

# Provost 2021-2031



## MANIFESTO **EMPOWERING TRINITY**

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Jane Ohlmeyer



**Trinity College Dublin**  
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath  
The University of Dublin

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*I will know that I have done my job as Provost well if – in a decade – Trinity is a serious player on the world stage. If, across Ireland, people see Trinity as an institution that brings learning, creativity, and innovation to the country. If, within Trinity, staff and students feel valued, supported, inspired and I have helped them to unlock their full potential. And, together, we can unlock the full potential of the University. In 2031 I want to leave Trinity in a better and stronger position than it is today. It is all about the future: how we secure the pipeline of excellence and how we take Trinity to its next stage.*

**Jane Ohlmeyer**

**#VoteJane**





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## My Promise to Trinity

Trinity's success as a university is rooted in its people and ideas. Our core strengths lie in our exceptional staff, our superb student body, and our incredible alumni. As a community we are ambitious about how we can excel, inspire, and make a difference.

I am asking for your support in this election because I believe that by working together as a community, we can shape the future and success not only of Trinity but of Ireland on the world stage, contributing in our different ways to a more inclusive, equitable, and just society for all. There is no greater place than a world-class university within which to identify, consider, and address the complex issues which face our world. Every decade brings new opportunities and, undeniably, differing challenges. My commitment to you as Provost is that our shared history, collective understandings, and diverse and rich expertise will be nurtured and facilitated under my stewardship to impact society, to inspire the brightest minds and to support excellent research.

As Provost, I will recognise the significant challenges that we face, internally and externally. This is a time for change. With your vote, I will bring new ideas grounded in broad experience, new energy, empathetic leadership, as well as a return to putting people first and trusting and valuing our Trinity community. Together, we will unlock Trinity's full potential.

My experience to date has prepared me to serve you as Provost. I will lead by listening, by placing trust in the community, and by facilitating an ethos where people feel valued. I will act with humility, collegiality, commitment, respect, responsibility, passion, and joy.

Thank you for taking the time to read my 'living' manifesto. This is the start of my conversation about the issues, not the end, and I will be publishing policy statements during the campaign as well as developing some of the ideas contained here.



“ I welcome your active engagement with me over the coming weeks and ask for your vote on 10 April. Feel free to contact me by email ([jane.ohlmeyer@tcd.ie](mailto:jane.ohlmeyer@tcd.ie)).

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### My Promise to You

From pandemic conditions to the climate emergency, the second millennium has brought profound and rapid change to our world. Now, more than ever, Trinity College has the capacity to be a university of local and global consequence.



Professor Jane Ohlmeyer

Never before has it been more critical that Trinity is led by a Provost who embodies the values of the University; a Provost who is bold in vision, fearless in commitment to scholarly excellence and to advancing a pluralistic and inclusive society, but equally dynamic and compassionate in enabling and inspiring colleagues and students to be the best they can be, as leaders and as people, empowering the community

that propels Trinity's reputation in the world.

I am running for Provost because I have these qualities as well as the proven track record, the breadth of experience at home and abroad, and the vision and clarity of purpose to steer Trinity through the current challenges and to ensure that we build on all that is great about our University.

Trinity has always inspired me. Working together we can unlock Trinity's potential in education, research, and innovation. I humbly ask for your

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- 8 support to work tirelessly on your behalf to achieve this, across all sectors of the University, and to empower every member of the Trinity community.

Together, we will build the Trinity of tomorrow.



**5 February 2021**

**Jane H. Ohlmeyer**

**Erasmus Smith's Professor of Modern History (1762), FTCD, MRIA  
Trinity College Dublin**

**EMPOWERING TRINITY**

Together we can realise Trinity's potential,  
putting people first so we can face the challenges of tomorrow.



## My Personal and Professional Experience

Born in Kitwe in Zambia, I grew up in Belfast during the Troubles before going to Scotland to study History, but it was at Trinity that I found my home. After completing my PhD in History under the inspiring supervision of the late Professor Aidan Clarke, I taught at the University of California at Santa Barbara, at Yale, and at the University of Aberdeen. In 2003 I returned to Trinity as the Erasmus Smith's Professor of History (1762), following in Aidan's footsteps.

Over the past two decades I have served our community as teacher, scholar, supervisor, mentor, Head of Department, Head of School, founding Vice President for Global Relations, and Director at the Trinity Long Room Hub Arts and Humanities Research Institute. It is this wide and varied experience that I will bring to the role of Provost.

Whether in small groups or the lecture theatre, I am a passionate teacher. I also have extensive experience of supervising doctoral



*Professor Jane Ohlmeyer, Erasmus Smith's Professor of Modern History (1762)*

students and mentoring postdoctoral fellows in History and across the Arts and Humanities. For me it is about using different pedagogies to inspire student learning, while never being afraid to innovate or make

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mistakes. Our students and early career researchers are the life blood of our disciplines and indeed a primary strength of our University. Whether at undergraduate or postgraduate level, a Trinity education transforms people's lives. Recognising, inspiring, and nurturing students' potential is and always has been a defining hallmark of our University. Moreover, in recent years, attention to inclusion and diversity is strengthening and enhancing our academic community.

As Provost I will introduce new initiatives to further enrich and diversify our community and our approaches to learning, teaching, and assessment. Exploring and embracing improvements in technology will be a key resource as we move forward and reshape how teaching, research and administration are conducted. We also need to remember that structures and technology only take us so far and that teaching is a human activity. It's the substance and quality of education that matters. We need to privilege small group activity and trust our academics to be research-led educators. This is what is so special about the Trinity education experience.

As Head of the Department of History and then of the School of Histories and Humanities I saw, first-hand, the importance of the tutor system, how much it helps students facing difficulties, and why it is an integral part of what makes Trinity such a unique place of learning. As Provost, I will make sure that the student voice is never ignored or that students feel that they are treated as a source of income in some commercial enterprise. Education is at the heart of what we do and every year students inspire us with their enthusiasm and ideas. We repay that contribution and that faith by delivering a world-class education that is a passport to future success.

Flexibility, resilience, and persistence remain features of our working lives, and are central to practices at work. Raising two sons, like many others I worried and struggled at times to manage my work-life balance. It was never easy. I know first-hand the pressures caring responsibilities can put on people. I understand fears that it may impact on promotion and career prospects. This is something we must get right.



I welcome how the Athena Swan process has brought to the surface these issues and others around inequality, discrimination, bullying, and workloads. Discussions around race and racial awareness and disability are very much to the fore. The pandemic has also underscored the importance of having a working environment that is flexible and prioritises well-being and health for everyone.

As Chair of the Irish Research Council I have been at the forefront of putting in place a gender strategy and we are currently developing a bullying and harassment policy, which is as relevant in a Trinity context as the gender strategy. Real action is needed to address these structural and cultural issues, how we communicate about them within College, and how we forge new practices.

As Provost I will initiate an overarching review of Trinity's work practices in line with its academic mission, national and international policies, and best practices in the Higher Education environment. I am committed to the creation of an agile, supportive and constructive work environment for the betterment of our students and staff. I will ensure that Trinity is a university that promotes dignity and respect in the workplace and celebrates openness, fairness, diversity, inclusivity, and equality.

## My Leadership Roles

Over the past two decades I have been an effective leader and influential ambassador for Trinity and Ireland. As founding Head of the School of Histories and Humanities (2005–08) I was responsible for bringing together several distinctive disciplines, for fostering principles of openness and trust, for developing shared academic programmes, and for attracting significant EU, national and philanthropic funding to the School.

As the founding Vice President for Global Relations (2011–14) I devised Trinity's first 'Global Relations Strategy' and developed the business plan that underpinned it. In this role I transformed how we approach international engagement and recruitment across all disciplines. I then hired and led a high-performing team that delivered the strategy in



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Dublin, set up our offices in New York, New Delhi and Shanghai, and supported the establishment of a niche campus in Singapore. Working closely with colleagues in every Faculty, School, and Department afforded me important insights into how decisions are made and implemented at all levels in Trinity, as well as on the national and international stages. As Vice President for Global Relations, I also developed excellent working relationships with researchers in some of the most prestigious universities across the world, with the leaders of



Professor Jane Ohlmeyer on a trade visit to China in 2012 as Trinity's inaugural Vice President for Global Relations

enterprise, with policymakers and the heads of cultural organisations, with colleagues in the Department of Foreign Affairs and in agencies that work for Ireland abroad, and with Trinity alumni and friends, whom I reached out to wherever I travelled.

“The depth and quality of these relationships bring a particular strength to the role of Provost and serve as an invaluable asset in a highly competitive and globalised Higher Education sector.

As Director of the Trinity Long Room Hub, I took great pleasure in providing strategic leadership and profile-building. I introduced innovative research, fellowship, and public engagement programmes as well as pioneering initiatives around interdisciplinarity, impact, and



policy that are being taken up at College and at European level. The Hub is recognised as a world-class reference point as it enters its second decade. Working with an incredible and highly motivated team, I sought to secure the Hub's future financial sustainability through philanthropic fundraising and securing EU-grants. I am a recognised advocate for the importance of the Arts and Humanities and interdisciplinarity – in areas such as the medical humanities and neurohumanities - both nationally and on the world stage.

Since September 2015, I have served as Chair of the Irish Research Council, a body that awards basic frontier research funding on the basis of excellence across 100 academic disciplines, from archaeology to zoology. Currently the Irish Research Council funds c.1,400 early career researchers and advises government on a range of research-related policy issues. As Chair, I have advocated for the creation of a more balanced research ecosystem in Ireland and for additional funding for basic frontier research for the past five years. The launch of the Laureate Awards represents a critical departure in achieving this, as do successful efforts to secure a living stipend/salary for our early career researchers. The Irish Research Council has been actively working with government and other funders across Ireland and the UK to devise a Brexit strategy that looks North-South as well as West-East while mitigating risks and maximising opportunities.



*Professor Jane Ohlmeyer outside Dáil Éireann as Chair of the Irish Research Council with Senator Ivana Bacik, Peter Brown and Deputy James Lawless*

We are now working with the new Department of Higher and Further Education, Research, Innovation and Science and other bodies, especially the Royal Irish Academy, to ensure that research informs public policy. Much of this derives from initiatives that I led as Director of

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the Trinity Long Room Hub. I continue to work closely with the Hub to ensure that Trinity is an integral component of any national conversation around research for public policy. Finally, the Irish Research Council strives to communicate why basic frontier research matters – as with the #LoveIrishResearch campaign – and to convince government ministers, TDs, MEPs, and other influencers about the importance of investing in basic frontier research as a national priority.

As Provost I will also be fearless in lobbying for increased resources for research and education and tireless in telling the stories that illustrate why research and education matter. Now more than ever, we must work closely with others and, where appropriate, speak with one voice. Having an appreciation of the quality of research in all disciplines across the entire country, I will work to enhance co-operation and collaboration with other Higher Education Institutions, cultural and civic organizations, government departments, and industry.

Thanks to these and other leadership roles that I have held at a European level (as a member of advisory and scientific boards and as the national delegate to bodies like the European Strategy Forum for Research Infrastructures) I know how to align strategic objectives with wider opportunities. I understand how to effectively lobby and network with leading researchers, heads of cultural institutions, key figures in the European Commission, leaders of industry and enterprise, politicians, national policy makers, and funders. I have interacted with distinguished researchers across all disciplines and career stages and truly appreciate the diversity of funding and academic priorities and needs.

As your Provost I will be the public face of Trinity, representing a great university on the Irish and world stages. I have developed an exceptionally strong external profile and a national and global network of contacts on which I will draw as Provost. This track-record in forming relationships and working with a wide range of high-level individuals at home and abroad also means that I have extensive experience as an effective negotiator and as a trusted ambassador.





Professor Jane Ohlmeyer with President Joe Biden at the US launch of *The Cambridge History of Ireland* in 2018, at the home of Ambassador Mulhall in Washington DC

## My Research

My academic credentials are those of an historian of international standing. I am an expert on the history of Ireland and empire in the early modern period. I am the author or editor of numerous articles and 13 books, including editing Volume 2 of *The Cambridge History of Ireland* (2018), which was launched by the President of Ireland Michael D. Higgins in Dublin, and by Joe Biden, now President Biden, in the United States. My most recent book is an edition of Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon's *A Short View of the State and Condition of the Kingdom of Ireland* (Oxford, 2020). I am currently working on a book on 'Ireland, Empire and the Early Modern World' which I will give as the 2021 Ford Lectures in Oxford. I will be the eleventh woman (and first from Ireland) to deliver these lectures since their establishment in 1896 and the first historian based in an Irish university since Professor F.S.L Lyons in 1978 (when Provost). Due to the COVID-19 pandemic the Ford Lectures will, for the first time, be delivered online, allowing me to reach much wider audiences in the UK, Ireland, and around the world.



To date I have also been the PI or co-PI for 25 research and research infrastructure projects, with awards totalling c.€22 million, a very considerable figure for the Arts and Humanities where funding for research is scarce. This includes €3 million from philanthropy, along with awards from a wide variety of international (Horizon 2020, Volkswagen Foundation, Mellon Foundation and the Leverhulme Trust) and national funders. It also includes the €10.8 million PRTL funding for the establishment of the Trinity Long Room Hub, our research institute in the Arts and Humanities.

One of the most exciting initiatives that I have led is the 1641 Depositions project, an inter-institutional and inter-disciplinary collaboration involving over 50 researchers and IBM. We published online and in print the testimonies (or depositions) of over 8,000 people who bore witness to the bloody and sectarian conflict that gripped Ireland during the 1640s. A decade on we are well placed to evaluate the extremely positive impact that the 1641 Depositions project has had on education, research, and the on-going peace process in Northern Ireland. It also serves as a template for future activities as we continue to unlock the treasures of our collections as part of the Inspiring Generations campaign.

The 1641 Depositions project fired my passion for digital humanities and inter- and trans-disciplinarity and has provided the impetus for a number of related projects. Most recently (2020), as Director of the Trinity Long Room Hub, I secured a prestigious Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions Co-fund, called Human+, in partnership with the ADAPT Centre (the SFI Research Centre for Digital Media Technology hosted by Trinity College Dublin) and a wide variety of enterprise partners. This application was ranked second in Europe. Human+ is about placing the human experience at the heart of technical innovation for the long-term benefit of society and will allow us to appoint 18 postdoctoral fellows working across the arts, humanities, computer sciences and engineering (2021–25). My wider interest in inter- and trans-disciplinarity is reflected in another EU-funded project that I also lead, called SHAPE-ID, which addresses the challenge of improving collaboration between the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences and other Sciences, especially



in the context of societal challenges and European research policy and funding programmes.

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I have spearheaded the development of Arts and Humanities approaches to democracy research, collaborating with a number of international partners, including Columbia University in New York, JNU in New Delhi, and University of São Paulo in Brazil. In 2020 we launched a free online Democracy Curriculum. I have been working with Trinity College Institute of Neuroscience to develop neurohumanities expertise within Trinity as part of a Wellcome Trust ISSF award. In addition to writing about the value of inter- and trans-disciplinarity and digital humanities, I regularly contribute to more general discussions that relate to the importance of the Arts and Humanities and educational policy. I have commented on the barriers facing women in the university sector, on world rankings and metrics, and Brexit.



*Professor Jane Ohlmeyer at Trinity's Long Room in the Old Library with the other editors of The Cambridge History of Ireland, Professor James Kelly, Professor Brendan Smith and Professor Thomas Bartlett*

As a community of educators and researchers, we in Trinity are ideally placed to take cross disciplinary collaborations to new levels. I am confident we can make a particular contribution to climate action, biodiversity and sustainability and approach this with the same focus and energy we have dedicated to addressing COVID-19.

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## Trinity's Talent: Putting People First

### 1. Empowering Our Staff

#### AS PROVOST, I WILL:

- ▶ Defend academic freedom and intellectual autonomy.
- ▶ Recruit and retain the best talent.
- ▶ Secure named lectureships and professorships as part of the next philanthropic campaign.
- ▶ Review internal practices around temporary and part-time contracts and, where necessary, lobby government.
- ▶ Review work-life balance, approaches to flexible working, and disparity of workloads.
- ▶ Review working practices, exploring technological solutions to streamline and simplify routine and repetitive admin processes.
- ▶ Promote dignity and respect in the workplace and a culture that is values driven and transparent.
- ▶ Prioritise promotions.
- ▶ Implement fully in Trinity national and international policies around gender, equality, diversity, inclusion, racism, harassment and bullying.

Now is not a time for continuing as we are: we need to change. Our future will require new ideas and thinking grounded in broad experience. Our passion and drive will determine our collective success. We, the staff, are the key to unlocking Trinity's real potential. We are committed, hardworking, highly motivated, and passionate. Academic freedom and intellectual autonomy are central to our research and scholarship. These principles are enshrined in Trinity's Statutes and safeguarded by Trinity's Fellows. We should not be guided primarily by financial imperatives. Over-emphasis on short-term sustainability and profit is fundamentally destructive.



“*As Provost, I will ensure academic values are the heart of all that we do in Trinity and nurture conditions whereby all staff feel a deep connection and contribution to this mission.*”

I will defend academic freedom and intellectual autonomy. I will invest in knowledge, ideas, and practices that guide future generations.

The protections afforded by academic tenure allow us to investigate unfashionable and controversial topics, to ask awkward questions, to dissent from received wisdom, and to teach and publish our honest conclusions without fear of internal censure or external pressures.

As Provost, I will prioritise promotions, celebrate achievements, and support personal development. Promotions should be more routine, not constrained by any sort of quota, and have clear and transparent criteria. Special excellence in teaching, research, interdisciplinarity, collegiality, and leadership will be celebrated and rewarded. Mentorship across career stages will foster creativity, ambition, and vision, especially as academic responsibilities change and develop.

Recruiting and retaining the most talented staff, especially younger colleagues, is challenging in a globalised academic world. Our size, our location, and the quality of interaction between our staff and students can be real advantages here. By creating a community that is both stimulating and rewarding – in which people can realise their full potential and where innovation, creativity, and collaboration across disciplines are supported – we will encourage the best talent to relocate to and remain at Trinity.

As Provost, I will work to create an environment of intellectual excitement, and revise processes so that Trinity can serve as a magnet for outstanding enquiring minds.

Of course, recruitment and retention of the best academics will also depend on our ability to raise non-exchequer funds, especially from



philanthropy, and to address issues around precarious temporary and casual contracts.

As Provost, I intend to secure an unprecedented number of named lectureships and professorships as part of the next philanthropic campaign. I have been particularly successful in securing funding for new academic and research posts. I will draw on this experience and my extensive network to secure this investment in talent. [hyperlink: Securing our financial foundations]. In collaboration with relevant stakeholders, I will review internal practices and, where necessary, lobby government to implement the recommendations of the 2016 Cush report.<sup>1</sup>



*Professor Jane Ohlmeyer chairing a recent meeting of the Royal Irish Academy and Irish Research Council with Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, Simon Harris T.D.*

Currently, our staff are stifled by unnecessary bureaucracy and grappling with systems that are often not fit for purpose. Our future will be determined by how well we can work together as a community, leverage data and technology, and devise new ways to train, engage, and handle the implications of ongoing change.

As Provost, I will ensure the basic systems and supports are fully aligned with the mission of the university. I will implement more effective communications and greater transparency around decision-making and finances. I will make it easier for us all to do our jobs and give you more time to think, research, and teach. [hyperlink: Realigning our support services and systems].



Changes in working practices, triggered by the pandemic, have underscored the importance of having a flexible working environment that prioritises well-being and health for everyone. The recent staff survey, 'Stay together and stronger', highlights the very real challenges we have faced as we grapple with stress, loneliness, and sheer exhaustion and juggle work and, often, caring responsibilities.<sup>2</sup> [hyperlink: mental health supports].

The Athena Swan process has also brought to the surface issues around inequality, discrimination, bullying, and workloads. Discussions around race and racial awareness, disability and gender are very much to the fore. Real action is needed to address these issues. We need to look at how we communicate about them within College while forging new practices to foster diversity and inclusion.

As Chair of the Irish Research Council, I have been at the forefront of putting in place a gender strategy and successfully developing a gender-blind application and assessment process which has increased the number of successful applications by women, especially in STEM areas.<sup>3</sup> The Irish Research Council is currently developing a bullying and harassment policy. I have stood up to bullies throughout my career, both in person and increasingly online. As Provost, I will continue to have zero tolerance for any form of bullying, harassment, or racism.

As Provost, I will review work-life balance and flexible working practices, address workload disparity, and work to achieve equality and diversity in the workplace. I will nurture a culture that is values driven. I will ensure that Trinity is a university that promotes dignity and respect in the workplace and celebrates openness, fairness, diversity, inclusivity, and equality.



## 2. Enabling Our Students and Early Career Researchers

### AS PROVOST, I WILL:

- ▶ Be a champion for all of our students.
- ▶ Promote access, diversity and inclusion, especially for underrepresented groups.
- ▶ Improve staff to student ratios with a target of 1:12 by 2031.
- ▶ Further engage alumni and enterprise as mentors.
- ▶ Cherish small group activity, trust our academics to be research-led educators, and value the role of students in our academic community.
- ▶ Increase the overall level of support for student services.
- ▶ Prioritise the development of a campus-wide, comprehensive approach to mental health crisis prevention and intervention.
- ▶ Reduce, simplify, and streamline the administrative workload for tutors.
- ▶ Work with other stakeholders to lobby government for increased investment in education, student welfare, and improved infrastructure.
- ▶ Make early career researchers a priority for philanthropic investment.
- ▶ Invest in studentships, where the minimum stipend is nationally agreed.
- ▶ Increase lifelong learning and outreach activities.

Trinity graduates have the creative potential to change the world. We prepare leaders in empathy, imagination and understanding, creating responsible and responsive global citizens who embrace complexity and diversity and who are people of courage and conviction.



We are a comprehensive university. Our disciplinary diversity across the Arts, Humanities, Engineering, Sciences, Social Sciences, and Health Sciences is a real strength. It is something to cherish and to build on.

Our students and early career researchers are the lifeblood of our disciplines. Trinity's prestige, exceptional quality of teaching, and wealth of academic programmes continue to attract outstanding undergraduates and postgraduates.

Over the course of my career, I have had the privilege of teaching History to talented Trinity Access Programmes students and gifted undergraduates. I have been lucky enough to work with and mentor outstanding early career researchers. I have also supported c.200 inspiring early career researchers from across 20 disciplines over a period of 5 years as Director of the Trinity Long Room Hub. I value enormously all of these interactions. As Provost, I will structure my workload to maintain strong connections with our students and early career researchers.

### Diversity and Inclusion

In 2019–20 we had 18,941 registered students of which 13,384 were undergraduates and 5,496 postgraduates.<sup>4</sup> By any measure our student body is incredibly academically gifted. It is also geographically, ethnically, and socially diverse. In 2019–20 28% of the student body



Professor Jane Ohlmeyer outside the Trinity Long Room Hub with staff and students in May 2018



were from 121 countries outside of Ireland (self-declared country of domicile).<sup>5</sup> Despite Brexit, we will increase the numbers of students coming from Northern Ireland and ensure that Trinity is a university for talented students from across the island and beyond.

We actively recruit students from under-represented groups. In 2018–19 22% of students to undergraduate programmes were recruited via Alternative Admission Routes (30% of whom are mature students) thanks in no small measure to the Trinity Access Programmes which is now being copied in places like the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge. A lot has been achieved, but we can do more.

Trinity needs to be more welcoming and accessible for different types of student learners and for those with a disability.

“As Provost, I will secure the investment needed to make this happen and strive harder to increase diversity and inclusion from non-traditional backgrounds, not least by bringing our Further Education and Training progression pathways up to the level of other Irish Higher Education Institutions.

The pandemic has highlighted the problems of relying on a single set of exams, the Leaving Certificate, to determine admission to third-level and this has been accepted at the highest levels of Government. As educators, Trinity has a role to play in this debate and to use its influence to advocate for a fair, equal, and transparent system that would reward excellence and potential.

### **Delivering an Exceptional Educational Experience**

The most effective way to value our students is through the promotion of academic excellence in the classroom and the delivery of an exceptional educational experience, both in person and online. We can improve even upon the high standards already achieved by lowering our staff to student ratio, by reducing the administrative burdens on staff, and by



enriching the academic programme through an ongoing programme of curriculum renewal.

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The overall staff to student ratio in 2018–19 was 1:17. In some areas the ratio was considerably higher (1:21 in the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences; and in certain areas within the Social Sciences, closer to 1:30).<sup>6</sup> This is too high for the best student experience and a leading research-led university, with ambitions to be a research intensive one. It needs to be reduced to be in line with peer LERU<sup>7</sup> institutions in the EU area: Amsterdam 1:13.5; Lund 1:12.1; Zurich 1:12.3.<sup>8</sup>

As Provost, I will improve staff to student ratios with a target of 1:12 by 2031.<sup>9</sup> This will bring Trinity in line with both LERU and Russell Group universities. I will ensure that our academic staff have both the supports and the time needed to be research-led educators. By increasing our academic staff by hiring and retaining new talent across all faculties, we will enhance the quality of the educational experience and our learning outcomes, improve staff workloads and wellbeing, and grow reputation.

The Trinity four-year degree programmes produce exceptional graduates with creative minds and powerful analytical and communication skills. Employers recognise this. We now need to make much more of this exceptional strength in our system. We also need to continue to find creative ways to engage our alumni as mentors and to build stronger relationships with them as well as potential employers. [hyperlink: relationship building alumni network]

The Trinity Education Project proved a massive undertaking that will require time to bed down. It is an example of something that was developed from the top-down, rather than built from the bottom-up in responding to issues raised by staff and students. It is no surprise then that there have been significant problems in its implementation. We now need to make the Trinity Education Project work. It is vital to our diversity and inclusiveness. As Provost, I will listen to the concerns raised by students and staff, change elements that are not working, and introduce more flexibility so that the Trinity Education Project works better for our students and our staff.



We need to remember that structures and technology only take us so far and that teaching is a human activity. It is the substance and quality of education that matters. As Provost, I will privilege small group activity, trust our academics to be research-led educators, and value the particular role that students play in College life. This is what is so special about the Trinity education experience.

The decision to impose a quota on the number of new Scholars in 2021 is problematic. Scholars are an important part of the College community and, even in the most difficult of circumstances, we must always find ways of identifying and rewarding excellence. Our guiding principle should be academic excellence, not saving money, and this should be rooted in trusting in the integrity of our students and our staff.

### Supporting Our Students

COVID has placed unimaginable strains on students and early career researchers, who have grappled with stresses caused by fear, uncertainty, and isolation.<sup>10</sup> Unfortunately, many of these problems are not new.



*Professor Jane Ohlmeyer talking to students about the digitised 1641 Depositions*

COVID has exacerbated deeply concerning underlying issues.

We have a duty of care to our students. We must do all that we can to make our campus a safe place to study and live. We need to provide the emotional and academic support required to cope with learning in an online environment during the pandemic. And we must maintain this commitment after the pandemic.

As Director of the Trinity Long Room Hub, supporting our early career researchers was my primary concern after the physical campus closed in March 2020. Collegiality



and virtual coffee mornings helped to alleviate the isolation. I now want to do more and to take action to support all of our students now, at this extraordinary moment, and in the post-COVID future.

Student services are extremely important to the welfare of our students and, despite pressures on time and resources, they do an exceptional job. Our tutoring system is a particularly effective way of offering one-to-one academic and pastoral support. At the moment our tutors are overwhelmed by paperwork and our student services are under-resourced with long waiting times for appointments. Immediate investment is essential to increase the overall level of support we can offer and reduce the administrative workload.

“*As Provost, I will prioritise the development of a campus-wide, comprehensive approach to mental health crisis prevention and intervention and the investment in the necessary programmes and supports for students and staff.*”

I will increase the overall level of support for student services and reduce the administrative workload for tutors. We need to afford a warm welcome and practical supports to all students and early career researchers, especially those who do not live in Dublin or are at risk or vulnerable.

As Provost, acting in partnership with the Students' Union and Graduate Students' Union, I will create a staffed 'front desk' offering a range of practical supports (visas, accommodation, setting up bank accounts, getting to know College and so on).

In 2016 the Cassells Report suggested a number of options, including a system funded primarily by the State and another involving student loans.<sup>11</sup> My strong preference is that the State fund higher education at an appropriate level. I believe that we should do all that we can to avoid



the possibility of debt-burdens for students, an under-capitalised loan system that does not allow us to recover the full economic cost that a Trinity education stands for, and for the bureaucratic dirigisme that will inevitably accompany such a system.

As Provost, I will work closely with the student body and government to identify imaginative and practical solutions to the very real difficulties many of our students face. [hyperlink: securing our financial foundations]

### **Opportunities for Early Career Researchers**

The recruitment of outstanding early career researchers continues to be a priority for Trinity, as does the acquisition of funding and provision of appropriate facilities, support structures, and accommodation.

Creating a non-hierarchical, inclusive, interdisciplinary, supportive, and stimulating community was my priority as Director of the Trinity Long Room Hub. I nurtured an environment that was conducive to both informal networking, peer support, and professional development. We now need to offer these sorts of opportunities to every early career researcher in Trinity. As Provost, I will ensure that our support services are fully integrated and aligned to share expertise and knowledge to meet the needs of our early career researchers.

I will establish a centralised research support hub to support new appointments, especially from overseas, but also to coordinate orientation, training, career networking and community building across disciplines and faculties. I will create much-needed common research and meeting spaces. These minimum conditions are essential to nurture the spirit of curiosity and interdisciplinary collaboration required to meet the complex challenges of our times.

As Chair of the Irish Research Council, I lobbied to secure the salary/stipend increases that took effect in January 2021. This is simply the beginning of a journey that I hope will result in better financial support and improved career prospects for some of the most vulnerable, yet





*Professor Jane Ohlmeyer outside the Trinity Long Room Hub with early career researchers in 2019*

amongst the most talented, members of the College community.  
[[hyperlink: Promoting excellence in our research](#)]

As Provost, I will make early career researchers a priority for philanthropic investment. I will continue to lobby government for additional investment, with higher stipends/salaries, more funding for consumables and, in the case of funded postgraduates, payment of the full fee (and, until that is forthcoming, Trinity should cover the difference).

### **Lifelong Learning**

Very successful extramural and outreach programmes are already offered by several of our Schools and Departments as well as Science Gallery Dublin, Tangent, and the Trinity Long Room Hub, among others. Such activities improve Trinity's local profile and help members of Irish society appreciate more fully what our university has to offer.

In response to COVID, many of these activities have moved online. We now reach audiences around the globe. This has proved to be one of the



silver linings in the pandemic cloud, undoubtedly helping to raise our profile and reputation.

As we embrace the opportunities that technological innovation affords, we also need greater flexibility in the design and delivery of credit-bearing modules or part modules to non-traditional learners and ‘micro-crediting’. The current barriers, some of which are bureaucratic and systems-based, need to be removed so we can enable this activity and incentivise it. We also need to collaborate more proactively with other Irish stakeholders (academic, civic, governmental and enterprise), with our trusted partners around the globe and through established networks like LERU and COIMBRA.

As Provost, I will build on what we have learned during the pandemic to increase lifelong learning and outreach activities while ensuring greater flexibility and encouraging meaningful collaboration.

### 3. Reinvigorating Our Governance

#### AS PROVOST, I WILL:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| ▶ Trust our colleagues to do their job and promote collegiality and community.                        | ▶ Ensure decision-making and financial allocation processes are transparent. |
| ▶ Ensure that Schools are the key drivers of academic activity and part of decision-making processes. | ▶ Foster meaningful engagement with all stakeholders on major issues.        |

We have sound governance and solid academic structures in Trinity, but they are not as effective (reflective or responsive) as they could and should be. I know that many colleagues, academic and professional, are frustrated about how we conduct our daily business, especially the lack of transparency around how we make and implement decisions, allocate funding, and incentivise activity. There are concerns about



how the 'centre of College' engages, connects, and communicates with all colleagues.<sup>12</sup> We need to address the rhetoric of 'us' and 'them' and blame cultures that have become too pervasive in Trinity and move away from the managerial and overly controlling models of governance.

As Provost, I will work to restore trust while promoting collegiality and building community. I will introduce modes of governance that are more open, professional, transparent, and collegial and deliver academic excellence.

The Schools are the drivers of academic activity, with the Faculties facilitating the core activities of the Schools. The current over-concentration on centrally-set performance criteria leaves little room for Schools to drive interesting and creative initiatives with energy and confidence. I believe that there is no appetite to change further the basic structures in place in Trinity, but the balance of responsibility of some key roles requires immediate attention and may require new supports. The challenge is to ensure that the academic structures that are in place work for us.

We need to be careful to encourage and provide oxygen to innovative sparks that will help College renew itself. Members of Board and Council and Executive Officers are key to decision making, the implementation of policies, and the smooth running of the University. It is easy to get disconnected from what is going on in Departments and Schools. We need to act in a manner that is equitable and reflective of the diversity of Schools.

As Provost, I will revise our governance structures to include the Heads of School in the running of the College and formal decision-making structures. I will ensure there are regular informal occasions as well as formal meetings, such as attending Head of School Forum meetings once a term, to discuss issues and opportunities.

Currently, high-level decisions are often taken without adequate consultation and collaboration. This can result in actions occurring



which are detrimental to the wider interests of the College. As Provost, I will address this as a matter of urgency and ensure that meaningful engagement on policy changes takes place at School and Faculty levels. In addition, I will personally consult with staff and students and hold regular and calendared meetings with staff representatives from the unions.

I will serve everyone who works in Trinity. I will lead the College and promote collegiality. To do this effectively, I will make it a priority to get to know each and every member of the College community and appreciate what you do.

## 4. Renewing Our Community and Relationships

### AS PROVOST, I WILL:

- ▶ Build the social infrastructure needed to enable multi-way communication and empower those who feel disaffected.
- ▶ Make face-to-face interactions a hallmark of my Provostship.
- ▶ Be ambitious in how we respond to societal challenges.
- ▶ Renew our Global Relations Strategy with an emphasis on sustainability, quality, the student experience, and the environment.
- ▶ Communicate tirelessly the value of education and research, its value, and its impact.
- ▶ Ensure that cutting-edge research informs public policy.
- ▶ Utilise national and international networks to set wider research agendas.
- ▶ Build our international reputation and improve our position in the global rankings.
- ▶ Develop closer contacts with our alumni network.



If there was ever a time for a community to come together, it is now. Relationship and bridge-building will be central to my Provostship. Together we will create the networks required to strengthen our voice, influence, and reputation. We need to do this within College as well as nationally and internationally to renew our community and deliver academic excellence.

### Within College

The social infrastructure that binds us as a community does not yet meet the needs of the great university that Trinity is. As Provost, my goal is to put in place a social infrastructure that facilitates effective internal communications and empowers individuals, especially those who feel disaffected, to help make Trinity a better University and a better place to work. I will also tap into the wealth of knowledge, expertise, ideas, and creativity across College.

Collegiality, community and buzzing campuses are an integral part of life at Trinity. We need to identify clear forums where everyone can contribute to discussions around major issues; express concerns and be listened to; make representations, and suggest agendas rather than simply reacting to them, as is often the case at the moment. Online or electronic exchange is no substitute for face-to-face communication in our libraries, laboratories, and classrooms.



*Professor Jane Ohlmeyer hosting the weekly community coffee morning as Director of the Trinity Long Room Hub*

As Provost, I will lead by example. I will hold regular coffee mornings and 'office hours' for anyone who wishes to meet with me. I pledge to visit every School and administrative area as often as I can. I will use the Provost's house to host events and informal gatherings to maintain close contact. I will actively welcome direct

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feedback about what is happening on the ground in Trinity. I want to strengthen the bonds between the Provost, the Fellows, and the College community at large.

Regard for face-to-face communication will be a hallmark of my Provostship, but this does not mean disregard of media communication when appropriate. Emails, informative websites, blogs, and Twitter are useful ways to communicate across the University and beyond.

### **Nationally**

Trinity is uniquely positioned to help shape a renewed Ireland at home and abroad at this moment of crisis. Our staff and students are our first and most powerful ambassadors. Our alumni, many of whom are policymakers, business leaders, and influencers, are ideally placed to communicate the importance and value of an exceptional educational experience at Trinity. We all need to articulate our stories, the meaning and diversity of our research and teaching in order to achieve meaningful understanding of the multifaceted work of our University in the context of society.

I am particularly committed to finding collaborative, inter- and trans-disciplinary solutions to global challenges – from climate and biodiversity to ageing, security, inequality, and the crisis of democracy – and ensuring that research informs public policy. [hyperlink: Investing in Research & Prioritising climate action, bio-diversity and sustainability]

Effective communication about our role as educators and researchers must be combined with advocacy at the highest level. We need to ensure that politicians, civil servants, policymakers, and influencers fully understand what Trinity is all about, why it is so essential to invest in education and research, and how research can inform public policy.

As Provost, building upon the work I have been doing throughout the past decade, I will help to set these wider agendas. As Chair of the Irish Research Council, I have developed a close and effective working relationship with key politicians and civil servants across government.



The creation in 2020 of the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science is proving to be a game-changer.

I will build on these relationships and work with other key agencies<sup>13</sup> and Higher Education Institutions to ensure that education and research are central to Ireland's post-pandemic recovery, to minimise the risks associated with Brexit and the on-going Peace Process in Northern Ireland, and to ensure that research informs public policy.<sup>14</sup> I will support the review of research, impact, and civic engagement functions to consider how best to raise awareness and understanding of the pathways to influence and inform local, national, and international policy; how best to identify Trinity expertise and broker connections with government and related organisations; and how best to provide support to translate research into a user friendly evidence base for policy and capture its impact.

### Internationally

Being a university of national consequence underpins Trinity's capacity to be a university of international significance. With Brexit, we are now the oldest English-speaking university in the European Union. During



*Professor Jane Ohlmeyer at student demonstrations in India in 2019 with Professor Sucheta Mahajan and students of JNU, New Delhi*

my time as the founding Vice President for Global Relations I developed high-level international collaborations and forged an international network of contacts.



Over the decade ahead, I will draw on these and develop further our global relations strategy, focussing on long-term and sustainable relationships, emphasising quality over quantity, and putting first the student experience and environmental considerations. [hyperlink: sustainability here] Of particular importance are established global educational and research partnerships, such as Columbia University in the USA and the European LERU,<sup>15</sup> COIMBRA, CHARM-EU,<sup>16</sup> and TORCH<sup>17</sup> networks. We also need to leverage, with much greater imagination and to better effect, the many global contacts and relationships colleagues hold, along with established programmes like ERASMUS.

While we want to lead on the European and global stages, we also need to do all we can to support, sustain, and grow our numerous and close collaborations with educators and researchers in the UK and to make much more of our existing campus in Belfast. As Chair of the Irish Research Council and as Member of the Royal Irish Academy, I have worked to put in place structures and policies that nurture mobility and collaboration across all disciplines on an East-West and North-South basis. We have a particular responsibility to uphold the Good Friday Agreement and to create a shared and peaceful future for all people living on our island.

Reputation is foremost among Trinity's most valuable assets. We need to think carefully about how we should nurture it, especially as we continue to slip in the global rankings. As Provost, I will work to improve our position in the global rankings and to change the narrative around them. Ireland needs at least one of its universities to be in the top 100, ideally top 50; it should be Trinity.

There are over 140,000 Trinity alumni in 140 countries around the world. We form part of a truly international community. As Provost, I will build a global Trinity network that enhances existing links with our alumni and peer institutions worldwide. Technology has transformed our ability to stay connected with this exceptional network, something that we need to build on as never before.



# The Fabric of Trinity: Unlocking Our Potential

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## 1. Investing in Our Campus

### AS PROVOST, I WILL:

- ▶ Strengthen links with the wider Dublin community.
- ▶ Establish a 'Creative Incubator', bringing together academics, industry, and the community to develop new processes, practices, and products.
- ▶ Invest in College IT and online teaching facilities.
- ▶ Invest in research collections.
- ▶ Repurpose and refurbish our older buildings.
- ▶ Promote sustainable development.

We need a long-term perspective for the University which maximises our unique locations, leverages our excellence, and positions Trinity as the pulse of creativity and innovation at the centre of Ireland's capital city.

We are very much part of the wider community and we are proud of the links we have with Dublin. We now need to strengthen these connections and build new bridges across the city. We need to take full advantage of our historic campus, our teaching hospitals – St James's, Tallaght, the Coombe, and the Dental School and Hospital – our halls of residence around the city, our playing fields and library storage facilities at Santry, and our Iveagh Grounds sports facility in Crumlin. The Department of Public Health and Primary Care at Tallaght provides a particularly significant interface between the community, the hospital, and the College. Equally exciting are the ambitious plans for the new Children's Hospital and Cancer Institute, which will come to fruition over the course of the next decade.

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Our city centre campus is iconic, and normally bustles with activity and energy. Evening courses, Continuing Professional Development initiatives, Science Gallery exhibitions, Trinity Long Room Hub events and high-profile initiatives, like Culture Night and European Researchers' Night, bring thousands of members of the public into College, some for the first time. When the pandemic passes, we will again make a virtue of our status as a tourist attraction and the fact that the Book of Kells – soon to be housed in an exciting new visitor centre – and the Long Room attract (pre-pandemic) nearly one million paying visitors a year.

During my Provostship, I will establish a 'creative incubator' to bring together the university, industry, and the community. In this space, we will develop new processes, practices, and products that stem from and interact with the creative arts. The 'creative incubator' will build upon the strengths of our core Arts and Sciences disciplines and the richness of our art and research collections and draw upon the cluster of cultural institutions and the range of existing and emerging creative industries concentrated nearby. It will also help to transform Ireland's position as a vital, dynamic beacon of creativity in Europe and the world. One that combines the best of online digital learning with vibrant campuses.

A range of other important developments are underway. The new student accommodation and student welfare centre will provide much-needed resources. The Martin Naughton E3 Foundry will showcase our strengths in engineering, environment, and emerging technologies. It will allow us to be innovators in education and research, with a potential to be transformative on a global scale. The renewal of the Long Room and the creation of a new reading room affords us with an opportunity to conserve and provide greater access to our unique and historic collections. But we also need to think of future generations of researchers. As Provost, I will invest in collections in the Library and elsewhere in the College.

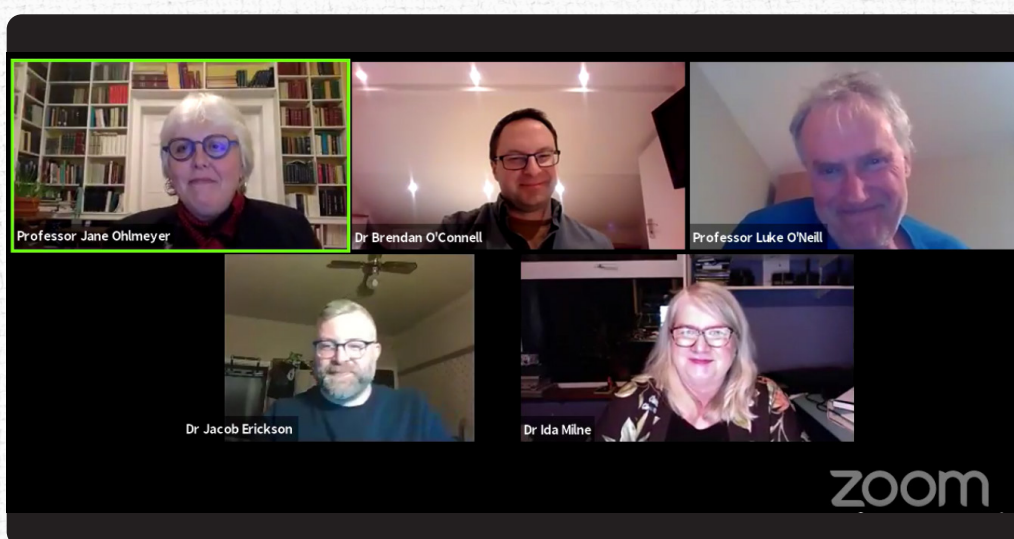
Other developments are currently under discussion, including the 'Trinity East' development of our 5.5-acre site on Grand Canal Dock. I welcome the ambition but believe that we need to proceed with caution.



We must be fully aware of the associated risks – financial, governance, conceptual, leadership, and bandwidth – as well as the very real and exciting opportunities. It is essential that we continue to repurpose and refurbish our older buildings; renew classrooms that are small and poorly ventilated, and furnish our facilities and laboratories with state-of-the-art technology, equipment, and research infrastructure. Sustainability will be at the forefront of my thinking as Provost.

Technology provides enormous opportunities to overcome the obstacle of distance across our campuses in the city centre and at the teaching hospitals, across Ireland and globally. We need to invest in College IT and online teaching and support facilities. We should, of course, have state-of-the-art online teaching and library facilities. We need to digitise our unique and historic collections so that our students and our academics can engage actively with students, teachers, and researchers the world over. Issues of open-access scholarship, of privacy and data protection, and how the online environment threatens to compromise freedom of speech are all pressures that we need to discuss and develop policy on.

“*Under my Provostship, the College will actively engage with technology to leverage the positives and thereby enhance research and education.*”



*Professor Jane Ohlmeyer hosting one of many online discussions for public audiences as Director of the Trinity Long Room Hub*

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The pandemic has forced us to master the online environment and to be at the frontier of using innovative technologies in the classroom and at home. Let us make a virtue of this as we reflect, as a community, on the sort of vibrant campus we would like to create in a post-COVID world.

## 2. Promoting Excellence in Our Research

### AS PROVOST, I WILL:

- ▶ Value the full range and diversity of research in Trinity.
- ▶ Engage with government to set research agendas and secure the funding needed to make us research leaders.
- ▶ Provide start-up and seed-corn funding for new frontier research, including for researchers who wish to re-focus their research.
- ▶ Facilitate research leave.
- ▶ Invest in research support services, especially post-award.
- ▶ Bring together, under the Vice President for Research, all research and innovation and strengthen the role of Vice President for Research.
- ▶ Invest in and support our early career researchers.
- ▶ Invest in our research centres and institutes and incentivise inter- and trans-disciplinary research.
- ▶ Support applied research, research outreach, and encourage innovation.

Over the past decade, Trinity has been consistently successful in securing significant funding from national, EU, and global sources. We outperform every other university in Ireland. These successes are all the more remarkable given the relative lack of resources that we have had access to, especially for basic frontier research. This is a tribute to your talent and determination.



There is, however, nothing inevitable about continued success. The challenge is how to sustain – and increase – this level of investment from exchequer sources. We must also secure increased funding from non-exchequer sources, like the Wellcome Trust in the UK, the National Institutes of Health, the Mellon Foundation and National Science Foundation in the US, and Horizon Europe.

Trinity must actively support researchers, those who work individually or as part of teams or both, in all disciplines and across all career stages. With this in mind, it is critical that we provide start-up funds for new colleagues, seed-corn funding for new research initiatives, and provide regular research leave. As Director of the Trinity Long Room Hub we ran a Research Incentive Scheme that proved particularly successful and is something that might be extended, where appropriate, to other areas.<sup>18</sup>

I understand the importance of funding basic frontier research. As Chair of the Irish Research Council, I have advocated for the creation of a more balanced research ecosystem for the past five years. I oversaw the introduction of our Laureate Awards in 2017, a very important new strand of funding in the Irish system, redressing the long-standing dearth of opportunities to conduct basic research across all disciplines and career stages. We are already seeing that Laureate awardees are going on to secure European Research Council (ERC) awards, including Ireland's first ERC synergy award, based in Trinity. The embedding of the Laureates, with annual calls from 2021, will help ensure that Ireland is a leader, not a follower, and that our drawdown of funding under Horizon Europe is at least as strong as comparably sized countries.

We need better support for all aspects of the research cycle to encourage experimentation, collaboration, and allow time for research and writing. Communicating why our research matters, the impact it has, and how research informs public policy is fundamental to this. We need to create a seamless experience from research idea, to grant application, to contracting, to post-award processes and, where appropriate, to intellectual property development and technology transfer. [hyperlink: to Renewing our community]. We also need to make sure that we have



the necessary office and laboratory spaces. [hyperlink: investing in our campus]

“All of this will require investment, and as Provost, I will make such investment a priority. I will also secure funding for new initiatives and for those who wish to re-focus their research.



Professor Jane Ohlmeyer with Professor Jean-Pierre Bourguignon, President of the European Research Council (ERC), President Higgins and Professor Mary Daly (then President of Royal Irish Academy)

We need to accelerate Trinity’s full disciplinary engagement with societal challenges, policy, and the UN Sustainable Development Goals, the articulation of impact, and especially co-creation with multi-sectoral stakeholders. I will expand our research development and support services (especially systems and impact and post-award), so that we can effectively deal with the challenges that lie ahead and keep Trinity at the forefront in Ireland in attracting research funding.

I will also reconfigure the office of and strengthen the role of the Vice President for Research. I will create an office under the leadership of the Vice President that brings together research and innovation from across the College. I will ensure that the Vice President for Research can



input into all decisions that relate to research and innovation and their connectivity to the student learning experience.

Our ability to recruit talent from around the world to carry out research in Trinity depends on the availability of adequate funding for studentships, bursaries, consumables, and fees; and creating a welcoming, supportive and stimulating academic environment. [hyperlink: back to section 1]

In Trinity, we need to take seriously our responsibilities to our early career researchers, who are so critical to our endeavours yet are also very vulnerable and lack certainty about their futures. We need to remunerate our early career researchers appropriately. We must treat them with dignity and respect, mentor them, and work with them to develop their careers, grow and expand their scholarly and research activities. [hyperlink: to section 2 above].

Our research institutes and research centres are central elements of the College research ecosystem. They reflect the appetite for inter- and trans-disciplinary research.

They must be maintained through appropriate levels of support, by incentivising inter- and trans-disciplinary research, and by breaking down the very real barriers that currently impede our ability to work effectively across disciplines. Working across disciplines opens up new opportunities and provides intellectual excitement. It can shape how we approach our own research, while allowing us to tackle more ambitious research questions. I have experienced this first-hand, as Chair of the Irish Research Council, Director of the Trinity Long Room Hub, and PI on two major EU grants that focus on inter-and trans-disciplinary research.<sup>19</sup>

Trinity has the grounding and the talent to become a world-leader in this field. Support for inter and trans-disciplinarity will be another hallmark of my Provostship. We need to provide training and career pathways for knowledge intermediaries/integration experts/facilitators who can bridge disciplinary and sectoral boundaries and/or bring



diverse researchers from diverse faculties and diverse sectors together to experiment with framing approaches to societal challenges, scoping out opportunities amongst themselves or with others to develop proposals for Horizon Europe and national funding down the line.

Just as we value disciplinary diversity, we need to value research diversity. As Provost, I will provide support for those who wish to engage in the increasing number of opportunities for applied research. This will allow us to exploit the many opportunities for engagement with enterprise that can add to the student and staff experience. I will also encourage a spirit of innovation across all career stages, especially, in young entrepreneurs across all disciplines. By doing this Trinity will move away from a narrow definition of what has come to mean ‘technology transfer’ toward the wider world of ‘knowledge transfer’.

### 3. Realigning Our Support Services and Systems

#### AS PROVOST, I WILL:

- ▶ Set up a strategic review of all support services.
- ▶ Create a centralised institutional data office.
- ▶ Put in place the systems needed to deliver the services that underpin research and education.
- ▶ Improve communications forums for consulting with and drawing on the expertise of professional and support staff.

Our University can only function effectively if the support services, systems, and processes are aligned behind the core mission and activities of the College. Amongst our professional and support colleagues there is great goodwill and talent, but much remains to be done to overcome the intense fragmentation in some areas. We need to co-ordinate efforts and focus minds on how best to serve the academic mission of the College, of all its staff, and its students.



The interface between academic and professional staff can be fraught. Academics feel like they are drowning in bureaucracy, inundated with endless and repeated requests for information. For their part, those who work in the support services are frustrated at the lack of appreciation of externally imposed compliance needs. Addressing these issues and finding lasting solutions and fit-for-purpose systems that work for Trinity will be the priority for my first year in office.

As is the case with teaching and research, we must strive for excellence in our processes and services. We must go beyond a narrow fixation on compliance and regulation. We need to apply the creative thinking we use in our teaching and research elsewhere in College to solve our problems. We should not hesitate to draw on the expertise of our colleagues and reduce our current dependence on external consultants.

We need to fully appreciate the very real differences between multi-departmental and mono-departmental Schools and support them accordingly, especially the Heads and Directors whose bureaucratic burdens would be better served by professional administrators.

Many of our support services are stretched and under-resourced. Sometimes support service agendas are perceived to be out of sync with the needs of students and academic staff. While we will continue to face challenges ahead, I believe that significant gains can be made through streamlining current structures, making objectives clearer and aligning these closely with the needs of staff and students.

We need our systems to achieve greater efficiencies and allow for the better exchange and management of information for decision-making, forward planning and the removal of duplication. It is crucial that we see the full delivery of what has been promised for the last decade and, more crucial still, we see the cost-savings from the deployment of these systems. I will establish an institutional data and analysis office to support University-wide strategic, academic and administrative decision making, assessment activities and reporting.



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As Provost, I will set up a strategic review of all support services. We need to establish how we can improve student and staff supports as well as systems and functions. I will ensure that this review takes place over a short period of time and that past reviews of relevance feed into this process.

I understand the challenges that changes will bring. Progress in this area can only be achieved with mutual respect, an understanding of the work people do, and a team spirit that unites us in working for the common goals of the University. I will open up the kinds of communication channels that will ensure we achieve this clarity of endeavour. Where things are working well, we will build on them, and where not, we will redesign them while ensuring that there are no unintended consequences in other areas.

“*Improving the working relationships between the academic and professional staff and providing clear focus and leadership will be the priority for the Provost and the new Chief Operating Officer.*”

#### 4. Securing the Financial Foundations

##### AS PROVOST, I WILL:

- ▶ Lobby for increased funding for education and research from the State.
- ▶ Work closely with our Chief Financial Officer to review current spending and identify where we might secure ongoing cost savings (procurement of particular concern).
- ▶ Support the targets and goals of our ongoing Global Relations Strategy without compromising on quality or experience.
- ▶ Invest strategically in underlying support infrastructure for research in Trinity so we can maximise our success in securing competitive research.



- ▶ **Continue to work on increasing commercial revenues without compromising our mission as a centre of research and education.**
- ▶ **Build a University Endowment.**
- ▶ **Communicate to government and civil society why research and education matter and the imperative of supporting them.**
- ▶ **Launch our second philanthropic campaign.**

People are the heart and soul of Trinity, but finance is the sinew. Our future success depends on our ability to manage the resources we have and our ability to create new income streams from non-exchequer sources. Many of the promises I have made have financial implications. During the lifetime of my Provostship we will need to significantly increase income from exchequer and non-exchequer sources to achieve our goals and to deliver academic excellence in teaching and research.

The reality of the financial situation is stark. In 2007, Trinity derived 80% of our funding from the Exchequer; this has been cut to 40% today. COVID has exacerbated matters and especially our ability to generate commercial income. Moreover, there is increased competition for funding as five new technological universities are created and the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland is awarded university status.

Trinity's income was €396.7 million to 30 September 2019, up by 4.6% from €379.2 million for the previous year to 30 September 2018.<sup>20</sup> This increase is a positive. But as Ireland's leading university we should be performing much better in terms of annual growth in revenue.

While the Higher Education Authority State grant is comparable to that of other Irish universities, the funding of peer institutions of similar size and stature abroad may provide a more appropriate benchmark. For example, Denmark, which has 8 universities and a similar size of population, spends nearly 2% of total government expenditure on



Research and Development, compared to less than 1% in Ireland.<sup>21</sup>

Within College, we need to look carefully at how we spend our money. We must make sure that we are getting the best possible value for it – including addressing very real concerns around procurement processes – and that we incentivise activity in a transparent way. While we should do everything possible to manage expenditure prudently on a multi-annual basis and maximise exchequer income, we need to focus on generating additional revenue.

### **Exchequer Funding**

The current funding model cannot continue. In response, as Provost, I will endeavour to shape the national debate, working closely with the Irish Universities Association and other stakeholders. I will strive to find answers that will work flexibly and nimbly for us as a university. [hyperlink: student section] The increase in our endowment that I propose will undoubtedly be part of this. We need to be creative and innovative as a community to generate enduring solutions to this central problem confronting us.

### **Non-EU Income**

Ambitious targets have been set to increase the number of non-EU students from 15% to 18.5% of total student numbers by 2025.<sup>22</sup> Despite very real concerns caused by the pandemic, we hope to achieve this. Nevertheless, the quality of these incoming students cannot be compromised. Equally, the quality of their educational experience and the extent to which they are integrated into the wider Trinity student body cannot be diminished. As Provost, I will ensure that this balance is achieved. [hyperlink: promoting our research]

### **Research Funding**

We need to lobby government to increase spending to be in line with countries of equivalent size and ambition and continue to compete aggressively for exchequer research funding that arises through schemes that fund research infrastructure (like the pre-2008 version of the Programme for Research in Third Level Institutions) or those



promoted by research councils (Science Foundation Ireland, the Irish Research Council, and the Health Research Board). Indeed, as Chair of the Irish Research Council (2015-21) I, working closely with other stakeholders, have worked hard to increase the overall pot for basic discovery research. There has been a 20% increase for the 2021 budget.

We must also look to the EU's Horizon Europe, where Trinity has every reason to meet with even greater success than in the past decade, and also to UK and US funders (Wellcome Trust, Arts and Humanities Research Council, Economic and Social Sciences Research Council, Mellon, and National Institutes for Health).

To achieve this, as Provost I will invest in the underlying support infrastructure for research in Trinity; explain why research matters and how it has impact, and, together with other stakeholders, advocate for additional funding for research. [[hyperlink: promoting our research](#)]

### **Commercialisation**

Over the course of the past decade, commercial activity has become an increasingly important income stream. However the pandemic means that ambitious targets may not be achieved, at least in the short-term until tourism recovers. We also need to consider developing other opportunities, especially around technology-enabled activities, lifelong learning, and micro-crediting.

As Provost, I will strive to be innovative and creative about how we generate income. I will not forget, however, that we are first and foremost a university and not primarily a tourist attraction or a commercial enterprise.

### **Philanthropy**

In May 2019 we launched 'Inspiring Generations', Ireland's first philanthropic campaign, with an ambition to raise €400 million by 2021.<sup>23</sup> As Provost, I will build on these foundations and launch our next philanthropic campaign drive with even more ambitious targets. By 2031 our annual philanthropic income from Trinity alumni and friends



will see an increase of 25% year on year and the benefits of philanthropy will be tangible across the University.

I will also build a University Endowment so that future leaders of Trinity can choose to support 'high risk, high gain' ideas; can choose to invest in an area in which the payoff cannot immediately be demonstrated; can choose to recruit a top researcher or a brilliant but financially-challenged student.

Our alumni are a particularly important group of potential benefactors and are proud of their association with the College. Trinity creates a long-lasting sense of belonging that we should acknowledge and nurture even further.

Of course, our relationship with our alumni begins during their student days and will often be determined by the quality of their 'Trinity experience'. If their experience at Trinity is positive, they, as alumni, become our best ambassadors and amplify our reputation. We can deliver exceptional educational experiences [hyperlink: link back to section on students]. The challenge is keeping in touch with students after graduation and inspiring them to invest in their university. As Provost, I will build these relationships. [hyperlink: link back to section on relationship building]

I have proven experience in fund-raising. I have developed relationships with many of Trinity's most important donors and friends over the past two decades. As the founding Vice President for Global Relations, for example, I met large cohorts of our alumni around the world and built up extensive national, European, and global networks. I am ideally placed to identify and attract support for Trinity.

“*Our ability to raise millions from philanthropic and other non-exchequer sources over the course of the next ten years will prove crucial in achieving our ambitions.*”



## 5. Prioritising Climate Action, Biodiversity and Sustainability

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### AS PROVOST, I WILL:

- ▶ Accelerate our commitment to and investment in climate action and biodiversity.
- ▶ Lobby and advocate for change, promoting evidence-based information to support local and global leaders.
- ▶ Lobby for additional funding at national and EU levels and secure philanthropic funding to ensure that we continue to lead this conversation.
- ▶ Establish a Sustainability Office and a new College Officer position.
- ▶ Build the structures and incentives to inspire students and staff to re-orientate their skillset, teaching, and research.
- ▶ Climate-proof and future-proof our curriculum.
- ▶ Establish a task force to embed sustainability into all College policies and operations.
- ▶ Develop an ambitious strategy and action plan that can be measured, monitored, and incentivised.

Ireland led as the second country in the world to declare a climate and biodiversity emergency in 2019. We now need to approach this crisis with the same focus and commitment that we have the COVID pandemic.

We are at a point in time where climate action is no longer solely a concern of the intellectual or the activist, but an explosive area of innovation and social activity. Societies and governments are realising that responsible plans for economic growth must respect our planetary limitations. The UN Sustainable Development Goal 13 calls for urgent climate action. The European Union and major charitable foundations have likewise identified environment and climate action as key policy

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priorities and fundamental societal concerns. This is a grand global challenge to be solved. Carbon neutral and environmental technologies will be critical areas of growth over the next decade.

Trinity needs to lead conversations and influence the government at home and abroad. We have the knowledge and passion within our community to strengthen public awareness and engagement, and to develop a distinctive, recognisable, and influential Irish voice in these debates. We can inspire real change within and outside Ireland.

Our world-class researchers, institutes, and centres are already spearheading inter- and trans-disciplinary approaches to these critical global challenges. We are particularly well-positioned to continue promoting the impact of this body of research and to contribute to evidence-based information on climate research to support local and global leaders. [hyperlink: policy research interface discussion] As Provost, I will ensure we utilise this expertise while supporting our researchers in securing grants from funding initiatives such as the Horizon 2020-funded European Green Deal Call.<sup>24</sup> I will continue to lobby for additional funding at the national and EU levels, and seek philanthropic investment.

The establishment of Martin Naughton E3 Learning Foundry further strengthens these firm foundations. We have the opportunity to do something that is not only ethical and imperative for future generations, but also necessary for employment, innovation, and entrepreneurship in Ireland.

We now need to build the structures and incentives to inspire students and staff to re-orientate their skillset, teaching, or research towards this area. We must look to international best practice, including the University of British Columbia Climate Teaching Connector, Sustainability Fellowships and Climate Education Grants, for practical guidance to achieve this goal.<sup>25</sup> As Provost, I will empower and mobilise our staff to climate-proof and future-proof the College curriculum across all our faculties.



I will also embed sustainability into all College policies and operations. I will establish a College-wide Task Force, with a white paper outlining proposed strategies and collectively built targets due by December 2021.<sup>26</sup> This review will inform the Strategy and Action Plan designed to deliver on our ambitions. Targets will be specific and where possible measurable, and progress will be reported annually in a new Climate and Biodiversity Annual Review. The white paper will be a living document and will be updated as informed by the Annual Review. I will set up a Sustainability Office which will include a new College Officer position that will lead a mission for a 50% decrease in our carbon footprint by 2030. I know that addressing our climate obligations will require certain



*Professor Jane Ohlmeyer addressing a full house in the Edmund Burke Lecture Theatre in Trinity College Dublin in early 2020*

compromises and trade-offs, including in terms of our own global footprint as staff and students. We will have to make difficult decisions, but we will make these as a community after extensive discussion, and I trust our ability to do this successfully.

Let's transform how we communicate, connect, promote and support each other, and how we make decisions and implement policies. I hope you will join me in making College work for you, for our students and for all staff, and help our community to achieve its full potential.

Together, we will build the Trinity of tomorrow. Ní neart go cur le chéile.



## My Manifesto in Brief: Empowering Trinity

Trinity's success as a university is rooted in its people and ideas. Our core strengths lie in our exceptional staff, our outstanding student body, and our inspiring alumni. As a community we are ambitious about how we can excel, inspire, and make a difference.

As Provost, I will focus on and deal with the significant challenges, internal, and external, that we face. This is a time for change. If elected, I will bring new ideas grounded in broad experience, new energy, empathetic leadership, as well as a return to putting people first and trusting and valuing our Trinity community. Together, we will unlock Trinity's full potential.

Thank you for taking the time to read my manifesto. I welcome your active engagement with me over the coming weeks and **ask for your vote on 10 April.**

### Trinity's Talent: Putting People First

**As Provost, I will:**

#### **Empower Our Staff: The Key to Our Future Success**

- Defend academic freedom and intellectual autonomy.
- Recruit and retain the best talent.
- Review work-life balance and disparity of workloads.
- Promote dignity and respect in the workplace and a culture that is values driven and transparent.
- Prioritise promotions and career development.

#### **Enable Our Students and Early Career Researchers: The Lifelines of Our Disciplines**

- Invest in and improve integrated supports, services, and infrastructures for all our students and early career researchers.



- Promote access, diversity, and inclusion, especially for under-represented groups.
- Improve staff to student ratios with a target of 1:12 by 2031.
- Prioritise small group activity and trust our academics to be research-led educators.
- Increase lifelong learning opportunities.

### **Reinvigorate Our Governance: Making Trinity Work for Our Community**

- Trust our colleagues to do their job and promote collegiality and community.
- Ensure decision-making and financial allocation processes are transparent and engaged.
- Ensure that Schools are the key drivers of academic activity and part of decision-making processes.

### **Renew Our Community and Relationships**

- Nurture effective multi-way communication.
- Communicate tirelessly the value and impact of education and research.
- Utilise national and international networks to set wider research agendas, build our international reputation and access to resources.

## **The Fabric of Trinity: Unlocking Our Potential**

### **As Provost, I will:**

#### **Invest in Our Campuses**

- Strengthen links with the wider Dublin community.
- Progress the overall strategic investment in our College infrastructure.
- Invest in College IT and online teaching facilities and research collections.
- Repurpose and refurbish our older buildings and promote sustainable development.



### **Promote Excellence in Research**

- Value the range and diversity of research in Trinity, both basic and applied.
- Provide start-up and seed-corn funding for new frontier research.
- Invest in research support services, especially post-award and impact.
- Bring together, under the Vice President for Research, all research and innovation and strengthen the role of Vice President for Research.
- Invest in our research institutes and incentivise inter- and trans-disciplinary research.

### **Secure Our Financial Foundations**

- Lobby for increased funding for education and research from the State.
- Secure and increase non-exchequer funding.
- Launch our second philanthropic campaign.

### **Realign Our Support Services and Systems**

- Establish a central institutional data and analysis office.
- Work with IT services to integrate the 3 main systems needed to deliver the services that underpin research and education.
- Improve communications forums for consulting with and drawing on the expertise of professional and support staff.

### **Prioritise Climate Action, Biodiversity, and Sustainability**

- Accelerate our commitment to and investment in climate action and biodiversity.
- Develop and enact an ambitious strategy and action plan to embed sustainability into all College policies and operations.
- Establish a Sustainability Office and a new College Officer position.
- Build the structures and incentives to inspire students and staff to re-orientate their skillset, teaching and research, and climate-proof our curriculum.

Empowering people to take action for the challenges of our time



*Let's transform how we communicate, connect, promote and support each other, and how we make decisions and implement policies. I hope you will join me in ensuring that we emerge from the next years of global crisis on a secure footing, making College work for our students and staff, and helping our community to achieve its full potential.*

*Together, we will build the Trinity of tomorrow.*

**Jane Ohlmeyer**

### **EMPOWERING TRINITY**

Together we can realise Trinity's potential,  
putting people first so we can face the challenges of tomorrow.

**#VoteJane**



## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> 2016 Report to the Minister for Education and Skills of the Chairperson of the Expert group on Fixed-Term and Part-Time Employment in Lecturing in Third Level Education in Ireland, aka the ‘Cush’ report.

<sup>2</sup> Na Fu, Michele Ryan and Veronica Campbell, STAY TOGETHER AND STRONGER: Trinity Staff Survey Key Findings 2020 (November 2020).

<sup>3</sup> For more information, see <http://research.ie/>.

<sup>4</sup> Figures provided by Academic Registry; of the postgraduates, 1,687 were pursuing research masters, doctorates and professional doctorates; postgraduates account for 29% of the total student body.

<sup>5</sup> Global Relations Annual Report 2019–20; of the 3,234 registered students with non-EU fee status, 1,088 were undergraduates, 1,167 were postgraduate taught, 327 were postgraduate research, and 19 were on programmes validated by Trinity.

<sup>6</sup> Senior Lecturer’s Annual Report 2018–19.

<sup>7</sup> League of European Research Universities (LERU).

<sup>8</sup> Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2020; here Trinity’s staff to student ratio was reported as 1:21.9.

<sup>9</sup> The 2020–25 strategic plan commits to ‘Reduce the student:staff ratio to 16:1 by 2025, from a 2017/18 baseline of 18:1’ and to ‘Increase academic staff in excess of 200 to enhance research excellence across the university’.

<sup>10</sup> Higher Education Authority National Student Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Framework 2020.

<sup>11</sup> 2016 Report of the Expert Group on Future Funding for Higher Education, aka ‘Cassells’ Report.

<sup>12</sup> The role of the Provost is defined by the College Statutes and underpinned in legislation. The Provost is the Head of the College and has, as its Chief Officer, overall responsibility for the academic, administrative, financial and personnel affairs of the University. The Universities Act, 1997 and the Trinity College, Dublin (Charters and Letters Patent Amendment) Act, 2000 together determine our current relationship with the State, and the pensions transfer (achieved by means of the Financial Measures [Miscellaneous Provisions] Act, 2009) increased our dependence on the State.

<sup>13</sup> Including the Higher Education Authority, Irish Universities Association, The Technological Higher Education Association, Irish Business and Employers Confederation, Enterprise Ireland, and IDA Ireland.



<sup>14</sup> See <https://www.ria.ie/research-public-policy-opportunities-ireland> and <https://www.ria.ie/policy-international/working-groups/ria-brexid-taskforce>.

<sup>15</sup> League of European Research Universities (LERU).

<sup>16</sup> CHARM-EU is a European University alliance, co-funded by the Erasmus + Programme, between the University of Barcelona (coordinator), Trinity College Dublin, Utrecht University, the University of Montpellier and Eötvös Loránd University Budapest.

<sup>17</sup> The Oxford Research Centre in the Humanities.

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.tcd.ie/trinitylongroomhub/research/funding-opportunities/research-incentive-scheme/>.

<sup>19</sup> For more information on projects, see [www.shapeid.eu](http://www.shapeid.eu) and [www.humanplus.ie](http://www.humanplus.ie).

<sup>20</sup> Income to 30 September is comprised of the Higher Education Authority grant (€50.4m), student fees (€153.1m), research income (€101.4m), other income (€64.3m), investment income (€7.0m), and donations and endowments (€20.5m).

<sup>21</sup> <https://enterprise.gov.ie/en/Publications/Publication-files/R-D-Budget-2018-2019.pdf>

<sup>22</sup> Trinity College Dublin Strategic Plan 2020–25.

<sup>23</sup> Inspiring Generations – The Campaign for Trinity College.

<sup>24</sup> ‘European Green Deal Call: €1 billion investment to boost the green and digital transition’ (17 September 2020).

<sup>25</sup> UBC Sustainability.

<sup>26</sup> See, for example, the University of Exeter ‘Environment and Climate Emergency Working Group White Paper’.



# VOTE FOR JANE ON 10 APRIL

*If you would like to get more involved in  
my campaign or have a (virtual) conversation,  
please email me at **[jane.ohlmeyer@tcd.ie](mailto:jane.ohlmeyer@tcd.ie)**  
or reach out on Twitter **[@janeohlmeyer](https://twitter.com/janeohlmeyer)***



**Trinity College Dublin**  
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath  
The University of Dublin