

INVITE

DIALOGUE

EFFECT

VALUE

PROMOTE

DESIRE TO FLOURISH

MID-TERM REVIEW (JANUARY 2018)

of The Pontifical University, St. Patrick's College, Maynooth



Contents

1. **Desire to Flourish (2015-2020):**
Overarching Goals
2. Implementation
3. Review
4. President's Introduction
5. Achievements and Priorities
 1. Goal 1: Enrich Our Identity
 2. Goal 2: Enhance Student Experience
 3. Goal 3: Increase Student Numbers
 4. Goal 4: Augment Staff Capacity
 5. Goal 5: Build Relationships with Partners
 6. Goal 6: Strengthen Governance and Infrastructure



Desire to Flourish (2015-2020)

Mission Statement and Strategic Goals



Mission: Drawing on its Catholic tradition, St Patrick's College, Maynooth is committed to the highest level in teaching and learning, research, and publication. As an institution it promotes the intellectual, human, and professional development of its students within an environment that respects autonomy and diversity.

The Faculty of Theology, further, strives to communicate, to conserve, and to innovate from within the Christian theological tradition and so contribute creatively to the wider church, society, and culture.

Therefore we will:

1. Enrich our Identity	2. Enhance Student Experience	3. Increase Student Recruitment	4. Augment Staff Capacity	5 Build Relationships with Partners	6. Strengthen Governance and Infrastructure
<i>Celebrate and deepen a distinctive identity that is rooted in our mission and Catholic tradition, and practiced in an inclusive and supportive community</i>	<i>Provide a helpful and challenging learning environment in which our students become reflective, skilled and confident graduates</i>	<i>Increase recruitment, retention and progression of students of diverse backgrounds</i>	<i>Enhance staff capacity in areas of research related to our mission, pedagogical best practice, administrative effectiveness, and wellbeing</i>	<i>Foster partnerships, nationally and internationally, with other higher education institutions, statutory bodies, ecclesial and other relevant organisations and individuals who share our mission</i>	<i>Review and propose sustainable means to strengthen organisation, infrastructure and funding</i>
Invite					
1.1 Into an inclusive community rooted in a Catholic identity	2.1 into a personable learning environment, especially in first year	3.1 Potential new cohorts	4. 1 Qualified, skilled and diverse staff	5.1 Collaboration with HEIs	6.1 Supplementary skills and experience into governance
Dialogue					
1.2 With other Christian and religious traditions, society and culture	2.2 Towards fuller participation of students	3.2 Towards identifying collaborative opportunities	4.2 Within academic disciplines	5.2 With organisations that share our mission	6.2 Towards a review of corporate governance
Effect					
1.3 Contributions to church, society and culture	2.3 Innovations that foster graduate attributes	3.3 New programmes and flexible modes of delivery	4.3 Professional development	5.3 Sustainable agreements	6.3 New internal organisational structures
Value					
1.4 The liturgical and spiritual life of the community	2.4 Highest standards in teaching and learning	3.4 Progression, especially of postgraduates	4.4. Staff well-being	5.4 Our alumni	6.4 A resourced administration and infrastructure
Promote					
1.5 Visibility	2.5 Student achievement	3.5 Targeted initiatives and marketing	4.5 Research culture	5.5. Community and academic engagement	6.5 Financial Stability

Implementation

Desire to Flourish: Strategic Plan 2015-020 is accompanied by an operational plan and accompanying framework.

Operational Plan

- The operational plan lays out the actions currently identified to attain our strategic goals (See www.maynoothcollege.ie). Some actions will deliver on several goals simultaneously.
- Actions are to be prioritised – and if necessary supplemented – on a yearly basis during the five consecutive Academic years of the term of this strategic plan (2015-2020).
- Progress and advancement are triangulated between the proposals of this document and the external environment. Implementation is therefore flexible in order to ensure that we are best positioned to adapt to circumstances as required.
- The most significant example is Goal No. 3 (Increase Student Numbers). In the first two years of the plan, focus was placed on undergraduate numbers. After some achievement in this regard, focus turned to postgraduate numbers at the beginning of the third year.

Supporting Framework

The supporting framework is the identification of responsibilities. The Council of Studies (identified in the Strategic Plan as Senior Management Team) will take overall responsibility for progress of the plan, authorising academic boards where appropriate and taking initiative where necessary. Oversight will be provided by the Trustees and newly proposed Governance structures.

The Strategic Plan will be reviewed and evaluated on an annual basis by the Faculty. An annual Trustee report will be presented. This report will also be published online.

Obligations

Responsibilities are separated as follows:

- **Enrich Our Identity:** College Life Board and Caroline Tennyson
- **Enhance Student Experience:** Undergraduate Board with Sheila Browne/Post-Graduate Board
- **Increase Student Recruitment (key):** Marketing Steering Committee (Ad-hoc) with Barbara Mahon
- **Augment Staff Capacity:** Council of Studies
- **Build Relationships with Partners:** Affiliated and Education Programmes Board with Carol Vaudrion
- **Strengthen Governance and Infrastructure:** Council of Studies

Opening Remarks

Last September, I participated in a meeting for newly appointed heads of Catholic and Pontifical Universities last September, organised by the *International Federation of Catholic Universities*. The meeting underlined quality assurance and strategic planning. Our current strategic plan *Desire to Flourish* (2015-20) emerged from the last quality assurance report from AVEPRO (the Holy See's Agency for the Evaluation and Promotion of Quality in Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties). A strategic plan is of little real value unless it is being implemented.

The Pontifical University has made considerable efforts to meet significant challenges in recent years: recruiting and retaining students, reviewing programme academic programmes, increasing scholarships, building international links, etc. But, **it is an ongoing effort and the challenges remain!**

We are at the midway point of the implementation of *Desire to Flourish*.

The key to the effectiveness any strategic plan is:

1. Clearly set goals and objectives that are real, concrete, and attainable but also stretch us. While not ignore aspirational goals, let us identify the ones we can achieve and make them happen.
2. We must renew our collective ownership and awareness of these goals and objectives. We all must strive – academics, administrative staff, and students together – to make our College a desirable and attractive place to study and work so that it can continue to make a valuable contribution to society and the mission of the Church at home and abroad. This requires a greater awareness and communication around our strategic plan and that it is not on some shelf gathering dust!
3. Furthermore, we must also freshen our enthusiasm and energy for the strategic plan so that we do not become complacent or irrelevant.

For this reason, as well as our annual Faculty Day monitoring of the strategic plan, a midway review or 'an examination of conscience' about the implementation of the strategic plan is valuable. It allows more recently appointed members of staff an opportunity to give their input.

Our strategic plan needs respond to even more recent developments: the dramatic decline in residential seminarians; the discontinuing of first-year theology in Kilkenny; the current review of governance of the Pontifical University and the seminary; the growing demand for distance learning programmes; responding to new ecclesial needs (e.g. parish / diocesan catechists), etc. The continuous monitoring and evaluating of our strategic plan allows us, to some degree, to be more in control of events rather than being controlled by them.

In line with the strategic plan, currently we are in the process of:

- Appointing a research co-ordinator in the Faculty;
- Launching the new website;
- Advertising two academic posts that require a strong research and publication history;
- Reviewing all staff contracts to ensure compliance with employment legislation;
- Advertising the O'Fiaich Scholarships to attract students from Northern Ireland;
- Introducing the first phase of the work performance review.

The remaining life-term of *Desire to Flourish* coincides with my tenure as President. A midway review of the implementation of the strategic plan would provide a map to path forward. The purpose of this review, therefore, is to identify and prioritise the goals and objectives that we would wish as a Faculty to invest in and aim to achieve in that time and that will enable the Faculty of Theology to flourish.

President Michael Mullaney

“Planning is the continuous and collective exercise of foresight in the integrated process of taking informed decisions affecting the future.”

– Davies and Lockwood

Mid-term Review

On January 8th 2018, the Faculty of Theology, along with Prof Tom Casey SJ (Dean of Philosophy) and key administrative staff, gathered in the Board Room of the John Hume Building (North Campus).

Called by the *Council of Studies*, the aims of the mid-term review were to acknowledge achievements to date, identify the challenges, and propose practical ways forward for the remaining duration of the Strategic Plan (ie to the end of academic year 2020-2021)

Identifying achievements can provide a strong sense of accomplishment and pride in the ongoing work to position and strengthen the Pontifical University for the future. The process makes transparent the real steps that are being taken to realise our vision.

The operational plan identifies many particular action points. Prioritising such points allows the participants to identify urgent needs and opportunities. However, singling out particular action points should not lead to neglecting the many already identified issues.

To that end, the review asked participants to name all the achievements to date and to negotiate towards three key priorities that would advance each goal for the remaining period of the plan.



Mid-term Review

Alongside general discussion, the following groupings considered the goals in detail.

Goal 1+5: Aoife McGrath, Caroline Tennyson, Salvador Ryan, John Paul Sheridan and Noel O'Sullivan, Carol Vaudrion

Goal 2: Declan Marmion, Kevin O'Gorman, Jessie Rogers, Andrew Meszaros, Sheila Browne

Goal 3: Seamus O'Connell, Michael Conway, Suzanne Mulligan, Barbara Mahon, Liam Tracey, Padraig Corkery, Jeremy Corley, Luke Macnamara

Goal 4: Michael Mullaney, Tom Casey, Michael Shortall, Fidelma Madden

Note: Goal 6 is being currently being undertaken by the Trustees. Goal 3 was reviewed by the Post Graduate Board because of the new focus on post-graduate student numbers. Goals 1 and 5 were reviewed by a combination of the College Life Board and the Affiliated and Education Boards.

The inclusion of administrative staff in the process is itself reflective of the Strategic Plan. Unfortunately, no student representatives could be present. Particular welcome goes to Prof. Tom Casey SJ (Dean of Philosophy). Since the publication of the Strategic Plan, the reconstitution of the Philosophy Dept has been an exciting development. We look forward to including the opportunities and needs of the Philosophy Dept in the rolling out of current goals and the drafting of new strategic plans.



Goal 1: Enrich Our Identity

Achievements

During the course of the current strategic plan we have:

1. Re-established the College Life Board, with student, chaplaincy and administrative representation (Goal 1.1.2)
2. Widened participation in a Patron's Day and other social events; supported the reestablishment of the Theology Ball (Goal 1.1.2)
3. Organised a Symposium aligned to the World Meetings of Families 2018; supported the recruitment of volunteers for WMOF2018 among students (Goal 1.2.1)
4. Supported the hosting of the International Meeting of IFCU; hosted bilateral symposia with the Pontifical University of Salamanca (Goal 1.2.2)
5. Organised and hosted an international conference - *On Models of Priestly Formation* (Goals 1.2.4 & 1.5.5)
6. Reconstituted the Philosophy Dept within the PU; entered into an Agreement with St Paul's Ottawa Canada to host a Distance Learning Post Graduate Canon Law programme (Goal 1.3.1)
7. Offered a new module within the Undergraduate programmes to recognise Mission Outreach and Volunteering (Goal 1.3.2)
8. Reimagined and established a new role of Pastoral and Academic Support Coordinator; appointed a new Chaplain with new expectations towards the SPCM community (Goal 1.4.1).

Priorities

During the course of the remaining period of the strategic plan we shall:

1. Own Our Identity (Goal 1.5):
 - Work towards articulating the identity of a Pontifical University offering Theology
 - Define what constituencies we are targeting and disseminate our identity to them (concrete list)
 - Consider the appointment an Outreach/Parish Liaison Officer who would liaise with Religious Orders, Dioceses/Parishes, alumni, etc. advertising part-time programmes linked with our identity to provide CPD/refreshers, training for different roles..
2. Recruitment and Stepping-Stones approach to academic qualifications (Goals 1.2.1 & 1.3.3 & 1.3.4):
 - Create a suite of programmes with a view to student progression through levels (e.g. diocese of Armagh)
 - Institution to facilitate staff in delivering these programmes – balancing time
3. Increase Outreach/Community Involvement - Practicing what we preach (Goal 1.5.2):
 - Forum for publicising work already being undertaken in community
 - Identify initiatives and activities that could be undertaken in future by staff and students
 - Develop synergy between staff and student involvement in community.

Goal 2: Enhance Student Experience

Achievements

During the course of the current strategic plan we have:

1. Established of a working group (comprised of the first semester lecturers) to enhance the first-year BATH experience by coordinating the syllabus for first semester and providing critical skills; expanded the Orientation process, by way of the tutorial structure (Goals 2.1.1 & 2.1.2)
2. Drafted a Success and Retention Policy (Goal 2.1.3)
3. Encouraged one-to-one interaction by lecturers through assignment feedback (Goal 2.1.4)
4. Enhanced the role of and incorporated the Academic and Pastoral Support Coordinator within the Faculty (Goals 2.1.6 & 2.1.7)
5. Drafted a new withdrawal process
6. Established a new Assignment Extension process and form (also 2.2.2)
7. Ensured all lecturers are on Moodle (Goal 2.4.11)
8. Celebrated achievement through an annual Student Prizes and Awards Ceremony (Goal 2.5.1)
9. Completed the realignment of the BATH to the requirements of the Teaching Council of Ireland (Goal 2.3.3)
10. Encouraged the assessments to become more varied (Goal 2.4.1)
11. Integrated the new Marks and Standards of Maynooth University; including the incorporation of the penultimate year into the final markings for undergraduate awards.
12. Enhanced student communication through a regular e-zine (Shout Out) (Goal 2.1.9)

13. Created procedures to support annual reviews of research progress (Goal 3.4.12)
14. Established new rules for long standing research post-graduates
15. Moved towards standardising the contact time and assessment requirements in post-graduate modules
16. Worked towards an efficient use of modules in structuring post-graduate programmes
17. Encouraged and facilitated post-graduates to share research in the Research Seminar
18. Supported the Post-Graduate Community through a Christmas gathering.

Priorities

During the course of the remaining period of the strategic plan we shall:

1. Put in place Programme Learning Outcomes for the three Undergraduate Programmes.
2. Enhance teaching and learning by:
 - Adopting a policy on timely feedback to students
 - Exploring alternative methods of assessment
 - Making sharing on teaching, learning and assessment a regular item for Faculty Day
3. Put in place a policy on student attendance.

Goal 3: Increase Student Numbers

Achievements

During the course of the current strategic plan we have:

1. Halted the decline in Undergraduate (BTh/BTh) recruitment, raising the new intake numbers from a low of about 40 to the current total of around 60 (Goal 3)
2. Stabilised the numbers undertaking the Higher Diploma in Theological Studies.
3. Employed a full-time school liaison officer.
4. Launched a user-friendly website for the Pontifical University (Goal 3.5.5)
5. Upgraded the quality of promotional material
6. Expanded the community of non-resident seminarians and international students in the Divinity undergraduate programme.
7. Established and Advertised the Eriugena Scholarship Programme for Doctoral Students (Goal 3.1.5).

Priorities

During the course of the remaining period of the strategic plan we shall:

1. Endeavour to attract post-graduate students by way of new networks that build upon Maynooth's international reputation (eg religious congregations); refine the scholarship programme; integrate marketing material; attract more PU undergraduate students
2. Sustain the undergraduate numbers through support of the School Liaison Officer; develop a website and social media marketing policy, that would include the promotion of much of the good already taking place
3. Develop new programmes and current programmes to be more attractive - eg stepping stone programmes and the inclusion of religious studies within the expertise of the Faculty (Goal 3.3).

Goal 4: Augment Staff Capacity

Achievements

During the course of the current strategic plan we have:

1. Engaged Adare HR Consulting to review policies, procedures, contracts (Goal 4.1)
2. Worked towards a more appropriate structure to support the employment of lay theologians; taken the opportunity to employ lay theologians and move towards a better gender balance (Goal 4.1.7)
3. Upbuilt Maynooth's international reputation by way of hosting international conferences, including hosting a preparatory symposium for WMOF2018 (World Meeting of Families) and preparing to host IFCU (International Federation of Catholic Universities) (Goal 4.2)
4. Expanded the research seminar to include different disciplines and post-graduate research(Goal 4.2.4)
5. Hosted a number of visiting academics for short term stays. Arranged for a semester long stay which will also act as learning for the creation of a sabbatical hosting programme.(Goal 4.2.6)
6. Begun a work performance review process (Goal 4.3)
7. Written a job description for a PU Research Director (Goal 4.5)
8. Published a Sabbatical Leave Policy(Goal 4.5.7)
9. Begun to publish in one page staff policies, procedures and reviews on the PU website (4.1.3)
10. Provided financial support for the publication of Faculty Research.

Priorities

During the course of the remaining period of the strategic plan we shall:

1. Write a transparent policy outlining the financial and institutional supports that can be made available by the Pontifical University (supplementing the scholastic trust) of research publication, international conferences, membership of academic associations and continual professional development
2. Visit partner international institutions before the Summer 2018, with the goal of establishing research partnerships and mutual sabbatical opportunities
3. Identify a research project for the Faculty as a body before Summer 2018, (Research Coordinator) that can be networked with international peers (at the IFCU conference). Develop ways in which the project may be advanced in the remaining years of the Strategic Plan.

Goal 5: Build Relationships with Partners

Achievements

During the course of the current strategic plan we have:

1. Collaborated with MU through a number of initiatives: (Goal 5.1.1)
 - Institutional: Regularising the annual Inter-institutional meeting
 - Conferences: cohosting the Irish Conference of Medievalists (2016 and 2017), in which a panel was sponsored by the ITQ
 - Lectures: a shared lecture between the Dept of Sociology and the ITQ
 - Programmes: shared delivery of the MTh (History of Christianity)
 - Modules: delivery of Theology in the MU Kilkenny campus (Goal 5.1.4) ; begun working towards offering an elective stream to MU students.
2. Advanced the common mission shared with other organisations (Goal 5.2)
 - Local and Universal Church: WMOF 2018; Affiliated Programmes
 - Other centres of formation: Conference on Models of Priestly Formation
3. Hosted several Academic Associations: British New Testament Conference; Conference of Medievalists; Irish Theological Association; The Association of Teachers of Moral Theology (Goals 5.2.4 & 5.2.5)
4. Facilitated the visit of staff members to the Australian Catholic University and Würzburg (Goal 5.1.8)
5. Attracted figures of international reputation to our suite of lectures (Goal 5.1.11)
6. Upbuilt the Erasmus experience for students and the relationships with the European institutions (Goal 5.1.10).

7. Supported Affiliated Programmes across the country and considered new potential centres and programmes (Goal 5.3.2)
8. Connected with our Alumni in support of our students in making career choices: The Post-Graduate Pathways evening (Goal 5.4.2)

Priorities

During the course of the remaining period of the strategic plan we shall:

1. Establish a network (database) of Alumni by dedicating necessary resources and hosting attractive events. (Goal No 5.4)
2. Expand and resource the suite of Affiliated Programmes; constructively consider appropriate provision of distance learning (Goal 5.3)
3. Establish International Networks with
 1. peer institutions in Europe with similar missions to share initiatives in research, sabbatical hosting, and teaching. Proposed institutions are: Salamanca, Würzburg and Tilburg.
 2. Seminaries and Diocese globally to grow the post-graduate cohort. Proposed regions include Asia and Africa.

Goal 6: Strengthen Governance and Infrastructure

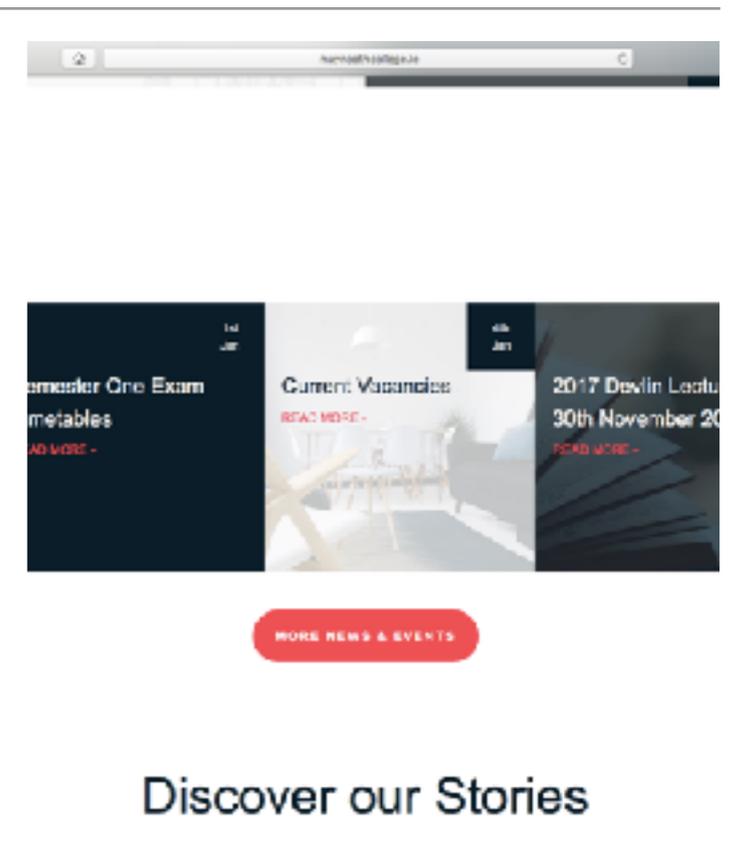
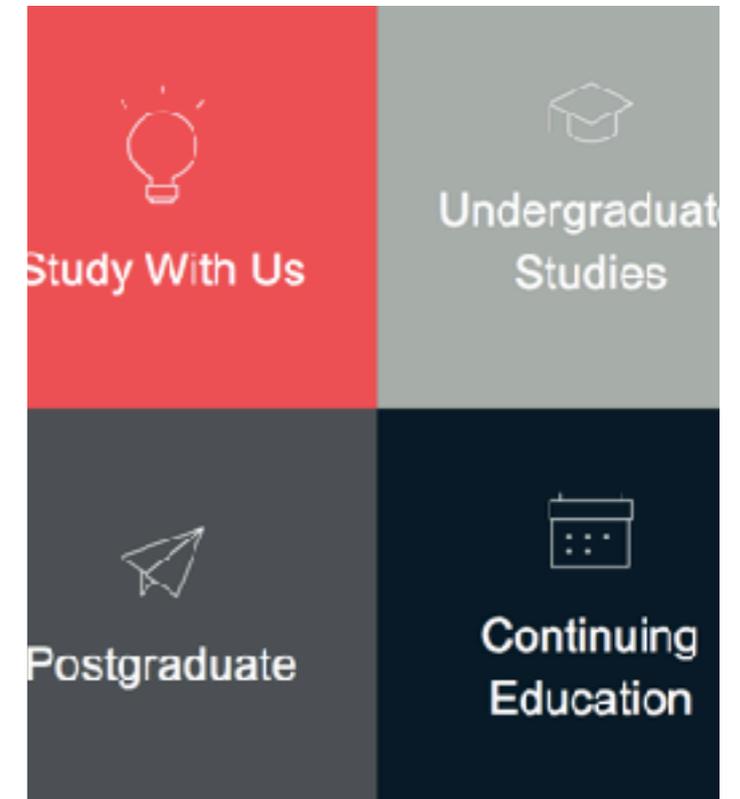
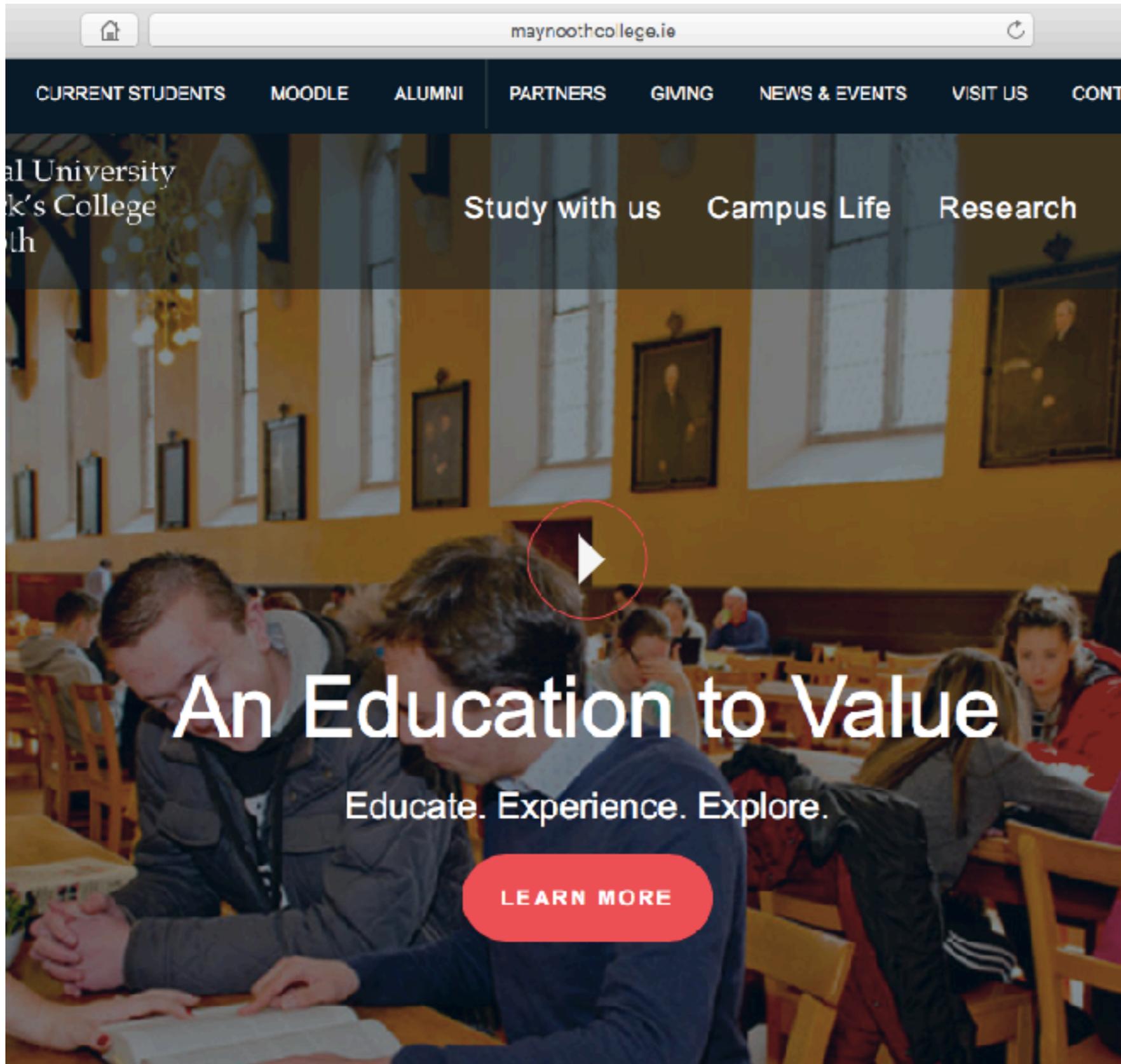
Note: This particular goal was not reviewed during the Extraordinary Meeting. The process of reviewing the Governance of St Patrick's College is currently being undertaken by the Trustees. We believe that this goal as a whole is of primary importance. We commit ourselves to constructively supporting any initiatives proposed by the Trustees for the betterment of St Patrick's College.

Achievements

During the course of the current strategic plan we have:

1. welcomed the review of Governance and Statutes by the Trustees (Goal 6.2)
2. established a Senior Management Team, named the Council of Studies (Goal 6.3.1)
3. drafted, presented to the Trustees and published an Annual Report (Goal 6.3.4)
4. taken the opportunity to enhance leadership and management skills through the support of IFCU (Goal 6.3.7)
5. Supported the *Alive in Hope: Sharing Our Faith* fundraising initiative (Goal 6.5.4).





Screen shots of our new website: maynoothcollege.ie