to the tender. UL was successful and won the tender competition. The tender process resulted in a commitment from government to provide grant funding of approximately 50% of the design construction and fit out of the 50m pool project. By mid-1998 we were ready to commence construction. There was another delay, caused by an unsuccessful tender bidding organisation who had submitted a legal challenge to the Department of Sports regarding the tender process. Resolving this challenge delayed the commencement of construction by a further year. The construction of the 12,092m² Sports Arena & 50m swimming pool project was completed in 2001 and came into full operation.

Following legislation in 1991, Thomond College of Education was merged into UL which increased the Campus build by 1991 to 74,286m² and by 2001 to 90,230m².
24 KATHLEEN LONSDALE BUILDING

With support from European Union Funds sanctioned in 1994, UL was enabled to further expand its Science and Engineering research facilities through the development of the 3,652m$^2$ Kathleen Lonsdale Building.

While there was a significant range of research facilities provided in the Main Building, Phase 1A & Phase 1B built in the 1970s and 1980s respectively; the Kathleen Lonsdale Building was the first dedicated research laboratory facility. This development was completed in 1996.
With the support of the Foundation Board, UL decided to replace its existing entrance which was a gateway originally erected to serve the Plassey Estate in the eighteenth century, with a new entrance appropriate to the University’s inspiring mission, ethos and creative physical development philosophy. In order to generate the most exciting design an architectural competition with the assistance of the RIAI was held during 1995.

The towering flagpoles and Sean Scully's black and white chequerboard wall, ‘Crann Saoil (Wall of Light), comprised the winning design proposed by de Blacam & Meagher Architects. The main entrance competition winning design was to be a long horizontal wall balanced by two oversized flagpoles both set against a yew hedge backed by demesne trees.

This winning design met the University's objective to link and present the older estate and contemporary institution as partners on the site. The flagpoles are 35m high and constructed in timber using sailing mast technology, while Sean Scully's wall is composed entirely of 30 inch black and white stone cubes arranged in a chequerboard pattern without plinth or capping. Both are
highly crafted objects of functional derivation. The flagpoles mark a young vibrant institution and its coloured fluttering flags are to be seen for several miles around reminiscent of medieval times where flags flew high over important sites. The wall is modern with an existential dimension, in line with the articulated aims of the university.

Closely echoing founding President Ed Walsh's aspiration to balance the rational bias of education with the emotional and spiritual experiences to be derived from art; artist Sean Scully compared the analytical thinking encouraged by the university with the wall. He said that ‘it is not explaining any rules to you, it is not didactic - it is a thing’. It has a presence that remains mysterious and inexplicable.
26 SOUTH/ NORTH CAMPUS DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

River Crossing
In 1995, the Campus Development Strategy moved to expand the UL campus to the north of the River Shannon. Establishment of a north campus was driven by the vision of creating a north bank/ south bank campus with the majestic River Shannon as a dramatic east/ west integrating feature of un-paralleled environmental beauty. To achieve this vision special linkage between the already developed South Campus and emerging North Campus was considered essential. The critical features in this linkage comprised:

- The development of a vehicular bridge crossing the river and the provision of similar level infrastructural developmental services across the south and north campus.
- The development of an integrated academic campus across the south and north zones with the central academic hub straddling both zones.

Vehicular Bridge & Infrastructure Services
The substantial lands along the north bank of the River Shannon that were successfully acquired to expand the UL Campus and increase a north bank campus were in general undeveloped without services and had no vehicular transport linkage to the south campus. To resolve these serious basic deficiencies and at the same time progress the creation of an integrated south/ north campus, the provision of a vehicular bridge together with a cycle path and a footpath across the river between the South and North Campus was considered essential.

In addition to providing a vehicular bridge, the perimeter road currently serving the existing South Campus was in need of being extended across the vehicular bridge to join up with the spine road being put in place to service development works on the new lands.
As well as extending the south bank transport services to the North Campus, this infrastructure also extended to the North Campus, the existing range of development services available on the existing South Campus. These services, which were essential for the development of the North Campus, were water, sewage, natural gas and fibre optic services. These infrastructures extended the existing range of development services available on the South Campus to the new sites on the North Campus.

**Campus Academic Integration**

The extension of the existing perimeter service traffic road to the new North Campus and the provision of the necessary vehicular bridge over the river Shannon, incorporating a comprehensive range of developmental services, was an essential requirement for the development of a united expanded campus. However, this was not sufficient to achieve an integrated academic campus where academic synergy is promoted and cross fertilisation of intellectual activity maximised across all strands of the campus community of students and staff, regardless of their campus location. To realise this objective an integrated infrastructure was required to create a physical
continuum from the academic hub of the South Campus to the future academic hub of the North Campus so that they would become effectively one extended integrated academic hub over time.

The Glucksman Library Building and its Plaza are the academic hub of the existing South Campus. The University community, students, staff and visitors make significant daily use of these pedestrian linkages. This campus structure and physical relationships between academic facilities have proved effective in advancing academic synergy, promoting intellectual cross fertilisation throughout the existing campus and fostering shared vision.

The realisation of this development strategy throughout the expanded Campus was achieved by creating a development zone from the Library Plaza across the Plassey riparian meadow to the Millstream that runs parallel to the adjacent River Shannon. In this zone a range of academic facilities and quality communal academic support services were developed along a pedestrian linked route, ‘The Chancellors’ Walk’.

Extending from the Library plaza to the Millstream Courtyard, The Chancellors’ Walk commemorates the guardians of the University in a colonnade of bronze sculptures. These developments were completed during the period 2003-12. Between the Millstream Courtyard and emerging academic hub of the North Campus known as the Riverside Plaza, a pedestrian bridge, ‘The Living Bridge’, is provided.

Chancellors Walk proudly displays bronze bust sculptures of UL Chancellors: (left to right) Paul Quigley, Jack Daly, Miriam Hederman O’Brien, Sean Dolan and Peter Malone.
The core function of this bridge was to establish a physical living continuum from the Riverside Plaza to the Millstream Courtyard and to the Library Plaza via the Chancellors’ Walk. As well as encouraging pedestrian traffic flow between the academic hubs of the South Campus and North Campus, the Living Bridge also provides a unique opportunity to explore the river environment for both the campus community and visitors. The Living Bridge positions the river as an integrated feature of the expanded campus rather than a dividing feature. In urban developments the crossing point of a river has the potential of being a circulation point, a social point or a place for exchange. The Ponte Vecchio in Florence, the Charles Bridge over the River Danube in Prague, the Rialto in Venice, Old London Bridge in London and the Wooden Bridge in Lucerne come to mind in this regard. The Living Bridge in UL plays such a role.
The bridge consists of a range of strands with each strand having a refuge area that promotes relaxation, human exchange and provides an educational environment. It was envisaged that these rest spaces along the Living Bridge would in time, become a place for musicians, and book markets, or simply a place for pausing, chatting, or sitting in contemplation. The development of the Living Bridge was completed in November 2007.
In 1996, following a review of the long-term campus requirements and the evaluation of lands bounding the campus, a strategic plan for land acquisition beyond the existing campus boundaries was developed.

Upon completion, this land acquisition strategy resulted in the acquisition of 156 acres of additional land along the northern, southern and western boundaries, increasing the total Campus from 176 acres to 332 acres.

Acquisition over the period 1972 to 2012 focused on the provision of land to meet the future development need of the university and to enable the institution to respond fully to its remit for teaching, research and to the development of the region. The strategy has enabled the university to expand over this period to one of the largest universities on the island of Ireland.
Extension North

Along the northern boundary on the North Bank of the River Shannon in County Clare 113 acres of integrated and adjoining lands were targeted for acquisition. These lands had major development potential for the University and their acquisition resulted in the majestic River Shannon becoming a central unifying focal point of iconic significance.

South Campus Extension

To improve the development potential of the existing 176 acre campus and extend it to its natural topographical boundary lines, the South Campus was extended by 7 acres; 5 acres south of the existing southern boundary and 2 acres north of the Robert Schuman Building. This land acquisition increased the South Campus to 183 acres.
Western Development Zone

The thirty-six acres of land west of the Robert Schuman Building, bounded by the River Shannon and Limerick County Council Sewage Treatment Works was generally low lying and un-serviced. These lands were targeted for acquisition arising from their significant development potential in the long term. The development of this land acquisition strategy and its successful gradual implementation as different lands reached negotiable stage was achieved between 1995-2006 through the active encouragement and support of Atlantic Philanthropies.

The proximity of these low lying lands to a calm section of the River Shannon suited to rowing provided the opportunity to later build a rowing boat club facility opened in 2009. The UL Boathouse acts as the greeting point upon arrival from the city along the scenic Shannon riverside pedestrian pathway which runs from Limerick city and into the UL campus.

Aerial of Campus showing Western development zone 2009
28 ART & SCULPTURE AT UL

The guiding principle of campus development was the integration of the natural and historical landscape of the original seventy acre rural estate of Plassey into a modern state of the art campus, so that the existing influences the new on the 340 acre campus. The eighteenth century Plassey House and parkland were not only restored and maintained but they were key in shaping the new university design. The central courtyard of medium rise buildings reference the earlier walled garden paying homage to Plassey House. The wider landscape of river and hills was celebrated through the careful creation of riverside and landscape views. Sensitivity to landscape was the resulting guide for sculptural commissions, eleven of which were in turn located for maximum effect. The resulting UL campus is widely recognised as one of the world's most environmentally sensitive and spectacular campuses where several art collections reside.

The presence of art and sculpture in UL has been consciously shaped by the distinctive philosophy underpinning campus development since the inception of the university. Nowadays, eleven major sculptural pieces reflect artistic interpretation of what it is to be human reminding us that education aspires to understanding this question as well as the pursuit of qualifications. Tom Fitzgerald's ‘Leaf Litany’ pictured above and located outside the Glucksman Library, draws inspiration from the splendid foliage of the surrounding Plassey parklands. Successful maintenance of the natural parkland setting, despite the existence of 126,000m² of contemporary buildings, gives the sculpture pieces space throughout the campus and these pieces show a boldness of design and scale, reflecting the confidence of the young, world class institution.
While public funding would have never stretched to the inclusion of art or sculpture, the campus development team were always on the lookout for any financial opportunities to commission art and sculpture in line with campus development. Sculpture often arrived by way of the architect on any given project or by way of benefactors. Once commissioned all artists were given artistic licence with work discussed by a visual arts committee and reviewed by President Ed Walsh and myself.

Ken Thompson's ‘Sundial’ (1985) and Peter Logan's ‘Silver Pencils’ pictured here were both donated by Patrick Whelan's team of consultants on completion of Phase One and The Foundation Building respectively. Located at the Foundation Building fountain, ‘Silver Pencils’ is a kinetic moving sculpture piece, countering architectural immobility with graceful ballet like movement. The pencil remains an enduring symbol of learning and design.

Four pieces were commissioned in association with new buildings. Alexandra Wejchert's imposing polished stainless steel sculpture of deep curving forms set in a dynamic triangular plan titled, ‘Geometric Forms’, was commissioned for the Robert Schumann Building which was designed by Wejchert's brother Andrzej.
Tom Fitzgerald’s ‘Leaf Litany,’ pictured at the start of this section and Antony Gormley’s ‘Together and Apart’ (right), were associated with the Library funded by Chuck Feeney’s Atlantic Philanthropies and Lewis L. Glucksman.

‘Together and Apart’ is consciously positioned on the main footfall thoroughfare in the central plaza in front of the main reception and comprises a bronze man standing with his hands by his sides, legs together with his head bowed; pensive, passive and enduring. Bench seating around the plaza provides a potential space of contemplation and interaction with the sculpture piece in one of the busiest walkways through UL.

‘Resurgence’, by James McKenna is an inherited sculpture originally commissioned by Thomond College which became part of UL in 1991. A large limestone sculpture of eight figures displayed in three distinctive groupings around a water feature is representative of the start up era in Ireland when education was seen as a triumph through use of national, political and mythological symbols.
Louise Walsh’s ‘The Diver’ was commissioned for Kilmurry Village, designed by Quinn Savage Smyth and funded by Atlantic Philanthropies.

Situated in the courtyard of the Kilmurry Village this piece is in close proximity to the nearby River Shannon.

Walsh’s female form diving into a pool watched by three heads makes a witty connection with the sociable fun loving student world known for their practice of fountain swimming and love of talk with the text ‘See no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil’.

Adjoining this area is Brennan Court, named in honour of Loretta Brennan Glucksman.

‘Chancellor's Walk’, already described, is a commemorative project inaugurated in 2008 in the colonnade of the Millstream Courtyard, an important pedestrian link between the North and South campus, as described in Section 26.
Michael Warren's ‘Salmon Fall’ (1993) is an erect column of black oak set on a white limestone platform located on the lawn of Plassey House and creates a focus within the existing landscape of tree lined rolling lawns onto the River Shannon.

‘Salmon Fall’, Micheal Warren.

Aside from specific sculptures commissioned as part of building development, three major sculptural pieces were commissioned to represent UL's mission and aspirations. The first you meet at the University entrance, which comprises of two pieces of sculpture pictured and described in Section 24. These are the 35m timber ship mast inspired flagpoles and Sean Scully’s white and black chequered wall set against a yew hedge backed by demesne trees. The flagpoles signal the vibrancy of the young university and can be seen for miles around and the enigma of the wall is a symbol of the dichotomy of the rational bias of education and the emotional/spiritual aspect of university life as represented by art.

As well as being home to the World Music Centre and the National Concert Orchestra, the University of Limerick is the permanent home of several art collections, including:

- The National Self-Portrait Collection of Ireland
- The Watercolour Society of Ireland Collection
- The O'Malley Sculpture Collection
- The Irish American Cultural Institute's O'Malley Collection
- The Armitage Collection
- The Medical Art Collection
The Bourn Vincent Gallery is the University's principal venue for exhibitions with an ancillary programme of seminars, lectures and performances. The Gallery continues to promote an awareness of visual art and contemporary practices with a full exhibition schedule throughout the year.
29 THE IRISH WORLD ACADEMY OF MUSIC AND DANCE

The development of both visual and performing arts in UL has been included in the distinctive philosophy underpinning campus development since the inception of the university. With the completion of the Concert Hall in 1993, designed to international best standards, our vision was to cultivate, nurture and develop the musicians and performing artists who might one day perform there. While the management team keenly appreciated the strategy to develop a Music and Performing Arts Academy, we needed someone with the vision to create such a school so UL could make a real international contribution to Music and the Performing Arts. Excellence in education has always been the overriding objective at the heart of UL and to this end we began a search for the right individual to drive the development of Music and Performance Arts at UL. All roads of enquiry pointed to one exceptional composer of international repute who was synonymous with innovative creativity and excellence in Irish music; Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin.

To our delight Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin's response to our initial approach was resoundingly enthusiastic and he became our Founding Director and Chair of Music at the Irish World Music Centre (IWMC) which opened in 1994, with twenty-three postgraduate research students initially located in the Foundation Building. Mícheál was clear on what was needed on a strategic level; an inspiring space to nurture the international community of musicians, dancers and scholars to find and explore their own creative voice. The IWMC would award postgraduate research and taught degrees in the study and performance of music and dance with an equal appreciation for performance and contemplation in the Performing Arts of Music and Dance.

The mission of the IWMC would be firmly rooted in its ethos through academic reflection and performance practice through its taught programmes, community outreach programmes (Bealach) and artists-in-residence. This fourfold energy creates the synergy which lies at the heart of the IWMC ethos.

Starting with twenty-three students in 1994, the IWMC quickly gained a high international reputation attracting top international musicians, composers, dancers
choreographers and academics. In 1995, The Irish Chamber Orchestra relocated onto UL’s campus bringing with them talent, energy and synergy to the IWMC.

The academic plan developed under Micheál’s leadership for the IWMC was impressively comprehensive offering a wide range of postgraduate taught programmes with the first MA students beginning the first three taught courses in 1997-1998.\textsuperscript{16} Performance based and academic research in all programme areas was offered at masters and doctoral levels. By 2003-2004, with the successful introduction of the first undergraduate course, BA Music & Dance, student enrolment had grown to 115, with demand for places increasing annually. Plans were put in place to grow student enrolment to 420 by 2007-08 with an estimated 33% coming from non EU countries.

A dedicated, purpose built high tech facility was now required to increase student enrolment as well as to maintain the existing successful operation of the IWMC and to allow it develop its full potential. The IWMC was already a success story in advancing Ireland’s core indigenous culture as well as nurturing and advancing an ongoing Irish response to specific global educational needs in the Performing Arts. A planning team to develop the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance was formed and chaired by myself with substantial representation from the Irish World Music Centre including IWMC Founding Director, Professor Micheál Ó Súilleabháin.

The site for the new purpose built Irish World Academy of Music and Dance was to be located on the banks of the River Shannon as part of the expansion into the North Campus as detailed in the Campus Masterplan. The rich mythology of the River Shannon as told in the tale of the Goddess Sionna who gave her name to the River Shannon, is deeply rooted in educational synergy towards self-knowledge and finding your own voice.\textsuperscript{17} And so, appropriately, the Irish World Academy of Music and

\textsuperscript{16} MA in Chant and Ritual Song; MA in Classical String Performance; MA in Community Music; MA in Dance Performance; MA in Ethnochoreology; MA in Ethnomusicology; MA in Irish Traditional Music Performance; MA in Music Therapy; Graduate Diploma in Music Education.

\textsuperscript{17} Indeed as far back as the sixth century, St Ciaran built the Monastery of Clonmacnoise on the banks of the River Shannon further upstream in County Offaly. In this way the River may be seen as linking the origins of early monastic settlements of learning and prayer with the contemporary culture of the University of Limerick.
Dance was located on the north bank of this iconic river, linked to the South Campus by the Living Bridge.

An international architectural competition was run through the Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland in February 2004 to ensure UL's values of excellence, access and cultural relevance. The University of Limerick Campus Masterplan to develop and link the North and South Campuses provided a key reference point and also helped in providing a contextual location. Out of the ninety-six architectural submissions, the winning design by DLB Cordier Architects was selected. A substantial fundraising effort was launched to fund the €21m development, the bulk of which was by private donation and University funds through the UL Foundation. Again we were kick started by the support of Chuck Feeney's Atlantic Philanthropies.

The Irish World Academy of Music and Dance opened its doors in 2010-2011 with in excess of the projected 420 students. The state of the art 4,743m² building comprises two performance theatres, (240 and eighty seats respectively), three dance studios, five other custom designed studios, a recording studio, practice rooms, computer rooms, tutorial rooms as well as research, teaching and office space all finished to the highest international standards.
30 HEALTH SCIENCE PROGRAMMES

In 2001, the Department of Health & Children announced that it wished to enhance the education and training of pre-registration nurses through the provision of a structured four year nursing degree. To ensure the success of this initiative and optimise the contribution that the universities could make to improving the national health service, the Committee of Heads of Irish Universities (CHIU) established a CHIU Task Force for Nursing Education. In partnership with the Department of Health & Children, this Task Force was to establish the University Nursing Education Degree Programme, to agree and to deliver the resources necessary for its implementation, including both recurrent and capital. Membership of the Task Force was drawn from across the six universities that were providing nursing education diplomas and were committed to launching a four year nursing education degree programme. I was appointed Chairman of the CHIU task force for nursing education and Eamonn Ceannt, Bursar of UCD, was Deputy Chairman. The main focus of the Task Force was to establish and agree resources required to implement a programme which would be targeted across six of the universities. The nursing academics on the Task Force took charge of developing the required four year nursing degree programme.

Developing and agreeing the resource requirement for 4,320 student nurse places being allocated across six university nursing schools was challenging. We sought a solution to this challenge by creating a typical nursing school model with a first year intake of 150 students leading to a total student enrolment at full development stage of 600 students. The annual recurrent resource required to manage and operate this nursing school was then established based on evaluating the resource requirement of other similar type university programmes. To this end, we undertook study visits to a range of international nursing schools across the United Kingdom, Canada and USA.18 The results of this study resulted in the annual unit recurrent cost being set at

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18 These study tours of nursing degree programme and resource requirements were mainly undertaken by myself as Chairman of the CHIU Nurse Education Task Force. In the evaluation of the USA nursing education schools I was joined by the UL Director of Nursing, Nora Mulcahy. This visit occurred on 11 September 2001 (9/11). We were in New York on the Tuesday morning that the ‘Twin Towers’ were destroyed by aircraft. I had visited the ‘Twin Towers’ on the previous Saturday. We did
€8,760 in respect of TCD and NUI nursing schools and €8,050 in respect of UL and DCU nursing schools. The difference in unit funding between the universities was due to different pension funding arrangements. In the older universities pensions were financed through a pension managed by the University. In the newer universities similar pension arrangements were financed directly by the State.

Based on a detailed analysis of the schools' facility requirements, space needs were agreed at 8.5 m\(^2\) per student and the construction and furnishing cost was agreed at €3,496 per m\(^2\). This gave rise to a total capital funding requirement to the University sector of €128.56 million. A further detailed analysis of the equipment requirement both in respect of a wide range of laboratories and general service needs was undertaken, arriving at a funding need under this heading of €4,500 per student. This gave rise to a capital funding requirement to the University sector of €19.2 million.

By May 2002, all the necessary academic and resource structures for all six university nursing schools were authorised and in place to allow the first four year nursing degree programme to come into full operation in the academic year 2002-2003. The six nursing schools of the Institutes of Technology and the nursing school at St. Angela’s College Sligo, approved by the Department of Health & Children, were also brought into operation at the same time by the funding arrangements agreed with the University sector being extended by the Department to the non-university nursing schools. The UL Nursing School was approved with 500 student places and a capital support fund of €17.8 million from the Department of Health & Children. We were greatly assisted at this time by Dick Sweeney, an officer in the Building Unit of the Department of Education.

**Additional Health Science Programmes**

Following a study undertaken by economist Peter Bacon to evaluate the healthcare manpower shortage, a decision was taken by government to establish new programmes in Speech Therapy and Occupational Therapy and a single additional
programme in Physiotherapy. As all these programmes were already available in Dublin, it was decided to locate the new programmes outside the Dublin region. In August 2001, the HEA invited UL to tender for these programmes. To develop the tender document in response to the HEA invitation, a Special Health Science Programme Task Force at UL was established under my direction. A decision was made at the outset to develop a tender for all three Programmes. The membership of this Task Force consisted of UL's Professor Jane Edwards, Dr Alan Donnelly, John Moroney and myself as appointed Executive Chairman. In developing our bid we were guided by international best practice in determining the most effective education structure for each programme. This approach resulted in a graduate entry model being adopted for Occupational Therapy and Speech & Language Therapy. This education model was new to Ireland but had been shown to be particularly effective based on experience in other countries both in terms of broadening access and achieving excellent quality in the resulting health science education. The model is also particularly cost effective as the programme duration is limited to two years, compared to four years from Leaving Cert entry.

In relation to the Physiotherapy bid, which was limited to a single winner with a twenty-five student intake, the UCC senior medical academic involved in preparing the UCC bid had let us know they were particularly focussing on winning this programme. We were surprised by this communication from UCC. We could only assume that they were attempting to discourage us from making a bid for the Physiotherapy programme.
In October 2001, we submitted our tender document and in May 2002 were informed that UL’s bid for all three programmes had been successful; Speech & Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy. Following this success, we were informed by the HEA on 14 May, that UCC was accusing UL of impropriety in its Professional Therapies bid, accusing UL of obtaining and using inside, confidential information regarding the UCC bid. There was no basis for this UCC accusation and it was immediately rejected. We learned later that UCC was particularly aggrieved that their bid for Physiotherapy had failed. To implement the three professional therapy programmes it was decided to develop an integrated Health Science Building (pictured above) with the facilities necessary for both Nursing and the three professional therapy courses. This development was funded from the capital funds allocated for each programme in respect of financing their required facilities.
31 THE GRADUATE ENTRY MEDICAL SCHOOL

Background

In February 2003, there was a formal celebratory launch in Plassey House for the recently established Health Science programmes. There was significant attendance at the event from UL, the Mid-Western Health Board, medical consultants and new staff implementing the programmes being launched. Towards the end of the event I met Professor Declan Lyons and after some brief general discussion of the event we were celebrating, he suggested that with UL's success in developing health science programmes, UL might consider the development of a Medical School. Initially I expressed surprise and perhaps consternation at the suggestion, informing him we had nobody in UL with the required expertise to guide such a development. Declan suggested to me that Professor Paul Finucane, Director of Education at the Irish Medical Council, might have the experience and expertise for such a challenge having recently returned from Australia where he had gained significant knowledge and expertise in the development and management of medical schools. Following further discussions and careful consideration I decided the time was right to undertake such an exciting challenge.

In March 2003, I met Professor Paul Finucane for the first time. I briefed him on the proposal we were developing to launch a campaign for the establishment of a medical school. Paul immediately indicated his endorsement of such a development and explained there was a need for a new approach in medical education, which had been well articulated by the World Federation for Medical Education (WFME) in its Edinburgh Declaration in the 1980s. Many countries found it difficult to respond to this reform. However, some had established new medical schools with the hope that it would free up the rigid and outmoded structures, processes and attitudes that tend to stifle innovation in longer-established schools. Canada embraced this reform of medical schools and established newly structured schools in line with WFME recommendations. McMaster University Medical School in Canada is probably the most famous example of such a reforming medical school. Ireland was one of the countries where the response to the Edinburgh Declaration was slow in spite of calls
for reform by the Irish Medical Council and its stated concerns that Irish medical schools were struggling with standards. The proposal for a medical school at UL formed a response to this national need. To launch the campaign essential for the development of the new medical school, Paul agreed to get involved, initially on a part-time basis due to his other commitments and was retained as UL's Founding Head of Medical School. The establishment of a Medical School at UL was identified as a key objective of the University's Strategic Plan, 2006 - 2011.

**UL Medical School plan: Submission to the Minister**

A briefing document was prepared for submission to the Minister for Education and Science to launch the campaign for the UL Medical School. The UL submission document detailed the proposed structure and major contribution the UL Medical School would make to Ireland’s medical education system. This was prepared under the leadership of Professor Paul Finucane, in partnership with both the Vice President Academic and Vice President Administration. In January 2004, we had a valuable meeting with the Minister in response to our submission. He welcomed our plan in principle for a new medical school and encouraged us to continue the campaign.

**Establishment of Medical Education Working Group on Graduate Medical Education**

In November 2003, the government established a working group to examine the quality of medical education and to make recommendations with particular reference to increasing the range of student entry. According to the Chairman, Professor Patrick Fottrell, the group was set up ‘in response to the serious concerns regarding the quality of medical education in Ireland, the funding arrangements for medical education and the ability of the medical education system to increase the number of graduates in line with projected health service requirements’. In 2004, the University of Limerick established a task force to manage and progress the UL campaign for its medical school project in 2004. The task force consisted of Professor Paul Finucane, Vice President Academic, Professor Don Barry and was

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chaired by myself, the then Vice President Administration and ably administered by Mairead Waters. This task force gave its attention to an international study of medical education in Australia, Canada, Britain and Continental Europe.  

To this end, I visited the world renowned Medical School at McMaster University in Ontario, Canada. My research also brought me to Australia to learn from world leading Medical Schools at Flinders University in Adelaide and the University of Queensland, Brisbane as well as to the UK to St. George's, University of London. Having made formal submissions to the Working Group for Medical Education and Training, we welcomed the findings of the Fottrell Report of this Working Group. Their recommendations were very much in line with our own findings into what was needed both in terms of reforming the quality and increasing the capacity of medical education in Ireland.

It was our intention to pioneer a highly innovative medical education programme in Ireland to facilitate the major advances in medical education achieved internationally following decades of reform. In our preparation of the medical education programme we were conscious of the historical precedent of the Cecilia Street Medical School, founded in Dublin in 1851, which came under the Royal University, the degree awarding authority set up in 1879. This early medical school joined the Catholic University in 1855 and prospered having established beneficial links with the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, an example we were to follow in UL.

20 The medical schools evaluated and studied included:
- McMaster Medical School, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada.
- Weill Cornell Medical College, Cornell University, New York, US.
- Flinders University School of Medicine, Adelaide, Australia.
- Peninsula College of Medicine, University of Plymouth & University of Exeter, UK.
- School of Medicine, University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia.
- St George’s Medical School, University of London, UK.
- Griffiths University Medical School, Queensland, Australia
Following publication of the Fottrell Report in 2006, the group made specific reference to the introduction of graduate entry access in its recommendations to reforming the quality of medical education. It envisaged that secondary school entry to medical education would reduce to 60% of total entry and graduate entry would increase to 40%.

UL received a tender document inviting it to bid for the establishment of a Graduate Entry Medical Programme. To our particular satisfaction we received clarification that the process in determining the location of these programmes would be competitive and that the panel of assessors evaluating the various bids would all be international experts. The terms of the bid were clearly articulated in a sophisticated and comprehensive format. It was a demanding challenge to submit the winning bid, but all the research and study we had undertaken in the previous three years gave us confidence in our submission, the executive summary of which is contained in Appendix 2. UL was successfully awarded the contract. The announcement was made by Minister Mary Hanafin who issued a statement to this effect on Wednesday 20 March 2007 contained in Appendix 3.

The first intake of thirty graduate entry level students started their four year medical programme in September 2007 in the specially fitted out 3,800m² Graduate Entry
Medical School building, pictured above. In addition, a new 1,800m² Clinical Sciences building at the Mid Western Regional Hospital, now known as University Hospital Limerick, was committed to, as well as an upgrade of facilities at the two other lead hospitals; Midland Regional Hospital, Tullamore and St Luke's Hospital, Kilkenny. A commitment was also made to the refurbishment of existing teaching spaces in the seven affiliated hospitals.

UL's Graduate Entry Medical School student intake size increased annually to 150 students by 2014, bringing the total Medical School enrolment to over 500 graduate students by 2014. With close links to the leading medical schools in the world, the University of Limerick Graduate Entry Medical School continues to have a close working relationship with McMaster University Medical School with regard to exam process evaluation.

Key to winning this tender was UL's innovative curriculum and funding structures which provided a clear solution to the challenges outlined in the Fottrell Report regarding quality and funding of Irish medical education as well as the required expansion of medical graduates to meet Ireland's projected healthcare manpower needs.

**The Curriculum**

The proposed curriculum was largely derived from that used in St George's, University of London and Flinders University of South Australia, customised to the Irish context. In addition, the curriculum borrowed innovative aspects of the curricula of other international medical schools, most notably McMaster University Medical School in Canada.

Problem based learning was to be the underlying approach of a four year graduate programme with emphasis on self-directed learning and a continuous assessment process. The curriculum was built around the three foundations of:

1. Knowledge of Health & Illness,
2. Clinical Skills,
3. Professional Competencies.
The Basic Sciences, Knowledge of Health & Illness and Clinical Sciences would be integrated throughout all four years with a gradual increased emphasis on the Clinical Sciences as students progressed through the four years of the programme. Self-directed learning and ongoing assessment processes that appropriately direct the student experience are strongly emphasised. We put processes in place to ensure continuous programme evaluation and revision, together with appropriate staff induction and staff development.

The first two years of the four year programme have a comprehensive integrated system based approach to the basic sciences that centres on problem based learning. The problem based learning approach ensures that students, working together in small groups, come to understand the basic sciences in the context of clinical problems. Early clinical exposure would be an important aspect of the first two years and students would be introduced to clinical sciences and skills from the very beginning of the programme.

Years three and four of the programme would provide students with an intensive clinical apprenticeship, encompassing the major clinical disciplines with substantial exposure to Primary Care and General Practice. This clinical training will be evaluated through the attainment of specific learning outcomes, ensuring excellence in professional competencies.

Students at UL Graduate Entry Medical School
New Structures to ensure quality and manage funding of Medical Education by continuous evaluation

The programme we designed brought a particularly innovative and imaginative approach to the delivery of clinical training. Overall, twenty-five per cent of clinical training is delivered in the Primary Care and General Practice setting and to facilitate this, UL developed five Primary Care Teaching Networks in different geographical areas. Hospital based clinical training is delivered through a network of ten hospitals, organised into three geographical clusters. From a national perspective, UL expanded the number of placements available for clinical training as all its teaching sites were either underused or unused.

The UL Medical School manages clinical training in a manner that ensures the quality of training provided. Community and hospital based clinicians who are responsible for clinical training have a formal contract with UL and their teaching activity is evaluated and subvented. Continuation of the subvention funding is linked to teaching quality evaluation. Innovative governance structures to oversee these arrangements were put in place.

An innovative academic structure was put in place based on the twin directorates of Education and Research. The Medical School is resourced according to the teaching needs of individual disciplines and no departmental structure is provided for. This structure is unique in Ireland and promotes inter-disciplinary collaboration in terms of curriculum delivery and development. Within the structure, we proposed fourteen senior academic appointments and a large number of part-time / session academic staff and appropriate administration and support staff.

The Medical School enjoys close collaboration with the existing Health Sciences programmes at UL taking full advantage of inter-professional education and training with the Nursing & Clinical Therapies.
Healthcare Manpower Expansion

Having carefully considered issues of viability and capacity, UL's proposed intake of 120 students per annum, with 10% international students from non EU countries, would accommodate the projected medical manpower needs in Ireland by adjusting it’s EU student intake from a low of sixty-eight to a high of 138, with non EU student intake at a minimum of twelve. Student admission is on the basis of GAMSAT results (Graduate Australian Medical School Admission Test), which is fully compliant with the student selection processes developed by the Higher Education Authority. Access to students from non-scientific backgrounds and from under-represented groups is also facilitated by UL.

A Helping Hand

Key in the successful launch of the Graduate Entry Medical School project was the provision of significant funding by Chuck Feeney's Atlantic Philanthropies for medical student accommodation which he understood would need to be of a higher spec to potentially facilitate the families of mature students. In fact, Chuck Feeney rang me the night before his Atlantic Philanthropies Board of Directors met to query why I was only looking for funding for fifty medical student places! He suggested we double the figures to accommodate 100 students as he had every confidence the Medical School would be an instant success and require substantial high quality accommodation facilities. Once again Chuck Feeney's support and admiration of UL's pioneering spirit helped provide UL with the ignition to drive this project forward.
32 PRESIDENCY

In the spring of 2006, the President of the University, Roger Downer, became unwell and was required to step down immediately due to ill health. Within days of this development I was approached by Sean Donlon, the Chancellor of UL and Chairman of the Governing Body, with a persuasive request to allow my name go forward to the Governing Body for appointment as President of UL for an interim twelve month period, pending the appointment of a new permanent President. At first I rejected the proposal, pointing out that such an arrangement would be contrary to the traditions of all Irish universities, where usually candidates would be academics playing a senior structural role in the University. The Chancellor informed me that he had already discussed the vacancy with the UL Academic Council and the Executive Board in a bid to identify a suitable candidate. Both discussions concluded with the recommendation that I be appointed to the post of President pending the recruitment of a permanent President.

Over the next few days, senior academic staff who had expressed an interest as candidates for the future permanent presidential role, arrived at my office to discuss the issue with me. All of these colleagues strongly encouraged me to accept the Chancellor's proposal. I received sound advice and great encouragement from the Founding President, Dr Edward Walsh and to my surprise my mother in law! I spent that weekend mulling over the proposal and at the Munster Leinster Rugby match with my son Hugh. As the red Munster flags flew in victory, I made my mind up. With the endorsement of my peers, family and dear wife, Seosaimhín, I contacted the Chancellor and advised him that I would allow my name be put forward for consideration as President of the University to the Governing Body at its next meeting.

On 25 April 2006, I was appointed President of UL. Despite my prior concerns regarding the public role central to the presidential function, I thoroughly enjoyed my period as President of UL.
At the age of sixty, while others might have hinted I should be slowing down, I was at the busiest and most productive time of my career to date, when I took on the role of President of UL. This was a period of significant development for UL, for which I had responsibility and substantial international travel was required during this period of development. These projects included:

- **New Health Science programmes** starting with The School of Nursing and successfully culminating in the Graduate Entry Medical School programme. Having won the Physiotherapy degree programme, UL successfully introduced graduate entry level programmes for Speech & Language Therapy and Occupational Therapy for the first time in Ireland leading the way for the Graduate Entry Medical Programme which was by then our primary strategic goal.

- **Increased post graduate public funding** and UL’s unique placement with industry meant UL was in a good position to maximise post graduate activity.

- **Introduction of the Civil Engineering and Architecture Programmes.**

- **Development of the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance facility.**

- **Implementation of a plan to expand the UL campus across the River Shannon into County Clare** thereby increasing the campus area from 170 acres to 332 acres together with the major construction projects of two bridges across the River Shannon linking the Limerick campus into county Clare - a vehicular bridge and a pedestrian bridge.

Without a doubt, the highlight of my time as President was winning the national competitive tender for the new Graduate Entry Medical Programme. We won this tender against the opposition of all the existing Irish University Medical Schools. Shortly after becoming President, I received a request to visit me from the President of UCG Dr Iognáid O Muircheartaigh. We met soon after on the 20 May, and speaking on behalf of Professor Gerard Wrixon, President of UCC, he invited UL to make a joint submission with UCG and UCC. At this late stage in the submission process, UL had already heavily invested several years of research and international travel forging links with the top international Graduate Medical Schools, and had acquired the problem based learning curriculum central to our submission. With our
novel curriculum approach we had little common ground and I refused the kind offer to join forces.

Sometime before the tender submission, the Minister for Education, Mary Hanafin attended the official opening of the new Material Sciences building, MSSI, at UL. Walking back to Plassey House together I took the opportunity to show her that if you stand facing the river at Plassey House you can see Keeper Hill in County Tipperary to the east. ‘What are you up to?’ she asked me. I asked her for a fair deal and that the Medical School tender be independently evaluated by non-Irish medical system educated medics to ensure an objective decision. The international team of medical experts who assessed the tender submissions were drawn from leading international universities. This ensured absolute fairness and no bias from the assessors.

In March 2007, I was informed by the Minister for Education, Mary Hanafin, that having evaluated all tender submissions and interviewed tender submission candidates from each university; the International Medical Expert Assessors declared the University of Limerick as the outright winner of the tender competition. She had a proviso however! We were to run the Graduate Entry Medical Programme linked with an existing Irish Medical School! As she did not specify it had to be an NUI Medical School, we found a willing partner in the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI), who had less interest in allocated places on the programme than the deal we put in place to ensure our independence to run the programme to our own international best practice design in which we had heavily invested. With the cooperation of the RCSI in place, the Government immediately endorsed this decision. The launch of the Graduate Medical Entry Programme at UL was approved and of particular necessity adequate funding for the operation and development of the new Medical School and Graduate Entry Medical Programme was provided to UL.

21 The Royal College of Surgeons were also successful in their tender submission in this competition to introduce a Graduate Entry Medical Programme alongside their existing Medical Degree Programme.
In May 2007, with the appointment of a new President, my presidential role came to an end but not my involvement with UL. At the instigation of the Chancellor, I was awarded the permanent title of ‘President Emeritus’ by the Governing Body.

At the same time that I received this honour I was requested to take on a special role to progress UL’s development for a two year period (2007-2009), working closely with the new President. This role would require fifty per cent of my time, the rest of the time I could be in retirement mode. It was an attractive proposal.

On the other hand, given the vibrant growth and development at UL at that time, not surprisingly the two year period extended to three years and the daily retirement segment reduced itself so that the role ended up a full time job! Not for the first time my wife’s patience was an unspoken gift to the development of the University as she patiently waited for me to join her in retirement, which I eventually did in 2012.
Personal Reflections

33 A PRIVILEGED EXPERIENCE

As I recall my career experience at UL, the overriding feeling I have is one of a deep sense of being very privileged. During my time at NIHE/UL I have experienced what can only be described as a charmed existence. I have been extraordinarily lucky with the dynamic and progressive environment in which I pursued my career, the leadership of this young university, the people I worked with and the many exciting development opportunities I encountered along the way.

With its historical backdrop, the development objective set by NIHE at its launch seemed challenging. However the fledgling NIHE campus in 1972 displayed an amazing sense of certainty that the objectives it had set would be achieved. What was being launched at Limerick was highly innovative in the context of academic structures in Irish universities and had the potential of making a significant contribution to university development nationally.
Defining Characteristics

When I look back over this time there are some key characteristics which played a central role in the development and advancement of the University of Limerick to the position it enjoys today – forces I believe that made a significant impact on us all. These defining characteristics include:

- Mission and Vision
- Development Culture
- Parkland Campus

Mission and vision

The first of these defining characteristics is a strong and shared vision across the campus community that envisages the University as an agency for change in the economic, social and cultural development of the society it serves. This vision is underpinned by the University’s mission. The vision has played a significant role not only in the strategy of academic programme development but also in the range of communal, cultural and sporting services offered to the wider community at a local level as well as at regional, national and indeed, international levels. This vision was underpinned by an academic structure which had a range of international characteristics completely new to Ireland at that time. These included semesterisation, modular credit system, continuous assessment and interdisciplinary programmes.

Founding UL President Ed Walsh is pictured here in consultation with Cornell University President Frank Rhodes (centre) and Atlantic Philanthropies, Chuck Feeney (left). This meeting is illustrative of the powerful international support gathered to help drive and realise the vision behind UL into a spectacular reality.
Development Culture

The second of these defining features of the University since its launch has been a strong ongoing commitment to development and growth underpinned by self-confidence and self-belief. This commitment was reinforced by a student enrolment plan that set the twenty year student enrolment target at 8,000 students. In the environment of the 1970s, this was seen as bold and ambitious. At the time the planned target represented an enrolment equivalent to forty per cent of total student enrolment across the five existing university colleges while the initial ten year student enrolment target was just 3,000 for the nine new UK universities established in the 1960s.\(^2\) The UL twenty year student enrolment target was reached at the end of 1990s. In 2006, the student enrolment target was increased to 14,500 as part of a revision to UL’s Strategic Development Plan.

Parkland Campus

The third defining principle has been the significant development potential of the campus with 174 acres on the south bank on the magnificent River Shannon. This campus had a development capacity for 175,000m\(^2\) of facilities. As well as possessing the development potential necessary to provide the facilities and infrastructure necessary for the long term development of the University, the campus also had immense environmental and scenic value. With the expansion of the campus in the 1995–2007 period by a further 158 acres to a total 332 acres, the development capacity was increased to 315,000m\(^2\) of facilities.

Forceful Cocktail

The combination of these characteristics, a strong and shared vision, a commitment to ongoing development and growth in an under developed higher education sector requiring change as well as a magnificent green field campus with unparalleled physical development potential, created a forceful energising cocktail of ingredients. I think it is inconceivable that those involved over the decades in the UL venture could not have been but energised by such a cocktail of forces.

Dramatic venture

The NIHE/UL story that the campus community experienced in different ways is dramatic and of course at times was also challenging. When one recalls the level of growth and development across every feature of university life, the advancement of the university is simply amazing over its brief history. In 1972, NIHE was launched with five academic programmes, an enrolment of 113 undergraduate students, buildings comprising the historic 1500m$^2$ Plassey House and its stables and a magnificent green field parkland campus comprising 70 acres on the banks of the Shannon River. By the 1980s, the number of academic programmes had increased to 46 courses, student enrolment had increased to 3,120 and facilities had increased to 37,600m$^2$ on the campus which by then had expanded to 176 acres. By 2012, student enrolment had reached 12,400, academic programmes had expanded to seventy-nine undergraduate courses, 102 post graduate taught courses and 280 doctorate students. Campus facilities had developed across 209,000m$^2$ and with the addition of the North Campus in county Clare, the campus expanded to 332 acres.

This personal story of the past forty years details an exciting and a truly creative backdrop against which I was privileged to operate during my time on this magnificent campus. Embedded in the story are scores of significant projects initiated and delivered by a range of individuals and teams from virtually every College, Division and Department of the University. Those individuals are too numerous to name here but I thank and commend everyone of those involved at every level for sharing in this remarkable journey from a brave ground breaking vision to a spectacular reality today.

- John O'Connor
President Emeritus
December 2016
Appendices.

APPENDIX 1.

Table 1. Index of Properties, Schedule of Areas and Date of Construction.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Building No.</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Gross Area (m²)</th>
<th>Date of Construction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Plassey House</td>
<td>1,545</td>
<td>18th century</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Physical Education and Sports Science Building</td>
<td>6,350</td>
<td>1973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Main Academic Building Phase 1A</td>
<td>18,110</td>
<td>1974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Schrödinger Building</td>
<td>6,827</td>
<td>1978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Main Academic Building Phase 2</td>
<td>17,653</td>
<td>1984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Stables Expansion</td>
<td>4,468</td>
<td>1985-'99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Plassey Village Student Residences</td>
<td>7,310</td>
<td>1987-'91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Maintenance Compound</td>
<td>491</td>
<td>1982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Robert Schuman Building</td>
<td>4,300</td>
<td>1991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Foundation Building</td>
<td>12,436</td>
<td>1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Kilmurry Village : Student Residences</td>
<td>9,800</td>
<td>1994-'97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Brennan Court Residence : Student Residences</td>
<td>4,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Kathleen Lonsdale Building</td>
<td>3,652</td>
<td>1996</td>
</tr>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Lew &amp; Loretta Glucksman Library and Information Services Building</td>
<td>9,170</td>
<td>1997</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Main Academic Building Extension</td>
<td>662</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>Horticultural Laboratory</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>1998</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Computer Science &amp; Service Building</td>
<td>4,000</td>
<td>1999</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Silver Apples Creche</td>
<td>381</td>
<td>1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Material &amp; Surface Science Institute</td>
<td>3,368</td>
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>UL Arena Phase 1</td>
<td>8,680</td>
<td>2000</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Project Description</td>
<td>Cost (€)</td>
<td>Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>------</td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>UL Arena 50m Pool</td>
<td>3,412</td>
<td>2001</td>
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<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Presidential Home Acquired</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Dromroe Village (500 students)</td>
<td>14,531</td>
<td>2002</td>
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<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Material and Surface Science Institute</td>
<td>2,900</td>
<td>2002</td>
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<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Thomond Village (500 students)</td>
<td>15,115</td>
<td>2004</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>Engineering Research Building Millstream Courtyard Building</td>
<td>3,905</td>
<td>2005</td>
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<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Health Sciences Building</td>
<td>6,186</td>
<td>2005</td>
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<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Cappavilla Village (500 students)</td>
<td>15,050</td>
<td>2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Kemmy Business School Building</td>
<td>5,800</td>
<td>2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Language Building</td>
<td>1,645</td>
<td>2008</td>
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<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Irish Chamber Orchestra Building</td>
<td>1,021</td>
<td>2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Irish World Academy of Music and Dance</td>
<td>4,846</td>
<td>2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>UL Boat House</td>
<td>1,875</td>
<td>2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Industrial, Enterprise Centre and Facilities Lero</td>
<td>1,890</td>
<td>2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>President’s House</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Graduate Entry Medical School with 200 student residences</td>
<td>14,882</td>
<td>2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>218,254</strong></td>
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APPENDIX 2.

Executive Summary Of UL Proposal For A Graduate Intake To Medical Education

University of Limerick Proposal for a Graduate Intake to Medical Education

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background: The need for new approaches to medical education was well articulated by the World Federation for Medical Education in its Edinburgh Declaration almost twenty years ago. Many countries responded positively to this reform agenda. Unfortunately, the pace of change in Ireland has been slow, in spite of calls for reform by the Irish Medical Council and its stated concerns that Irish medical schools are struggling with standards. Recently, the need for reform in Irish medical education was clearly articulated in the 2006 Report of the Working Group on Undergraduate Medical Education and Training (Fottrell Report).

Difficulty in reforming medical education is not unique to Ireland. Many countries have established a new medical school in the expectation that, freed from rigid and outmoded structures, processes and attitudes that tend to stifle innovation in longer-established schools, the new school will serve as a catalyst for reform throughout the medical education system. The medical school at McMaster University in Canada is probably the most famous example of such a reforming school.

The proposal contained in this submission constitutes the response of the University of Limerick to the national need for reform in medical education and for an increase in the number of medical graduates in line with projected health service requirements.

The UL Graduate Entry Programme: The University of Limerick will offer a four-year graduate entry programme leading to the award of Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery. The programme will be offered through the University of Limerick Medical School. The establishment of the Medical School is identified as a Key Objective of the University’s Strategic Plan 2006-2011.

The UL programme will be highly innovative in an Irish context and will,
for the first time, enable the major advances in medical education that have been developed internationally over recent decades to be made available in Ireland.

While the curriculum is largely derived from that used in St Georges University of London and the Flinders University of South Australia, it has been customised to the Irish context. In addition, the curriculum borrows innovative aspects of the curricula of other international medical schools, most notably the medical school at McMaster University in Canada.

The curriculum is built around the three domains of ‘Knowledge of Health & Illness’, ‘Clinical Skills’ and ‘Professional Competencies’. The Basic Sciences and Clinical Sciences are integrated throughout all four years with a gradual increase in emphasis on the Clinical Sciences as students progress through the four years of the programme. Throughout, there is a strong emphasis on self-directed learning and on assessment processes that appropriately direct the student experience. There are processes in place to ensure continuous programme evaluation and renewal, together with appropriate staff induction and staff development.

The first two years of the programme will see a comprehensive integrated system-based approach to the basic sciences that centers on problem-based learning (PBL). The PBL approach ensures that students, working together in small groups, come to understand the basic sciences in the context of clinical problems. Early clinical exposure will be an important aspect of the first two years and students will be introduced to clinical sciences and skills from the very first week of the programme.

Years 3 and 4 of the programme will provide students with an intensive clinical apprenticeship, encompassing the major clinical disciplines and with a substantial exposure to Primary Care and General Practice. This clinical training will be driven by the attainment of specific learning outcomes.

The UL programme will bring a particularly innovative and imaginative approach to the delivery of clinical training. Overall, 25% of clinical training will be delivered in the Primary Care/General Practice setting and to facilitate this UL has developed five Primary Care Teaching Networks in different geographical areas. Hospital-based clinical training will be delivered through a network of ten hospitals, organised into three geographical clusters. From a national perspective, UL will expand the number of placements available for clinical training as all of its teaching sites are currently either unused or underused. The UL Medical School will manage clinical training in a manner that ensures the quality of the training provided. Community and hospital-based clinicians who are responsible for clinical training will have a formal
contract with UL, their teaching activity will be both subvented and evaluated and continuation of subvention funding will be linked to teaching quality. Innovative governance structures to oversee these arrangements will be put in place.

**Intake:** Annual intake into the medical programme will be set at 120 students and, of these, 12 (10%) will be international students from outside the EU. Intake into the programme will begin in September 2007 and will increase incrementally from an initial intake of 30 EU students to reach the steady state intake of 120 students in 2010. Having carefully considered issues of viability and capacity, UL can accommodate changing manpower needs in Ireland by adjusting its proposed annual intake of 108 EU students between a low of 68 and a high of 138. Annual intake of non-EU students will remain constant at 12.

In admitting students on the basis of their first university qualification and their performance in the Graduate Australian Medical School Admission Test (GAMSAT), UL will fully comply with the student selection processes developed by the Higher Education Authority. UL has also developed imaginative proposals to facilitate access by people from non-science backgrounds and from under-represented groups.

**Accreditation:** UL has sought formal accreditation of its medical programme from the Medical Council and submitted all relevant documentation to the Council in September 2006. The accreditation process will continue when the Medical Council resumes consideration of graduate entry programmes after completion of this tendering process. As part of the formal UL internal accreditation process, the College of Science Management Group, the College of Science Faculty Board, the Deans’ Council and the Academic Programme Review Committee have all scrutinized and approved the programme.

**Collaboration and Co-operation:** The medical programme will be closely integrated with existing programmes in the Health Sciences at UL, including Nursing and Clinical Therapies, and will take full advantage of the potential for inter-professional education and training provided by the development of a new medical school in such a context. The school has developed a strategic research plan, linked to the University’s research strategy and priorities and which, in the first instance, will focus on strengthening existing research collaborations within UL and between UL and its clinical partners. At a national level, UL will not only fully participate in collaborative education and research across all medical schools and universities, but will take on a leadership role in initiating and driving such collaboration. On the international front, the UL medical school will greatly strengthen its existing links with medical schools in Australia, Canada, the UK and the US.
Resources: UL has developed a detailed specification of both the human and physical resources needed to deliver the programme.

The Medical School will have an innovative academic structure based on twin Directorates of Education and Research. No departmental structure is provided for and the new medical school will be resourced according to the teaching needs of individual disciplines. This structure is unique in Ireland and will serve to promote inter-disciplinary collaboration in matters of curriculum delivery and development. Within the structure, there will be 14 senior academic appointments, together with a large number of part-time/sessional academic staff and appropriate administrative and support staff.

Planning for the UL Medical School began in 2003. The University has recruited a Foundation Head of School and a Foundation Director of Education. Other senior and part-time/sessional academic staff appointments will be made as soon as the programme is formally approved. On-going staff recruitment will reflect the incremental increase in student numbers.

Delivery of the UL medical programme, particularly the delivery of Years 1 and 2 of the programme, will require a 3,800m² medical school development on the UL campus. In addition, there will be a new 1,800m² Clinical Sciences building at the Mid-Western Regional Hospital in Limerick, significant physical developments at the other two lead hospitals (Midlands Regional Hospital, Tullamore and St Luke’s Hospital, Kilkenny) and refurbishment of existing teaching space in the other seven affiliated hospitals.

Plans for the medical school development on the UL campus are at an advanced stage and this will be ready by September 2009. For the two intervening years, UL has identified adequate temporary accommodation on campus for the medical school. As the first cohort of students will not access clinical training until 2009 and clinical student numbers will not reach steady state until 2013, UL is well advanced in its plans for the development of clinical training facilities in partnership with the Health Service Executive (HSE).

Funding: UL has developed a detailed 10-year business plan for the medical school. Per capita income from students will be €24,348 annually, €9,500 of which will come from a student fee. Systems are in place to ensure that no student will be precluded from the programme for financial reasons. Inevitable start-up costs mean that the school will carry a manageable budget deficit until 2010/11, following which income and expenditure will be closely matched.
The total capital cost of providing essential physical resources for the medical programme is projected at €28.22 million - €18.66 million in respect of education facilities on the UL campus and €9.56 million in respect of facilities across the range of clinical sites. It is planned to finance this capital expenditure through a combination of capital state grant funding and University funding arrangements.

**Conclusion:** In his introduction to the 2006 Report of the Working Group on Undergraduate Medical Education and Training, the Chairman of the Working Group, Professor Patrick Fottrell, explains that the Working Group was established “in response to serious concerns regarding the quality of medical education in Ireland, the funding arrangements for medical education and the ability of the medical education system to increase the number of graduates in line with projected health service requirements”. The University made formal submissions to the Working Group and welcomes the far-reaching recommendations contained in the Report. Careful attention to these recommendations is a hallmark of the University’s proposal.

The University of Limerick looks forward to implementing the important reforms that lie ahead and to making a real contribution to the realisation of the overall vision for quality in medical education enunciated in the Fottrell Report.
APPENDIX 3.

Announcement of award of contract for UL Graduate Entry Medical School by Minister for Education and Science, Mary Hanafin,

Mary Hanafin, T.D. Minister for Education and Science, today announced the results of the competition to establish 240 places on new programmes of graduate entry to medical education.

The introduction of the new graduate entry programmes in 2007 is part of overall Government reforms that will more than double the number of medical education places available to Irish students. Under this initiative, an additional 110 undergraduate places have already been approved for 2006 and 2007 across the medical schools at University College Dublin, Trinity College Dublin, University College Cork, NUI Galway and the Royal College of Surgeons of Ireland (RCSI). A further 70 undergraduate places will be allocated to these colleges over the next three years.

The new graduate entry programmes announced today represent a further expansion of opportunity for entry to medicine. Entry to the programmes is open to students who have already completed an honours undergraduate degree in any academic discipline and achieved a minimum 2.1 award. The new places are to be phased in over a four year period, commencing with an intake of 60 students this year and rising to the target intake of 240 students per annum.

Following an international assessment process which considered bids from the Royal College of Surgeons of Ireland, the University of Limerick, and an Irish Universities Medical Consortium (comprised of UCC, UCD, NUIG and Trinity College) to run the new graduate programmes, a panel of international experts has recommended the following:-

1. That RCSI should be approved an intake of 30 students in 2007, rising to a
steady state enrolment of 40 EU students

2. The University of Limerick should also be approved an intake of 30 students in 2007, rising to a maximum steady state enrolment of 108. The panel also recommends that UL should engage further in collaborative approaches with other medical providers.

3. The remaining 92 places should be allocated to institutions which are part of the Irish Universities Medical Consortium (IUMC). (Based on an invitation to the four universities to submit revised bids)

Commenting on the results, Minister Hanafin said she was delighted to see substantial progress made with implementing a key recommendation in the Fottrell Report. ‘Today’s announcement marks another significant milestone in the transformation of medical education in Ireland. It is also an historic day for the University of Limerick and I wholeheartedly congratulate the university on this achievement. I want to thank the independent international panel for the rigour that they applied to the evaluation process. The very eminent expertise of the international panel provides strong assurances of the high quality of the successful proposals. The new graduate entry programmes are an enormously welcome development in medical education. This new second chance route of entry will alleviate the intense pressures that have come to be associated with the need for extremely high Leaving Certificate ‘points’ performance for entry to medicine over recent years’ Minister Hanafin said.

The new graduate places this year will mean that the overall intake to medical education will have increased by 170 this autumn over the 2005 intake level. Minister Hanafin confirmed that €6 million has been provided in the Department of Education and Science’s 2007 Estimates to meet the costs of medical education reforms this year as part of the overall implementation of the recommendations of the Fottrell Report.  