

Appendix 9 – SPD Strategic Plan  
Céim ar Chéim 2012 - 2015



## Strategic Plan

2012-2015

## **Céim ar Chéim**

St Patrick's College  
Drumcondra

## Table of contents

Page No

### Executive Summary

1. Introduction
2. Operational Context
3. Mission
4. Core Educational Values
5. Strategic Priorities
6. Key Actions
7. Performance Indicators

### Appendices

- I. Governing Body
- II. Strategic Planning Committee

## Executive Summary

The landscape in Higher Education today is dynamic and changing. This is particularly true in the area of teacher education. Since the initial preparation for this Strategic Plan began almost two years ago, there have been very significant developments in the wider context in which the College operates; it is likely that there will be other such developments in the period ahead. The challenge then is to agree a strategy which identifies key values and priorities while positioning the College to respond appropriately to a rapidly changing environment.

St Patrick's College is a centre of excellence in teaching and learning and in research. Established in 1875 as a Catholic College for the education of teachers, it is the *alma mater* of a large proportion of Irish primary teachers. Its graduates have made a distinguished contribution to Irish schools and Irish children as well as to the wider educational, social, cultural and political life of the country. In recent decades the College has grown and developed: today there are more than 2,600 students on twenty different programmes in education and humanities at undergraduate and postgraduate level, up to and including EdD. and PhD. The largest of these programmes is the BEd degree which currently has a student enrolment of c. 1200. The programme will be reconceptualised and restructured and its duration extended to four years from 2012, in accordance with the guidelines of the Teaching Council.

The College is a publicly funded institution under the aegis of the HEA; it is committed to meeting the changing educational needs of Irish society in the area of teacher education and the humanities. Its governance is entrusted to a governing body appointed by the Patron, the Archbishop of Dublin, from the main stakeholders in education, the arts and the wider community. The current chair is Professor John Coolahan. Under the terms of an institutional linkage agreement (2008), the College has the status of a Faculty of Dublin City University and the University accredits all its programmes. As part of the restructuring of Higher Education, initiated as part of the National Strategy on Higher Education, discussions are underway aimed at deepening that relationship.

The new Strategic Plan, *Shaping The Future*, has been drafted by the College Strategic Planning Committee and adopted by Governing Body and Academic Council after an extensive process of consultation, internally and externally. The plan includes an introduction which provides information on the College (pp NN-NN) and a review of the operational environment, including policy context and the major financial challenges as well as the current strengths of the College (pp. NN-NN). The key actions which follow seek to reconcile the demands of the immediate financial context with the need to protect quality and plan for the future.

A fundamental requirement of all institutions in straitened times is to clarify their role and prioritise accordingly. The role of the College is defined in a mission statement (p.N] as being in teacher education and humanities. This is followed by a statement of core educational values (ppNN-NN. ) Six inter-related educational values are identified: education for human flourishing; academic excellence; the centrality of the student; human rights and democratic practice; equality and social justice; and environmental care. These rest on four supporting pillars – sustainability; engagement;

collaboration and innovation. The College is committed to sustaining and developing a learning community in which these values prosper.

In pursuing its distinctive mission in teacher education and humanities and in responding to a changing environment, the College identifies nine strategic objectives as priorities. These are as follows: renew and extend programmes; respond to national priorities and play a lead role in Teacher Education and the Humanities; build partnerships and alliances; ensure quality and promote excellence; enhance the learning environment; embed inclusion, diversity and sustainability; expand research capacity; develop College infrastructure, organisation and funding; and promote staff training, development and well-being.

To ensure that they are advanced and implemented, each of the strategic objectives has a number of key associated actions with a specified time-frame for action. These actions – sixty three in all - also reflect the four pillars of sustainability, engagement, collaboration and innovation. Each action will be identified with a particular member of staff with responsibility for implementation. It is also intended that all units and departments in the College will draft their own action plan derived from these objectives.

As a publicly funded institution, the College is conscious of the need for accountability and transparency and the need to benchmark its performance. To that end, *Shaping the Future* identifies twenty three appropriate key performance indicators linked to its strategic priorities by which its success or otherwise may be judged.

While *Shaping the Future* is set against the background of a challenging financial environment, there are grounds for optimism. Sanction has been secured from the Minister for Education and Skills for the recommencement of the major Campus Development plan which will renew College infrastructure and provide state of the art facilities for teaching and learning worthy of a leading educational institution in the twenty first century.

# 1. Introduction

*'Honouring the past while shaping the future'*

## The College

St Patrick's College is Ireland's leading College of Education and Humanities. Established in 1875 as a Catholic College for the education of teachers, it is the *alma mater* of a large proportion of Irish primary teachers. Our graduates have made a distinguished contribution to Irish schools and Irish children as well as to the wider educational, social, cultural and political life of the country. The motto of the College is *Intellectum da mihi, Domine (Lord, grant me understanding/ A Thiarna, bronn orm tuiscint)*.

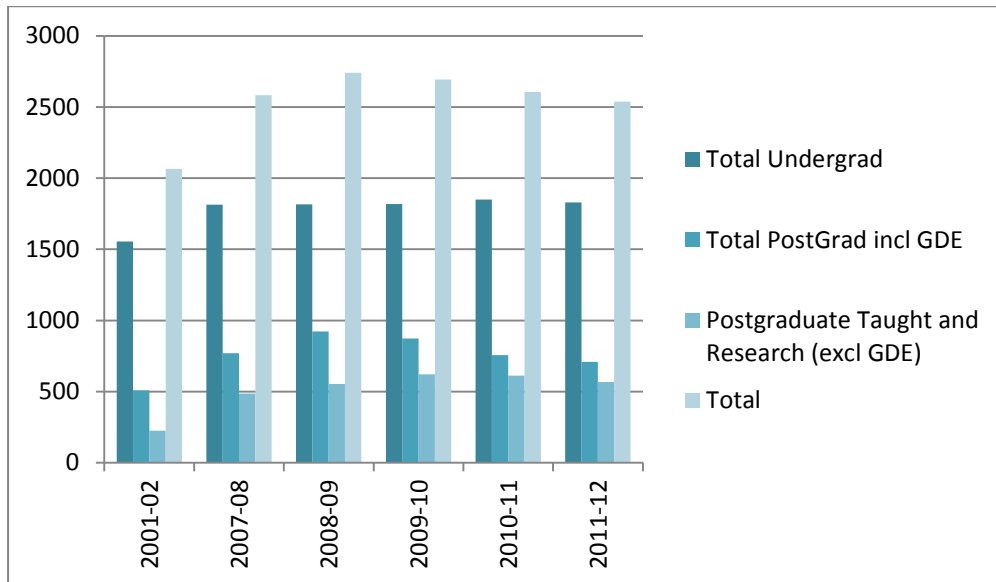
Over the past fifteen years, the College has grown and developed in response to the changing needs of Irish society. Today, it offers twenty programmes in education and humanities at undergraduate and postgraduate level, up to and including EdD and PhD. The largest of these programmes is the BEd degree which currently has a student enrolment of c. 1200. In accordance with the guidelines of the Teaching Council, the duration of the BEd degree will be extended from three to four years in 2012 and the programme will be reconceptualised and restructured.

## College Programmes

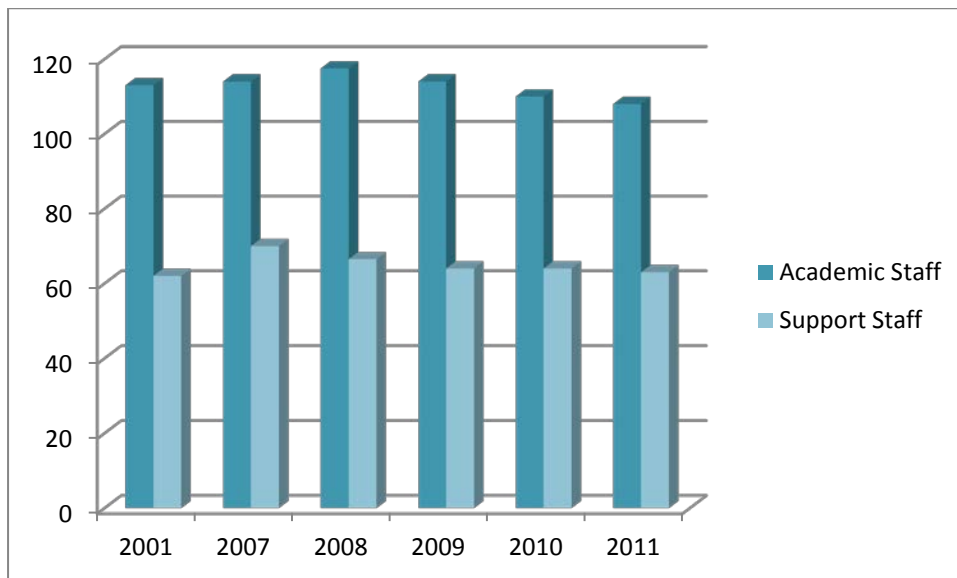
- Bachelor of Education
- Bachelor of Education (International)
- Bachelor of Arts
- Bachelor of Arts (International)
- Certificate in Religious Studies (full-time/part-time)
- Certificate in Education (In Service)
- Graduate Certificate in Education of Pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorders
- Graduate Diploma in Special Educational Needs
- Diploma in Education (In Service)
- Graduate Diploma in Education (Primary Teaching)
- Master of Education (Taught)
- Graduate Diploma in Advanced Educational Studies
- Master of Education (Research)
- Masters in Religious Education (Primary) – with Mater Dei Institute
- Masters in Special Educational Needs
- Master of Arts (Taught)
- Graduate Diploma in Humanities
- Master of Arts (Research)
- Doctorate in Education (EdD)
- Doctor of Philosophy (PhD).

As of 2010-11, the student population was 2,606 and the full-time academic staff complement in the College's two faculties (Education and Humanities) was 110. The growth of student and staff numbers in recent years is illustrated in the following diagrams:

### Student Numbers



### Academic and Support Staff



Staff numbers have been reduced by 16.5 since 2008 under the terms of the Employment Control Framework. In recent years, the College has invested significantly in staff development to build capacity in teaching and research. The number of staff with doctoral qualifications is currently 74%

(2012). This has contributed to a significant increase in research and publication which is reflected in the table below:

### Research Output 2006-2010

<b>Type of Publication</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>
Books	18	9	19	9	18
Conference Proceedings	0	3	1	1	2
National Surveys/Commissioned Reports	5	6	3	9	8
Academic Journals Edited	3	3	3	4	5
Essays/Chapters in refereed Journals/Books	41	51	72	65	80
Textbooks/Syllabi	3	9	5	1	4

### Educational Research Centre

<b>Type of Publication</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>
Books	0	2	2	0	0
Conference Proceedings	2	2	1	1	0
National Surveys/Commissioned Reports	8	0	5	4	9
Academic Journals Edited	1	1	1	1	1
Essays/Chapters in refereed Journals/Books	5	11	4	6	8
Tests	4	4	1	0	6

In pursuing its mission and serving the needs of Irish society, the College cherishes diversity and seeks to promote tolerance, understanding and mutual respect. The composition of the student body is more diverse than ever before, reflecting the College's commitment to facilitating access for under-represented groups. The College has a growing access programme. It participates in the HEAR access scheme for socio-economic disadvantage and is in the process of joining DARE, the disability access scheme. Annual intake from HEAR has risen from five in 2007 to 32 in 2011. The percentage of first year new entrants in the HEA target socio-economic groups (non-manual, semi- and unskilled) is 20% (2010-11 figures), which is relatively high in the sector. Up to 5% of undergraduate places will be available for students with disabilities under the DARE scheme. Ten percent of places on the BEd are available for mature and second chance learners and 20-25% on the BA; places are also available on the BA for applicants who have the appropriate FETAC Level 5 qualifications.

The College is a publicly-funded institution under the aegis of the HEA. Its governance is entrusted to a governing body appointed by the Patron, the Archbishop of Dublin, and representative of the main stakeholders, the education, arts and business community. The current chairperson is Professor John Coolahan.

In addition to the main teaching and administration buildings, the attractive urban campus of 11.1 hectares includes the historic Belvedere House, College Chapel, Library and Educational Resource Centre, Students' Union offices, an Educational Disadvantage Centre, a Centre for Human Rights and Citizenship Education and Centres for the Study of Human Development and Children's Literature. The campus also houses the Educational Research Centre, the National Induction Project for Teachers, an Education Centre for Teachers, a Junior and Senior School.

The provision of new teaching accommodation and refurbishment of existing buildings is the centrepiece of a campus development plan developed by the College in consultation with the HEA and DES and approved by the Government. Work on the project was interrupted arising from the financial difficulties of the contractor. Following completion of a new tendering process, it is expected that a replacement contractor will be appointed shortly and that work will recommence. The duration of the project is expected to be two years.

### **The University**

In 1993, St Patrick's became a College of Dublin City University. All College programmes are accredited by, and all students of the College are students of the University. This linkage has been an important catalyst in the development of College programmes. Under the terms of a supplementary agreement signed in 2008, the College and the University are committed to building on their relationship within the context of the institutional autonomy of the College and, in particular, to the further development of the education/arts dimensions of the University to be achieved through the development and provision of joint programmes.

The linkage agreements provide for reciprocal participation by College and University staff in the respective structures of both institutions and the College is represented by a Dean within the University. The University has contributed to the development of this Strategic Plan; the College, for its part, participates fully in the University strategic planning process, subscribes to the aims and priorities of the University's Strategic Plan and is collaborating with colleagues across the University including the other linked Colleges in its implementation.



## 2. Operational Context

The environment in which St Patrick's College operates is shaped by local and global factors. *Ar Aghaidh*, the previous College Strategic Plan, described the environment as 'dynamic and changing': this is even more true today. The dominant features and trends in the wider national and international landscape include the increasingly competitive local and global market; the emphasis on accountability and transparency and the demand for improved performance and value for money; the related need for collaboration and partnership; the requirement to promote access and equity; and generally the need to ensure and enhance quality. All are acknowledged and reflected in this plan and its strategic priorities and actions.

### **Financial Environment**

The intensification of the financial crisis, nationally and internationally, has added a new dimension and thrown into sharper focus factors such as the need for continued good governance and clarity of institutional mission. Above all, the current financial environment and the related constraints in funding and employment have posed significant challenges for higher education institutions and highlighted the need for sustainable funding models. Not the least of the challenges facing policy makers and those who shape strategic plans is to reconcile the understandable demands arising from the immediate short-term emergency situation with medium-term goals in a manner which does justice to both. This strategic plan acknowledges the immediate constraints while seeking to plan for the future. It rests on four pillars: **sustainability, engagement, collaboration and innovation.**

At a minimum, the new financial realities are presenting institutions with significant challenges in relation to budget in a way which impacts on all operations. The budgetary cuts already announced will have an impact on staffing levels, new appointments, class size, College infrastructure, and potentially on quality. A central challenge is to devise a strategy to minimise such impacts. In addition, the actions in the College Strategic Plan will need to be reviewed regularly in the light of new financial realities. The College also needs to assess the potential impact of changing funding arrangements, for example for part-time learners.

Nationally and internationally, publicly funded initiatives are properly required to manifest their contribution to job creation and economic recovery. Teacher education has an important role to play in this regard, that needs to be articulated more clearly. The Colleges of Education must contribute to the conversation about economic recovery and national regeneration and seek to shape it. The relevance of quality education and teacher education is not always immediately evident to the wider community or to policy makers. The very welcome *Statement on Education and Training* by the National Competitiveness Council (2009) which makes links between education at all levels and economic recovery provides a valuable starting point:

The quality of our education system has been a critical foundation for our economic and social progress... The widely shared appreciation of the role that education and training plays in promoting economic and social development, and enhancing life changes, is one of Ireland's key strengths.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> National Competitiveness Council, *Statement on Education and Training* (2009), p.6.

### ***Changing Higher Education Policy Context***

The national and international financial crisis has contributed to a significant review of national priorities and a new focus in key policies -notably the national development plan 2007-13 and the National Strategy for Higher Education (2011). The latter asserts strongly the centrality of higher education to future economic development and the broad social and cultural advantages to widening access. Based firmly on the objectives outlined in *Building Ireland's Smart Economy* (2008), the Strategy champions innovation, job creation and life-long learning and identifies priority concerns at system and institutional level in relation to mission, governance, engagement, research, internationalisation and sustainability.

The implementation phase of the Strategy now commenced with the publication of the HEA's 'Towards a Future Higher Education Landscape' document (February 2012) includes a process of strategic dialogue, and demands from institutions a sharper focus in planning and a clear articulation of mission and priorities. The Strategy offers two broad directions to institutions – clustering of two or more Colleges/Universities in a strategic alliance with sharing of services etc or merging of previously autonomous institutions; in the current crisis, the status quo is not seen as an option. Given its history, traditions, ethos, critical mass and key importance in its sector, the College will pursue collaborative options consistent with its mission and identity.

The potential benefits to institutions from sharing services in areas such as procurement are well established. The College already enjoys a close working relationship with Dublin City University across a range of areas including library services. Academically, the relationship is particularly manifest in initiatives such as CASTeL and the new University degree in Psychology. The College is committed to building on that collaboration and to participating with the University in other relationships and alliances. The College will identify significant initiatives in this area and pursue them energetically with a view to achieving savings and efficiencies.

The College also participates in a wide variety of other initiatives including the Dublin Region Higher Education Alliance (DRHEA), CHOICE (the Colleges of Education network), CERC (the Colleges of Education Research Consortium), SCoTENS (the Standing Committee on Teacher Education, North and South), and Foras Feasa (a digital Humanities network). The College will continue to actively engage with and participate in relevant networks and alliances including alliances with other teacher education institutions and partnerships with schools. It will review its current collaborations with a view to streamlining them and deepening and strengthening those most appropriate to our mission.

In relation to mergers, the two larger Colleges of Education are currently linked with universities and function in many respects as part of the university sector – however they function autonomously, and deal for many purposes directly with the Department of Education and Skills. They have a clear and distinctive mission in teacher education and sufficient critical mass to be sustainable. There are considerable advantages to this from the perspective of teacher education, particularly in the area of flexibility and responsiveness to national priorities.

The case for rationalisation is based on an assumption that there would be significant financial benefits to be gained from closure or amalgamation of institutions. Previous experience in Ireland and elsewhere provides salutary evidence to the contrary, and of the unintended consequences which can sometimes ensue. It is doubtful whether any significant savings would be achieved by full integration within the university. In so far as savings were possible, these are likely to be achievable through collaboration and shared services. The College is committed to pursuing actively such collaboration.

A theoretical alternative to integration would be the establishment of a National Institute for Teacher Education involving a number of Colleges along the lines of those mooted in the Institutes of Technology sector. While such a development might offer some financial savings in the long term, the educational case is less clear and no vision or rationale has been offered. The College supports the promotion of collaboration and clusters within the teacher education sector and across higher education generally rather than integration and merger, and asserts the value of the maintenance of diverse institutions which bring distinctive values and expertise to teacher education.

### **Teacher Education**

In the area of teacher education there have been significant developments in national priorities which pose significant challenges and opportunities for the College. Taken together, the Government's *Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life: The National Strategy to Improve Literacy and Numeracy Among Children and Young People* (2011) and the Teaching Council's *Initial Teacher Education: Criteria and Guidelines for Programme providers* (2011) foreshadow the most significant changes in teacher education in more than thirty years. The extension in the duration of initial teacher education programmes from three to four years in the case of the BEd and from three to four semesters in the case of the Graduate Diploma in Education, and the related reconceptualisation of programmes, are welcome developments which will make significant demands on College staff and resources. The immediate priorities of devising two new re-balanced programmes and writing the related modules, teaching both old and new programmes during a transitional period, creating a new model of school partnership and devising an extended and integrated Gaeltacht placement pose enormous challenges, the meeting of which will represent the most eloquent indicators of performance.

The National Strategy on Numeracy and Literacy has broad implications for all levels of the education system. As acknowledged in the strategy itself, the College has a well established capacity in this area through its language and literacy unit and innovative projects such as *Write to Read*. It is committed to enhancing its efforts in this area. Similarly, the government's strategy on the Irish language, *Straitéis 20 Bliain na Gaeilge* (2010), raises important challenges to which the College will respond actively, building on recent successes as a lead partner in **An Tionscadal Náisiúnta Siollabais do Mhic Léinn Ollscoile**. Other areas of national priority also demand and will receive engagement from the College – notably the critically important area of Science and Mathematics and the National Languages Strategy.

The College faces significant challenges from other providers in the area of teacher education: in responding energetically to these challenges, the watchwords will be flexibility, innovation and

quality. The College is already a leading provider of on-line, digital, blended courses with well established on-line certificate, diploma and MEd programmes across a range of areas in education, some offered through Teachnet or in collaboration with other providers such as the Institute of Child Education and Psychology Europe (ICEPE). Engagement in this area will be enhanced. The re-accreditation and quality improvement processes will be used to review and advance the College engagement with issues including modes of delivery and assessment, e-learning, modularisation, internationalisation and education for sustainable development. It will also provide further opportunities for the College to reaffirm its commitment to the role of the Arts and Humanities in education, the importance of which is even greater in the current context.

The link between educational outcomes and quality teaching is well established. The quality of initial teacher education and in-service programmes, the structures in place to protect and enhance them and ultimately the quality and status of teaching, are properly the concern of the States and regulatory bodies worldwide. As evidenced in the international literature, this needs to be linked to the wider quality assurance agenda. The growing recognition in higher education of the importance of quality teaching and learning, an area in which the College has considerable strengths, also presents significant opportunities which will be responded to actively.

### ***Humanities***

The role of the Arts and Humanities in society, their contribution to shaping individual and communal values and well-being, and their potential contribution to national recovery have been acknowledged and more fully appreciated in recent times. The achievement of Irish people over a long period of time in the fields of literature, music, and the creative arts is clear evidence of this. Ireland continues to enhance its reputation in this area. The College, too, has a venerable tradition in the Arts and Humanities and, in particular, in relation to Humanities in Education and the holistic development of the person. Impending changes in initial teacher education notwithstanding, we continue to affirm the contribution of the Humanities in higher education and in the formation of teachers. There are very convincing social and economic reasons for developing further our capabilities in these areas. Humanities departments at St Patrick's College are committed to equipping their students with deeper and broader disciplinary foundations, and to nurturing the creativity and enthusiasm needed for continual engagement with learning. In partnership with DCU, the College will actively seek to enhance its contribution to the Humanities, and to develop the content of programmes at undergraduate and postgraduate level in line with the needs of a new generation.

### ***The Centrality of the Student***

The emphasis on the student voice in the National Strategy on Higher Education is welcome. The College has and will continue to espouse the centrality of the student and to that end will strive to enhance the teaching and learning environment. A key objective in educating the teachers of tomorrow will be to seek to develop and sustain a facilitative and conducive learning environment and to exemplify best practice in this respect. The College will foster an enterprising spirit and the awareness of the need for continual innovation, and will strive to integrate these into its values. In pursuit of its mission in education and humanities and in responding to the rapidly changing needs of Irish society as identified above, the College will engage actively with its stakeholders at all levels, including its graduates and current students.

The cultivation of critical educative judgement is the central aim of the College's education programmes. In line with the conviction that this can only prosper within a wider formation of the person, we promote a broad holistic education and seek to afford students the opportunity to develop understanding, discrimination and empathy in and across a range of intellectual disciplines.

### ***Access, Life-Long Learning and the Education Continuum***

The College has in recent times increased participation from, and broadened its links with, traditionally under-represented communities in higher education. It will continue to develop its access programmes and increase the number of students entering Education and Humanities programmes through non-standard routes. In addition, conscious of the important role primary teachers play in enabling all children to achieve their potential and have the highest aspirations regarding education, the College will continue to enhance its teacher education programmes to support teachers in this role.

The publication by the Teaching Council of *Policy on the Continuum of Teacher Education (2011)* marks a significant development in the wider recognition of life-long learning and the concept of a seamless continuum in teacher education which spans all stages of the teaching career. The College has championed this approach and has always aspired to contribute across the continuum. It has significantly expanded its contribution in the area of in-service education and continuing professional development in recent years, including second level. Through its extensive range of continuing professional development courses at certificate, diploma, masters and doctoral level, the College aims to equip teachers with action and other research skills which have the potential to energise teacher professional development and transform schools. Flexible learning and exit routes from programmes will be further developed. While the financial environment will make in-career work more difficult, the contraction of DES funded support services offers the opportunity for other providers to fill the vacuum with well-focussed and cost-effective initiatives at first and second level.

Among the areas which have been significantly impacted upon by financial cutbacks are special education and early childhood education. The academic year 2011-12 marks the fiftieth anniversary of the College's first SEN programme and the establishment of the Special Education department – the first such department in an Irish HEI. Despite constrained resources, both these areas remain national priorities; it is incumbent on the College to ensure that the expertise and capacity which has been developed is maintained and deployed effectively in the service of the education of Irish children.

The creation of a National Induction programme for newly-qualified teachers is a welcome development. The active participation of the College in the pilot project from the outset has contributed both to its educational success and its cost-effectiveness. The College will explore ways of enhancing its contribution in this area thus improving the value for money of the initiative and advancing the quality of developing systems for supporting newly-qualified teachers in their first years in the classroom.

Financial constraints will impact on the capacity of the College to maintain and enhance its activities in research and across the teacher education continuum. However they may also provide

opportunities in these areas. The College's EdD programme – the first of its kind in the Republic of Ireland – which targets urgent priority areas in the education system, and the growing PhD programme have been notable achievements. However, the support structures for postgraduate programmes and research need to be reviewed periodically to ensure their quality and sustainability.

### ***Research***

St Patrick's College has a well-established reputation in the area of research and a distinguished record of publication. Sustained investment in staff development and innovative postgraduate research programmes has created significant research capacity and achievement in education and humanities.

Generating and sharing knowledge and understanding is central to the role of the College. The interface between research, teaching, learning and knowledge transfer is of particular importance. The College is well placed to conduct and disseminate basic and applied research. Its research agenda in education and humanities will continue to be tangible and focussed and to support critical research perspectives in relation to policy and practice. The well-established networks of the College which include schools throughout the country, education centres and other educational agencies will be utilised to facilitate long-term knowledge transfer. The more competitive environment for research funding underlines the need for partnerships and collaborations such as the Colleges of Education Research Consortium (CERC), and the Centre for the Advancement of Science Teaching and Learning (CASTel).

Since its establishment in the College in 1966, the Educational Research Centre has planned, executed and disseminated research and evaluation studies in education which have contributed to a greater understanding of learning and teaching. The work of the Centre which has focussed on national assessments of achievement, a number of major international studies, evaluations of initiatives and new programmes, test development and critical analysis of issues in education has profoundly influenced policy and practice. The status of the Education Research Centre as a major international research centre in its field needs to be protected and enhanced.

### ***Infrastructure***

While the College has invested in improved physical and IT infrastructure in recent years, the rapid expansion of recent decades has not been matched by an equivalent modernisation in its physical infrastructure. The case for major capital investment was approved and a long-awaited campus development commenced late in 2010. Unfortunately this been disrupted owing to the financial difficulties of the main building contractor. Re-tendering has now been completed; it is hoped that work will resume shortly.

The works will provide approximately 11,000 sq metres of new build, comprising state of the art teaching and learning facilities, workshop space, digital learning, language and science laboratories, lecture theatres, gymnasium extension and seminar and conference space. Existing buildings will also be refurbished. This will rectify long-standing problems of overcrowding, replace outdated teaching facilities and provide a state of the art College for the twenty-first century.

***Conclusion***

The environment in which Irish Higher Education Institutions currently operate is more challenging than ever before. Clarity of mission and prioritisation are fundamental requirements. The key priorities and related actions identified below are set in the context of six core values and four supporting pillars. They seek to reconcile the demands of the immediate crisis with the need to sustain what is best and plan for the future accordingly.

### 3. Mission

The mission of St Patrick's College is in teacher education across the continuum, and in the humanities. We espouse the importance of education as a humanising, transforming and holistic practice. A publicly funded higher education institution in the Catholic tradition, the College is inclusive, welcoming and respectful of those of all religious and secular traditions. We seek to create a community of learning which achieves excellence in teaching, research and community engagement, while cherishing diversity, promoting equity, and fostering Irish language, culture and heritage.



## 4. Core Educational Values

**Academic Excellence**

**Centrality of the Student**

**Education for Human Flourishing**

**Human Rights and Democratic Practice**

**Equality and Social Justice**

**Environmental Care**

### Four Supporting Pillars

<b>Sustainability</b>	<b>Engagement</b>	<b>Collaboration</b>	<b>Innovation</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In relations with the physical environment</li> <li>• In the development of College communities</li> <li>• In planning, development and resourcing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With diverse learning communities (internal and external)</li> <li>• With research and scholarship</li> <li>• With the local community</li> <li>• With national priorities and system needs</li> <li>• With culture and society</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With internal and external communities</li> <li>• With schools and partners in education</li> <li>• Through clustering for strength with DCU and local, national and international partners</li> <li>• Characterised by mutuality and democratic practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In College structures, policy and practice</li> <li>• In teaching, learning and research</li> <li>• In programmes and courses</li> <li>• In digitally enhanced learning and flexible modes of delivery</li> </ul>

## 5. Strategic Priorities

### 1. **Renew and Extend Programmes**

In pursuing its distinctive mission in Teacher Education and Humanities, and in responding to the current and future needs of Irish society, St Patrick's College will continue to review and extend its programmes at undergraduate, postgraduate and continuing professional development levels in collaboration with Dublin City University and other partners.

### 2. **Respond to National Priorities and play a lead role in Teacher Education and the Humanities**

In collaboration with DCU and other partners, the College will expand its influence as a lead institution in the field of teacher education across the continuum and in the humanities, leading national debate in these areas, contributing to policy and shaping practice, while responding in a timely manner to national needs and priorities in key areas such as flexible and lifelong learning.

### 3. **Build Partnerships and Alliances**

The College will enhance its relationship with DCU and build partnerships and alliances at community and sectoral level with other higher education institutions, with schools and with other relevant organisations, nationally and internationally and enhance its contribution to the community.

### 4. **Ensure Quality and Promote Excellence**

The College will promote quality and excellence in all its programmes and activities and will develop resource and funding strategies to underpin this, and maximise sustainability and joint initiatives. Our graduates will be recognised for being flexible and creative, innovative and skilled, intellectually rigorous and reflective.

### 5. **Enhance the Learning Environment**

Building on its well-established tradition of excellence in teaching and learning, the College will provide students with a supportive, intellectually challenging and coherent learning environment. It will enhance the educational, social, cultural and artistic experience of students and engage actively in University-wide and national initiatives in this area.

**6. Embed Inclusion, Diversity and Sustainability**

St Patrick's College will promote and embed inter-culturalism, human rights, social inclusion and care for the environment in College policy, programmes, processes and partnerships.

**7. Expand Research Capacity**

Working collaboratively with colleagues across the University and externally, St Patrick's College will develop the research capacity of the institution in key strategic areas, in order, *inter alia*, to inform policy and shape practice in the area of its mission.

**8. Develop College Infrastructure, Organisation and Funding**

The College will review and enhance its infrastructure, organisation and funding to meet the challenges of future development.

**9. Promote Staff Training, Development and Well-Being**

In responding to evolving needs at a time of rapid change and diminishing resources, the College will support a wide-ranging programme of training and professional development for staff across the institution, to assist them in the performance of their duties and to enhance their well-being.

## 6. Key Actions

The following key actions relate to the nine strategic actions identified above and reflect the four pillars of sustainability, engagement, collaboration and innovation. It is intended also that each unit and department will draft their own action plan derived from these objectives.

Strategic Priority	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>1. Renew and Extend Programmes</b></p> <p><i>In pursuing its distinctive mission in teacher education and humanities, and in responding to the current and future needs of Irish society, St Patrick's College will continue to review and extend its programmes at undergraduate, postgraduate and continuing professional development levels in collaboration with Dublin City University and other partners</i></p>		By end of Year
Key Actions	1.1	Develop, accredit and implement a reconceptualised four-year BEd programme and a two-year Graduate Diploma in Education programme	1,2
	1.2	Extend the range of options in the BA and specialisms within the BEd	2,3
	1.3	Actively engage across the continuum of teacher education – initial, induction and continuing professional development – and across all levels – early childhood, primary, secondary and higher education. Where appropriate, develop or contribute to the development of collaborative programmes for groups and sectors such as international students, second-level sector, and students interested in studying education outside of professional degree programmes	1,2,3
	1.4	Strengthen provision for the Irish language within Education and Humanities programmes, through supporting and extending existing initiatives in the areas of Irish language teaching and learning; developing new initiatives in response to diverse student learning needs; reconceptualising the relationship between language, pedagogy and specialist academic modules; developing Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) modules in a variety of curricular areas; re-organising Gaeltacht placements to ensure coherence and integration with the language and pedagogy curriculum and assessment procedures of the College	1,2
	1.5	Review and extend the current provision for postgraduate programmes and continuing professional development courses in Education and Humanities and in cognate areas such as educational psychology, based on an assessment of current resources, needs and requirements and with a view towards developing a wider portfolio of flexible learning and online courses	2,3

<b>Strategic Priority</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>2. Respond to National Priorities and play a lead role in Teacher Education and the Humanities</b></p> <p><i>In collaboration with DCU and other partners, the College will expand its influence as a lead institution in the field of teacher education across the continuum and in the humanities, leading national debate in these areas, contributing to policy and shaping practice, while responding in a timely manner to national needs and priorities in key areas such as flexible and lifelong learning</i></p>		<b>By end of Year</b>
<b>Key Actions</b>	2.1	Continue to support significant existing national and College initiatives in the areas of literacy, mathematics education, science education, ICT and inclusive education and develop new ones in response to system needs and national priorities	1,2,3
	2.2	Invest in the development of on-line and flexible learning options in teacher education in collaboration with other partners	1,2,3
	2.3	Increase the engagement of the College with educational policy development and critique and provide the necessary supports to facilitate this	1,2,3
	2.4	Support the complementary roles of Humanities and Education within the College’s mission and programmes	1,2,3
	2.5	Enhance the public profile of the College and its centres of excellence through <i>inter alia</i> the development of a Public Relations policy, enhanced use of ICTs, the organisation of conferences, seminars and public lectures and the dissemination of staff publications	2,3
	2.6	Based on a needs analysis and responding to national priorities, develop a flexible programme to meet the ongoing professional development needs of teachers	2
	2.7	Establish Lárionad na Gaeilge: Ionad Ilmheáin Teagaisc, Foghlama, Acmhainní agus Taighde (Irish-language Centre: a Multimedia Language Teaching, Learning, Resource and Research Centre) as the centre-piece of a wider initiative in the area of language and national language policy generally; actively engage in Irish-medium teacher professional development	2

<b>Strategic Priority</b>	<b>3. Build Partnerships and Alliances</b>		<b>By end of Year</b>
	<i>The College will enhance its relationship with DCU and build partnerships and alliances at community and sectoral level with other higher education institutions, with schools and with other relevant organisations, nationally and internationally and in order to enhance its contribution to the community</i>		
<b>Key Actions</b>	3.1	Building on the linkage with DCU and optimising the use of resources, launch joint initiatives and programmes in areas of strategic priority, contribute to the implementation of the University's strategic plan, <b>Making A Difference</b> , and support the University in developing strategic alliances and clusters which add value to the College's existing programmes and expertise	1,2,3
	3.2	Review and rationalise existing institutional linkages under Erasmus and other programmes with a view to deepening relationships with key institutions and extending student and staff exchange	3
	3.3	Promote and develop College programmes for international students and increase international student numbers substantially	2
	3.4	Strengthen links with statutory bodies in education and build partnerships within the sector	1,2,3
	3.5	Drawing on the review of the Teacher Professional Development Partnership with Schools Project, develop and implement a schools partnership model which embraces all teacher education programmes	1,2,3
	3.6	Support mechanisms to reward community engagement activities among staff and students	2,3
<b>Strategic Priority</b>	<b>4. Ensure Quality and Promote Excellence</b>		
	<i>The College will promote quality and excellence in all its programmes and activities and will develop resource and funding strategies to underpin this, and maximise sustainability and joint initiatives. Our graduates will be recognised for being flexible and creative, innovative and skilled, intellectually rigorous and reflective</i>		
<b>Key Actions</b>	4.1	In association with the University, promote as appropriate across programmes and services the Graduate Attributes, Aptitudes and Proficiencies from <i>Generation 21: Shaping Graduates for Life and Work in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century</i>	2,3
	4.2	Develop existing mechanisms for identifying, supporting and rewarding excellence in teaching, research and service	2,3
	4.3	In line with the recommendations of the National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030, enhance stakeholder involvement in QA and existing mechanisms for regular student, graduate and employer feedback	2
	4.4	Actively promote a quality culture in all College activities and assure conformity to the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance and the requirements of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance Authority of Ireland	1,2,3
	4.5	Move beyond unit, function and programme quality reviews to include flexible and thematic assessments of College activities and the learning experience	2

<b>Strategic Priority</b>	<b>5. Enhance the Learning Environment</b> <i>Building on its well established tradition of excellence in teaching and learning, the College will provide students with a supportive, challenging and coherent learning environment. It will enhance the educational, social, cultural and artistic experience of students and engage actively in University wide and national initiatives in this area</i>		<b>By end of Year</b>
<b>Key Actions</b>	5.1	Integrate digital technologies and blended learning into all programmes as appropriate and continue to invest in infrastructural environment to facilitate this	2
	5.2	Agree joint initiatives in this area with the University and contribute actively to the establishment of the proposed new National Academy for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning	2
	5.3	Foster innovation in teaching, learning and assessment while ensuring the continuation of small group teaching in College programmes through seminars and tutorials	1,2
	5.4	Develop a module in College undergraduate programmes that is focused on student leadership	3
	5.5	Continue the development of a state of the art Library/Information Service and integrate IT/AV and Library services where appropriate resulting in a seamless service for users	1,2,3
	5.6	Review and enhance systems, procedures and communications across the College including student support, administration and information services	2
<b>Strategic Priority</b>	<b>6. Embed Inclusion, Diversity and Sustainability</b> <i>St Patrick's College will promote and embed inter-culturalism, human rights, social inclusion and care for the environment in College policy, programmes, processes and partnerships</i>		
<b>Key Actions</b>	6.1	Embrace and promote the HEA's Charter for Inclusive Teaching and Learning and embed the related inclusive strategies in College policy, practice and programmes	2
	6.2	Develop the College Access programme in partnership with DCU and pursue an inclusive admissions policy with regard to ethnic minorities and differently abled students; review non-standard entry routes in line with seeking to meet the HEA 2013 target of 30%; maintain current relatively high student numbers from under-represented socio-economic groups	3
	6.3	Establish external advisory group to facilitate increased consultation with local and other communities, in relation to widening participation in education from under-represented groups and to inform access policy.	1
	6.4	Review programmes, policy and practice to enhance and embed inter-culturalism, human rights, equality, social inclusion and environmental awareness and care	2
	6.5	Continue to support the work of the Educational Disadvantage Centre and the Centre for Human Rights and Citizenship Education	1,2,3

<b>Strategic Priority</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>7. Expand Research Capacity</b></p> <p><i>Working collaboratively with colleagues across the University and externally, St Patrick's College will develop the research capacity of the institution in key strategic areas in order, inter alia, to inform policy and shape practice in the area of its mission</i></p>		<b>By end of Year</b>
<b>Key Actions</b>	7.1	Support development of the ERC and harness opportunities for synergies with research activity across the College	1,2,3
	7.2	Expand numbers of postgraduate research students by 20% , targeting in particular the development of key research skills and priority areas of system need	3
	7.3	Become a centre of excellence in language education research, with particular focus on immersion education; teaching and learning Irish at first and third level; second language teaching generally; and Computer-Assisted Language Learning	3
	7.4	Enhance staff training in the supervision of research in conjunction with the Graduate Studies Office (DCU) and NAIRTL	2
	7.5	Create greater awareness in the wider education and academic community of the publications of College staff by developing a digital repository and review systems for compiling bibliometrics and Key Performance Indicators	2
	7.6	Continue to support the role and creative application of digital technologies within research	1,2,3
	7.7	Explore the potential for academic and inter-disciplinary synergies on the DCU-SPD-MDI-AHC axis and develop joint doctoral and other collaborative initiatives with DCU and other HEIs under the umbrella of the DRHEA and similar networks	2,3
	7.8	Continue to support inter-institutional, north/south and international research networks	1,2,3



<b>Strategic Priority</b>	<b>8. Develop College Infrastructure, Organisation and Funding</b> <i>The College will review and enhance its infrastructure, organisation and funding to meet the challenges of future development</i>		<b>By end of year</b>
<b>Key Actions</b>	8.1	Complete extensive expansion and development of campus facilities and infrastructure	2
	8.2	Enhance the College infrastructure to enable the further development of sustainable environmental practices	3
	8.3	Continue to review College governance in line with good practice across higher education and the public sector	2,3
	8.4	Review current funding model and enhance internal financial and risk management reporting structures	2
	8.5	Review, risk-assess and enhance academic, administrative and management systems, structures, communications and procedures, including Academic Council and its committees, career structure and posts of responsibility	3
	8.6	Identify areas of strategic importance to the College and ensure provision for leadership, succession planning and skills development in those areas	2
	8.7	Review and enhance Estate Management structures and procedures	1
<b>Strategic Priority</b>	<b>9. Promote Staff Training, Development and Well-Being</b> <i>In responding to evolving needs at a time of rapid change and diminishing resources, the College will support a wide-ranging programme of training and professional development for staff across the institution, to assist them in the performance of their duties and to enhance their well-being</i>		
<b>Key Actions</b>	9.1	Introduce a cross-College professional development programme based on a needs analysis which will <i>inter alia</i> enhance staff development and training for the delivery of online and flexible learning programmes, promote practices such as peer review and enhance the professionalisation of part-time staff	2
	9.2	Produce a consolidated manual for HR and staff development policies and procedures	1
	9.3	Agree and implement an appropriate work-load, and associated resource allocation models	1
	9.4	Conduct a risk assessment with a view to ensuring work-life balance and the quality of working life	2
	9.5	Initiate a programme of leadership training as well as resource management for challenging circumstances and times and provide support, through training opportunities, for distributing leadership within departments and units	2

## 7. Performance Indicators

By the end of the period of this Strategic Plan, the College will have:

<p><b>1. Renewed and Extended Programmes</b></p> <p>KPI 1(a) Prepared and implemented a reconceptualised four-year BEd programme and two-year PGDE            KPI 1(b) Expanded contribution to Induction, In-Career and Postgraduate across the continuum of teacher education, evidenced by accredited mentoring programmes, increased range of other programmes and closer partnership with schools            KPI 1(c) Renewed and extended BA programme with increased intake of students</p>
<p><b>2. Responded to National Priorities</b></p> <p>KPI 2(a) Launched and led significant initiatives in areas including Literacy, Mathematics Education, Inclusive Education and Continuing Professional Development for teachers            KPI 2 (b) Increased the number of non-standard entrants on under-graduate programmes to 30%</p>
<p><b>3. Built Partnerships and Alliances</b></p> <p>KPI 3 (a) Enhanced strategic links and academic collaboration with Dublin City University and its linked Colleges evidenced by increased number of shared programmes and research, and built partnerships with other institutions in line with institutional mission            KPI 3(b) Led the development and implementation of school partnerships in teacher education            KPI 3(c) Increased numbers of students participating in Erasmus and other international programmes by 20%</p>
<p><b>4. Ensured Quality and Promoted Excellence</b></p> <p>KPI 4(a) Enhanced reputation of programmes evidenced by student retention and achievement, and by graduate employability            KPI 4(b) Achieved external recognition of quality and excellence of programmes and staff; and enhanced reputation as a key institution in the area of teaching and learning, as evidenced by application rates            KPI4(c) Enhanced and integrated mechanisms for student feed-back to inform planning and delivery</p>
<p><b>5. Enhanced the Learning Environment</b></p> <p>KPI 5(a) State of the art IT/AV/Library and other facilities supporting high-quality teaching and learning and an extended range of blended learning programmes            KPI 5(b) Increased investment in Student Support Services            KPI 5(c) Implemented a new MIS system to facilitate innovation</p>

**6. Embedded Inclusion, Diversity and Sustainability**

KPI 6(a) Externally recognition by key agencies for embedding of social inclusion, diversity and care for the environment in College programmes and processes

KPI 6(b) Increased numbers of under-represented groups in student body

**7. Expanded Research Capacity**

KPI 7(a) Enhanced reputation as a significant research institution in line with the mission of the College

KPI 7(b) Achieved external recognition of Educational Research Centre as a leading centre of educational research of national and international import

KPI 7(c) Developed a digital repository for College research and publications and increased research output

**8. Developed College Infrastructure, Organisation and Funding**

KPI 8(a) Completed extensive expansion and development of campus facilities and infrastructure to ensure an appropriate 21<sup>st</sup> teaching, learning and research environment

KPI 8(b) Diversified College funding and renewed governance and internal structures

**9. Promoted Staff Training, Development and Well-being**

KPI9(a) Implemented agreed workload model

KPI9(b) Increased investment by College and demonstrable engagement by staff in on-going development, training and other change management initiatives

# Appendices

## Governing Body ~ 2007-2012

Professor John Coolahan (Chairperson)

Dr Peter Archer

Rev Desmond Beirne

Mr Eamonn Bolton (2011-12)

Ms Olivia Bree

Dr Elizabeth Cotter

Mr Seán Cromien

Ms Evelyn Cuddy

Mr Roddy Day

Rev Aquinas Duffy

Ms Marian Hackett

Mr Ed Leamy (2011-12)

Professor Brian MacCraith

Dr Ciarán Mac Murchaidh

Mr Dermot McCarthy

Mr Feichín McDonagh SC

Ms Anne McDonagh

Rev Brian Moore CM (RIP December 2011)

Mr Tommy Murtagh

Dr Anita Prunty

Dr Pauric Travers

Dr Fionnuala Waldron

Mr Martin Ward

Mr Paul Whelan

Dr Janet Varley (joined April 2012)

Dr Alan English (joined April 2012)

## Strategic Planning Committee

Dr Pauric Travers (Chairperson)

Mr Eamonn Bolton (2011-12)

Ms Olivia Bree

Professor John Coolahan

Mr Roddy Day

Ms Maeve Fitzpatrick

Dr Catherine Furlong

Mr Seán MacLiam

Dr Ciarán Mac Murchaidh

Ms Orla Nic Aodha

Dr Pádraig Ó Duibhir

Dr Maurice O'Reilly ( 2009-11)

Dr Fionnuala Waldron

Mr Martin Ward