BREAKING BOUNDARIES

STRATEGY TO

20 30

UCD DUBLIN

AD ASTRA
TO THE STARS

UCD students, faculty and staff designed and built Ireland's first satellite, successfully launched in December 2023. Some 20,000 hours were spent testing and problem-solving ahead of EIRSAT-1's voyage into space.

This is not just a story of Ireland's first journey to the stars, it is a story of how UCD brought experts and learners together from across disciplines to pursue a big vision, and how our partnership with industry is now giving rise to a new space sector in Ireland. It is also a story of the school children who worked with a UCD professor of creative writing to write *All Ways Home*, the poem now inscribed on the orbiting satellite.

This is a story of UCD, and shows what we can achieve when we break boundaries across and beyond our university to pursue a clear vision with knowledge, passion and dedication. Our university motto Ad Astra – to the stars – has never seemed more apt.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

University College Dublin is a university that seeks to make a difference to the world around us. I experienced this first as a UCD engineering student in the 1980s, when I was a beneficiary of the university's drive to provide a world-class education well beyond the requirements of our country at that time. The talent forged in UCD became a driving force in the remarkable transformation of the Irish economy and society since that time.

We must now plan UCD's response to the challenges and opportunities of today.
That is the goal of this strategy.

The ideas underpinning our strategy arose from extensive consultation across our university community and with external stakeholders, and I am very grateful to all who shared their ideas through that process.

These ideas, and the actions that will bring them to life, are presented here in a strategy that is distinctively and recognisably belonging to UCD, and focused on advancing our ambition and reflecting our values through these fast-changing times.

The strategy reflects a dynamic and engaged university that is global, inclusive and sustainable, delivering positive transformation through mutually reinforcing research, educational and engagement actions and a commitment to excellence. It will guide us in supporting new skills formation, industrial competitiveness, and the use of Artificial Intelligence and other digital technologies. It will also support us to enhance the sense of belonging and community across our university and among our alumni, and to build pride in what we achieve together.

The period of this strategy will take us to the end of 2029 and the start of the fourth decade of this highly disruptive century. Towards the end of this period, we will celebrate the 175th anniversary of the foundation of our university. By then, it will be clear how this strategy has supported us to build on our great tradition to advance with ambition our positive impact on Ireland, on the world and on the lives of our students.

I look forward to working with all of the UCD community, and with our committed partners, to deliver on the ambition in this strategy.

Professor Orla Feely
President, University College Dublin

PAST

Our legacy

UCD was founded in 1854, with St John Henry Newman as our founding Rector. We rapidly grew in scale and impact, and UCD staff, students and graduates were central to the events leading to Irish independence and the foundation of the Irish State just over a century ago.

Since then, our university and our community have had an unparalleled impact on the transformative development of Ireland. Our graduates have achieved extraordinary success around the world, from Olympic gold medals to the Nobel Prize, leading some of the largest companies in the world, leading in public life, and leading cultural and societal transformations.

PRESENT

UCD today

UCD is at the heart of Ireland's vibrant economy, culture and society as the country's largest and most influential university, with over 38,000 students from over 150 countries and over 300,000 alumni around the world. We are Ireland's global university, the largest English-speaking university in the European Union, and an active partner in the Una Europa university alliance and other major university networks.

We are a leader in research and innovation across our broad range of disciplines. Our 133-hectare main Dublin campus is among the finest parkland campuses in the world and a resource treasured by many. Our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion has been recognised through the Athena Swan Silver Award, and we are ranked first in Ireland and 50th worldwide for sustainability.

FUTURE

UCD in 2030 will be

- supporting an ever more diverse range of students to realise their potential through an enriched and empowering education.

- an exemplar in supporting student experience, wellbeing and sense of belonging.

- a preferred destination for outstanding faculty, staff and students.

- a welcoming and exciting place for all in our community.

- delivering groundbreaking research that has clear impact at scale on the defining issues of our time, including Artificial Intelligence (AI), One Health and Societal Transformations.

- a leader in university innovation and entrepreneurship, supporting Irish and European industrial competitiveness.

- a leader in knowledge generation, learning and action across the sustainability agenda, with carbon emissions reduced by 51% and on track for net zero by 2040.

- Ireland's leading university in delivering impact through partnership, and a trusted partner globally.

- a source of insight and objectivity on issues of vital importance to society.

- visible and accessible as a steward and a champion of Irish culture and heritage.

- trusted, responsible and financially robust.

- delivering integrated supports and using data, AI and other digital technologies to enhance all our activities.

- firmly established among the top 20 universities in the EU.

VISION:

UCD WILL BE RENOWNED AS A DYNAMIC, ENGAGED UNIVERSITY AND A TRANSFORMING FORCE IN IRELAND, IN THE WIDER WORLD AND IN THE LIVES OF OUR STUDENTS

MISSION:

TO CREATE KNOWLEDGE, TO EMPOWER LEARNING AND TO ENGAGE WITH PARTNERS TO DRIVE IMPACT FROM EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

VALUES:

EXCELLENCE | ENGAGEMENT

INCLUSION |

| CREATIVITY

INTEGRITY | COLLEGIALITY

UCD
DUBLIN

BREAKING BOUNDARIES

STRATEGY TO 20**30** UCD DUBLIN

The UCD Strategy to 2030 is about breaking the boundaries of existing knowledge in our research, scholarship and innovation to deliver fundamental results on important questions.

It is about combining creatively across disciplines and working with partners to drive impact and excellence in the education and research that we deliver.

It is about growing access to our education for a more diverse community of learners across the course of their lives, and engaging nationally and globally with intent and agility.

UCD is Ireland's global university, an inclusive community and a driver of positive action for sustainability, and these attributes will be evident across our actions.
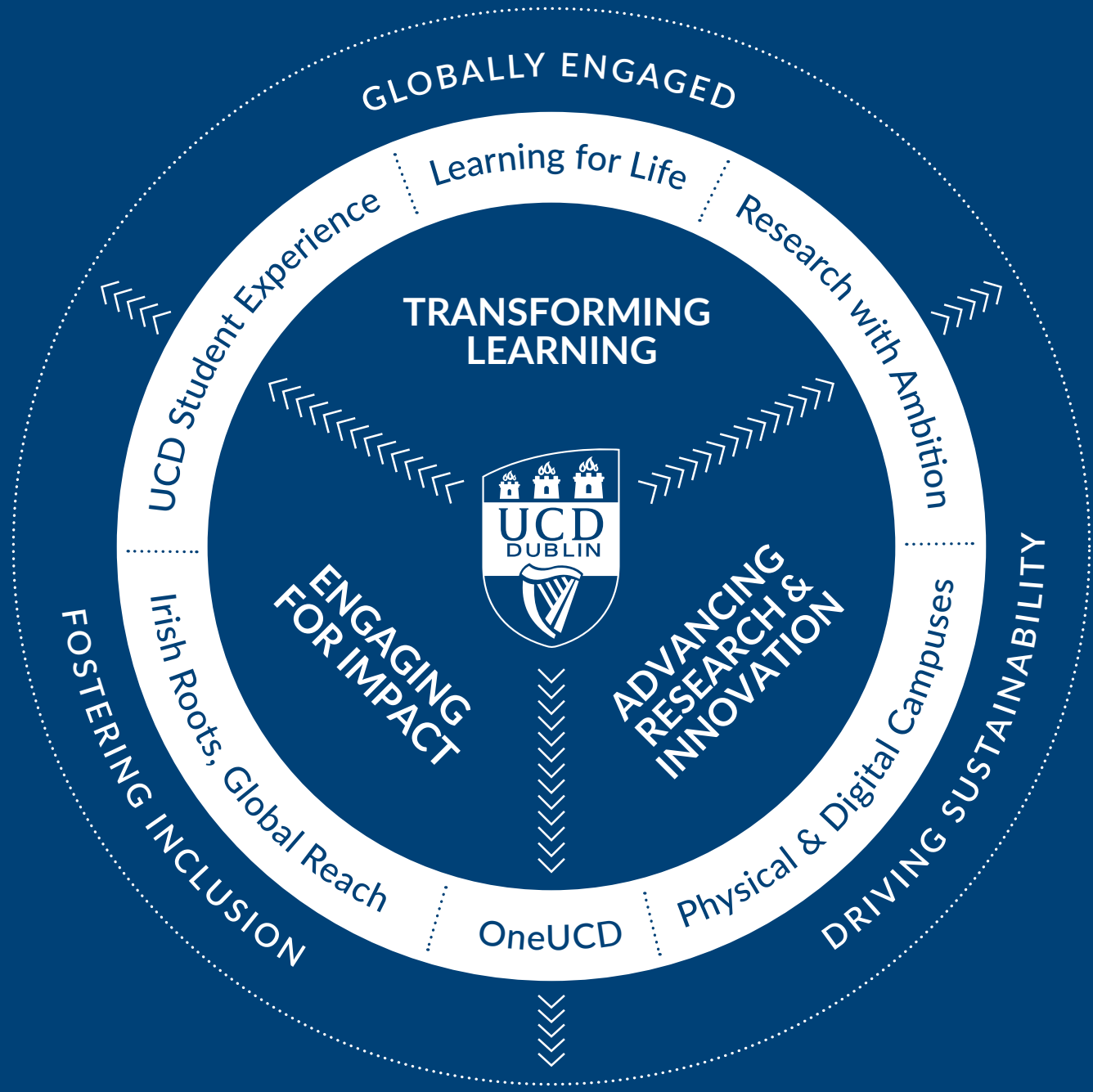
GLOBALLY ENGAGED

Learning for Life

UCD Student Experience

Research with Ambition

TRANSFORMING LEARNING

UCD DUBLIN

ENGAGING FOR IMPACT

ADVANCING RESEARCH & INNOVATION

FOSTERING INCLUSION

Irish Roots, Global Reach

Physical & Digital Campuses

DRIVING SUSTAINABILITY

OneUCD

Our three central pillars, guiding us to break boundaries and deliver lasting, meaningful impact:

Transforming Learning

Advancing Research & Innovation

Engaging for Impact

To drive change in these three pillars, we will invest in and focus activity through six cross-cutting initiatives:

Learning for Life

UCD Student Experience

Research with Ambition

Irish Roots, Global Reach

OneUCD

Physical & Digital Campuses

Across our behaviours and actions we will demonstrate the following UCD attributes:

Globally Engaged

Fostering Inclusion

Driving Sustainability

OUR THREE PILLARS

TRANSFORMING LEARNING

We will enhance our curriculum to identify and deliver the broader set of skills and attributes needed by our graduates to stand out in an increasingly complex world. We will expand access to our portfolio of outstanding programmes of education, recognising the diverse backgrounds of today's learners along the course of their lives and careers. We will prioritise the sense of belonging and community for all our students. We will enhance our physical and digital campuses in an integrated manner to support these aims.

ADVANCING RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

We will draw on all of our strengths and our partnerships to create knowledge, cultivate talent, and achieve impact through our research and innovation. We will work at scale across disciplines in the areas where that impact can be greatest. The boundaries between the university and our stakeholders and partners will be more porous, with ideas and talent flowing with ease. We will support our researchers with the joined-up services they need to deliver success.

ENGAGING FOR IMPACT

We will facilitate more effective exchange of people and ideas through ethical partnerships with research institutions, industries, third-sector organisations and policy-makers. We will be bolder in sharing our stories through our communications, reinforcing confidence and trust. We will deliver impact through engagement within Ireland, with our near neighbours in the UK and EU, and globally.

UCD will be most distinctive and ambitious where all three of these pillars combine: where excellence in teaching and learning meets excellence in research and innovation, both of these fuelled by, and fuelling in turn, our engagement with the major issues confronting people and planet. One key example of this under this strategy will be our new AI and digital technologies institute, which will draw together our powerful and cross-cutting capacity in this domain in education, research and innovation, and engagement.

LEARNING FOR LIFE

UCD graduates will always be known for their deep discipline knowledge, enriched by research and grounded in rigour.

Building on this bedrock of excellence, we will enhance our existing degree structures and create new structures of programme delivery. We will prepare our students to succeed in disruptive times, and facilitate agility and access in our education offerings across all levels and modes.

We will work to nurture the skills, competencies, attributes and behaviours that will set our graduates up for success.

Recognising the increased need for learning opportunities at all life stages, we will encourage and welcome a broader range of students, supporting them with flexible and technology-enabled learning structures and environments.

Through enhanced synergies with our research, and with global and industry partners, our students will grow their awareness of and readiness for a world of opportunities.

Through the excellence of our education, we will attract and empower an increasingly diverse community of learners to fulfil their potential and advance our society through disruptive times.

We will:

- provide our students with structured opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills in areas such as AI and digital skills, innovation, sustainability, leadership, well-being, and languages.

- support our students to be reflective practitioners with strong transversal skills, through enhanced opportunities for experiential learning, work-integrated learning and global engagement.

- grow the diversity and flexibility of our portfolio of learning options, supporting our ambition to bring the excellence and opportunity of the UCD learning experience to learners across their life stages.

- grow our development programmes and career supports for graduate researchers and for postdoctoral researchers, enhancing the sense of belonging and community for these cohorts, and creating new opportunities for knowledge-sharing and interdisciplinary engagement.

- reform our curriculum, timetabling, assessment modes and credit weightings to optimise teaching and learning across all modes and all levels.

- integrate and build on our development supports for faculty and staff, and grow our capacity as an organisation that analyses, reflects and learns.

Breaking the code: *Combining decades of pioneering work in machine learning, data science and digital technologies with a broad discipline base, UCD can drive advances in AI and technology research and learning in important areas. Our learning programmes in digital policy consider these advances in the context of our wellbeing as a society, supporting our students to consider the ethical, political, legal and societal implications of AI and new technologies and to apply this understanding as technologies and society evolve.*

UCD STUDENT EXPERIENCE

A university experience is about more than a programme of study – it is about personal development within a vibrant and supportive community.

A focus of this strategy will be optimising the experience, wellbeing and sense of belonging of UCD students across all modes of learning. Through experiences within and beyond the classroom, we will support an increasingly diverse student community to flourish. This will be supported by an improved faculty-student ratio.

As Ireland's global university, we will deliver a tailored UCD student experience to our students outside Ireland, and a global experience to our students here in Dublin.

Student partnership is central to how we deliver an experience that empowers our students in their growth and goals, and in their personal development as citizens who give back to their community and society.

We will continue to build the diversity of our student population, further deepening the University for All initiative, widening participation of under-represented groups in learning at UCD and ensuring the supports are in place to enable each student to thrive. In this way, we will give life to our motto Cothrom na Féinne, which speaks to our commitment to fairness.

The UCD student experience will be distinctive and transformational.

We will:

- establish an Office of Student Experience and Wellbeing to enhance the initiatives, services and supports that we provide to our students.

- prioritise the delivery of high-quality accessible and inclusive spaces, services and programmes that build community and enhance the student experience. These will include a reimagined library, sports and social facilities, accommodation, food offerings, public transport and digital campus.

- support an increasingly diverse community of students to feel a sense of belonging at UCD, including through a wide range of opportunities in sports, societies, volunteering and student representation.

- improve our faculty-student ratio.

- deepen our global collaborations to advance the intercultural experience and competencies of UCD students, and to develop their ambition and ability to make a contribution to the world.

- advance the implementation of universal design as a core principle to support inclusive learning and campus development.

- partner actively with our students to understand and respond to their priorities, and to develop a shared sense of responsibility towards our university and our society.

Breaking social boundaries: *Over a third of UCD's incoming undergraduates are from underrepresented groups. Our leadership in universal design provides a framework that benefits all our students and fosters an inclusive educational environment by promoting access and inclusion across classrooms, facilities and student supports.*

RESEARCH WITH AMBITION

Research and innovation at UCD draw on the breadth and depth of our expertise to deliver knowledge and solutions that matter. From advancing sustainability and interpreting cultural heritage, to transforming healthcare and designing our digital world, our researchers are leading the way in fields that shape the future.

Through our Strategy to 2030, we will support UCD researchers to combine their expertise across disciplines to explore new frontiers of knowledge and to build at scale in areas where UCD can deliver the most significant impact.

UCD will be an exemplar of what can be achieved through deep and diverse collaboration nationally and globally, convening clusters for impact, with a continuous flow of ideas, knowledge and expertise between partners.

Our thought leadership will derive from the voices of our academics based on their research and scholarship, not through taking institutional positions, and we will always respect and uphold academic freedom.

By collaborating with ambition, and delivering world-class research and innovation grounded in rigour and integrity, UCD will be a dynamic research environment where people thrive, bold ideas are realised, and impact is delivered for the benefit of society, economy and environment.

We will:

- establish an institute for AI and digital technologies research, education, ethics and policy, bringing together the diverse and growing interdisciplinary and cross-sector AI and digital technologies research and innovation community at UCD to deliver significant impact.

- grow our capacity to inform public policy through our research.

- support existing large-scale cross-cutting research areas of excellence and impact, such as One Health and Sustainability, to grow with ambition, and identify and support key emerging areas.

- embed innovation in all its forms throughout our research and education and develop innovation across our campus.

- improve the researcher experience through an integrated service that is researcher-centred and reduces research bureaucracy.

- identify the critical infrastructures, facilities and digital technologies needed to support our research, seek the resources to support them, and ensure that they are integrated and accessible.

- attract outstanding researchers and faculty members, including through our Ad Astra fellowship programme, and support them to realise their ambitions at UCD.

- advance best practice in our research culture, underpinned by academic freedom.

Breaking the mould: *UCD is a leader for patent applications, spin-outs and research collaborations with industry. Equal1, a UCD spin-out and Ireland's first quantum computing company, has developed the world's first hybrid quantum classical computing chip. The chip unlocks decades of progress to power our AI-enabled world whilst potentially reducing data centre energy usage 20-fold.*

IRISH ROOTS GLOBAL REACH

UCD has always been a university that makes a difference. We have had an unparalleled impact on the development of Ireland and our impact is felt today around the world.

Throughout the period of this strategy, UCD will build our position as a clear and valued strategic asset for Ireland and for Dublin, supporting the next phase of economic and societal development for our country and city, and championing our national culture, heritage and language.

We will grow our role as Ireland's global university, bringing the best of Ireland to the world and the best of the world to Ireland, expanding our strategic global partnerships.

We will build our profile and our reputation nationally and globally as an outstanding university and a trusted partner. By conveying with conviction the impact of our work, we will inspire enhanced support for our university and our mission.

Our alumni will feel an enhanced connection to UCD and will be as proud of our university as we are of them.

Through our active engagement nationally and globally, we will build confidence in and support for UCD's capacity to address the opportunities and challenges of today and to anticipate those of tomorrow.

We will:

- grow our partnerships nationally and globally with organisations that share our ambition and values, focusing on partnerships of scale and equality that enhance teaching and learning as well as research and innovation, and have a clear and measurable pathway to impact.

- make it easier for partners to engage with us, and improve internal co-ordination of our wide-ranging partnerships

- expand our focus on telling our stories and building support for our university, integrating our marketing and communications capacity to project a cohesive and authentic external message.

- build our engagement across the island of Ireland, and with the UK and EU, and implement our four regional strategies leveraging the support of UCD's Global Centres in New York, Beijing, Delhi, Dubai and Kuala Lumpur.

- expand access to our outstanding cultural and heritage collections while building on our cultural connections nationally and internationally with activities throughout our university that celebrate culture and creativity.

- enhance the prominence of the Irish language in every part of our university.

- build a lasting relationship with alumni that supports and celebrates their success, delivering value to them and to the university.
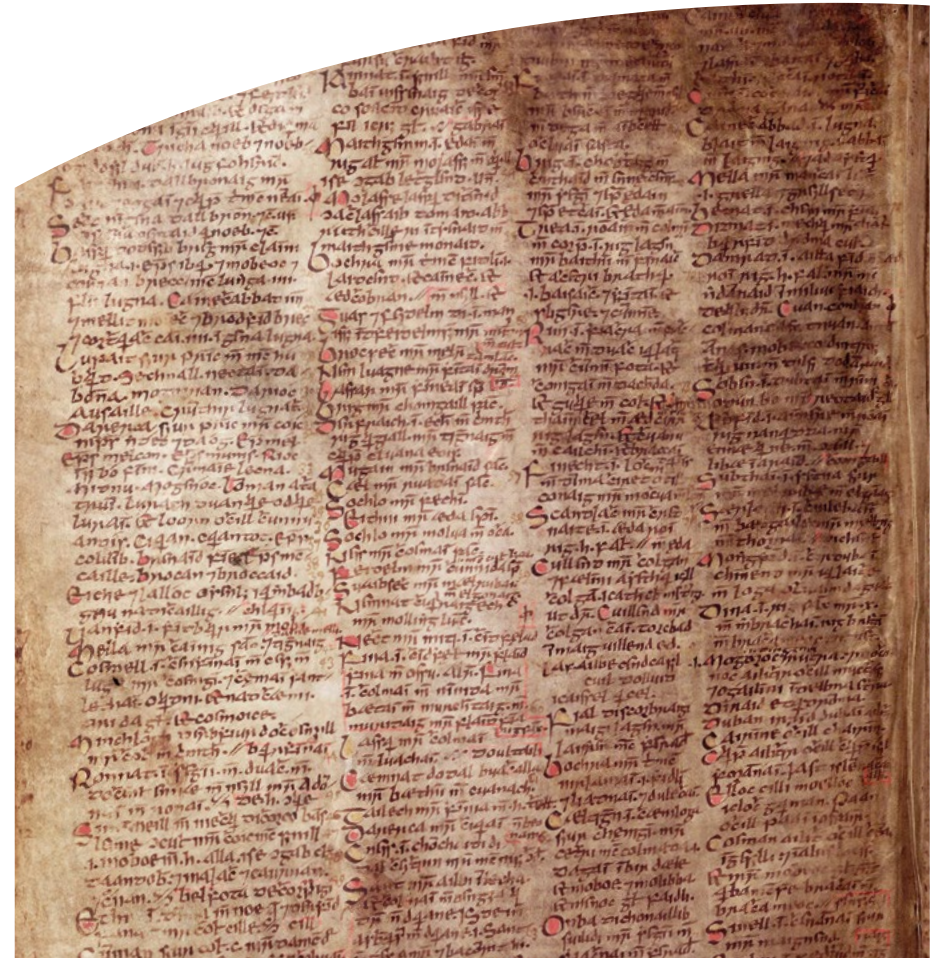
Breaking barriers in cultural heritage: *UCD plays a vital role in securing Irish heritage, curating material of both national and global significance. From political papers and literary archives to the National Folklore Collection (part of the UNESCO Memory of the World register), our extraordinary collections are a resource for scholars and the wider community.*

ONE UCD

UCD's success will be achieved through our people. We will promote a vibrant, inclusive and ambitious culture that is based on our values and is shared across the organisation. UCD will be known as a highly inclusive community and a great place to work, and we will build a sense of belonging for all in UCD.

We will improve the integration of our supports and our planning under this strategy, with the experience of the user, not organisational structures, driving our services. We will reduce bureaucracy and expand our use of digital technologies to ensure that our employees' time and talents can be engaged in the most effective way, and that our students, faculty, staff and partners experience a service that meets their needs.

We will grow our diverse revenue base to support our ambitions and will manage our finances with care, aligning our resources to our priorities and values. We will effectively advocate for necessary government funding, and grow our philanthropic engagement and contributions. We will plan holistically for growth, increasing student numbers in key areas that align with need and resourcing.

As an inclusive community and an integrated organisation, UCD will be a place where potential is realised.

We will:

· enhance supports across the whole life cycle from student recruitment to alumni engagement, and from hiring to retirement for our employees, to create a sense of perpetual welcome and belonging at UCD for our whole community.

· strengthen coordination of key services and supports to staff, students and partners to improve our operational efficiency and effectiveness, and add value to our activities.

· implement a new approach to integrated planning that ensures this strategy is implemented through action plans across the university. We will identify key measures of progress and report on these, bringing visibility to what we do and how we do it.

· work with UCD Foundation to significantly increase philanthropic giving to our university.

· launch an integrated investment plan to deliver the strategy.

· develop our capability for transformational change at institutional, team and individual levels.

· establish processes through which our community can provide feedback on the implementation of this strategy and help to shape our university.

Breaking boundaries for health: *UCD's leading research and education in medicine, veterinary science, agriculture, and sustainability tackle the challenge of healthy living in a healthy world. As a WHO collaborating centre, UCD One Health addresses global health issues by recognising the interconnectedness of humans, animals, plants, and the environment.*

PHYSICAL AND DIGITAL CAMPUSES

Our campuses in Belfield, Blackrock and Lyons Farm, and our global campuses, are great assets to UCD and the communities that we serve. We will continue to enhance them so that they are exemplars for best practice in how universities use their spaces.

Over the course of the strategy, we will develop a new plan for our physical campuses that maximises the use of existing spaces to meet the needs of the university while facilitating new developments, including consideration of our partnerships with existing and new external stakeholders.

Our digital campus is an essential resource underpinning the experience of all in UCD, and the demands on this will change further through actions in this strategy. We will offer an enterprise architecture that empowers us to deliver on our ambitions in learning, research, engagement and service delivery.

UCD will be a thought and action leader of transformational change for sustainability, and this will be as evident on our campuses as it is in our education and our research and innovation.

As a visible leader in sustainability, UCD will be a net zero organisation by 2040, contributing to conserving and restoring biodiversity, and working to reduce the impacts of climate change for ourselves and others.

We will:

- successfully complete major capital developments in the Centre for Future Learning, Science Phase 3, student residences, sports and leisure amenities, Lyons Farm, the James Joyce Library, and the Newman Building, together delivering state-of-the-art space for learning, research and the student experience.

- enhance our overseas campuses so that they reflect the experience in Ireland.

- develop an integrated campus plan to 2040 that incorporates its natural, built and digital aspects.

- develop our outstanding physical campuses in a manner that sets new standards and enhances the experience of all in our community, delivering and activating new builds, and renewing existing stock.

- set and implement a clear enterprise architecture roadmap to ensure that our digital technologies support our ambitions in learning, research and innovation, and services.

- cultivate our campuses as exemplars of, and laboratories for, sustainability, biodiversity and regeneration, advancing our education and research in doing so.

- develop and implement an action plan to reduce our carbon emissions by 51% from baseline by 2030, and place us on a path to net zero carbon by 2040.

Breaking ground: *Leading the way in agrifood innovation and research, Ireland can offer solutions that tackle the era-defining challenge of a just transition. UCD experts are spearheading research to transform food systems and ensure affordable, nutritious food for a healthy life. At our research and teaching farm at Lyons in Co Dublin, we combine the development of new technologies with on-the-ground solutions and experiential learning to demonstrate how transformations can be achieved.*

COTHROM NA FÉINNE AD ASTRA

Breaking Boundaries, UCD Strategy to 2030, has been formed by the ideas of the UCD community and our valued partners. It reflects our university's great tradition of making a difference to Ireland, to the world, and to the lives of our students, and imagines all that we can now achieve as we build on that tradition. As we move forward with the implementation of the strategy, we hold to our values and to our two mottoes:

Cothrom na Féinne | Ad Astra