

Transforming Lives and Societies Together

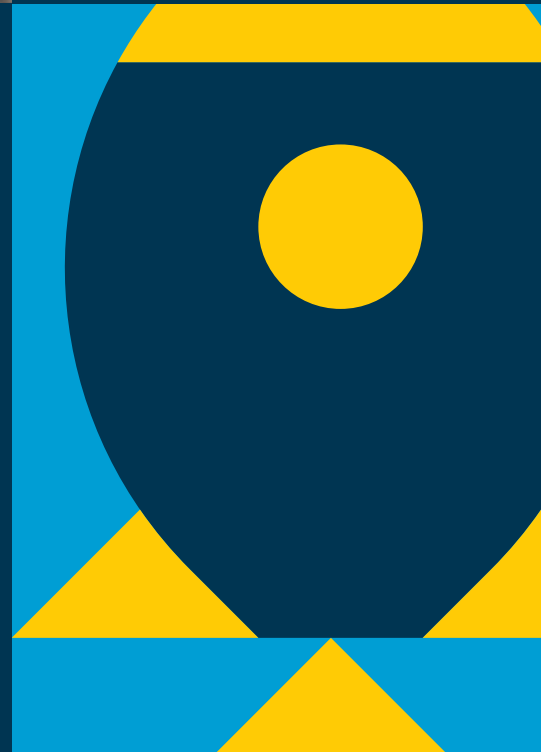


Supporter Impact Report

2022/23



Iontaobhas Oideachasúil
Educational Trust





“Philanthropy makes a vital difference to the life and work of DCU, and enhances our mission to transform lives and societies. The impact of your support reflects our shared dedication to an exceptional student experience, underpinned by innovative teaching and learning, strong industry partnerships and a drive to solve real-world challenges through our research.

I would like to thank DCU’s supporters, friends and alumni for investing in the transformative projects showcased in this report. I hope you enjoy reading about the remarkable impact made possible by your commitment to academic excellence and the future of teaching and research.”

Professor Dáire Keogh
President, Dublin City University

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A Word from our Chair

At DCU Educational Trust, we believe in the power of higher education to make a transformative difference in our society.

This year, the support of our philanthropic partners has made a lasting mark on our campuses, in our communities and in the lives of our students. Together, we are opening a door to new possibilities in research and education.

Thanks to the vision and generosity of DCU's supporters, this year we were able to support future-driven projects like the construction of our dynamic new Polaris building and the DCU Exoskeleton Programme, a research initiative that is reimagining the treatment of paralysis. This year, our supporters also raised €1.3 million in funding for life-changing student scholarships that open a door for talented young people to excel.

I would like to thank our supporters for their generosity in 2022/23, which has made the remarkable impact highlighted in this report possible. Thank you for working with us to shape a brighter future through research and education.

Eamonn Quinn,
Chair, DCU Educational Trust



A Word from our CEO

Last year the life-changing impact of philanthropic giving was felt across our DCU community. The generosity of our supporters is truly inspiring – and the transformative impact that your support enables can be seen in every story we share in this report.

It was a proud moment for DCU and for our supporters when the University was ranked sixth in the world for its impact in reducing inequality by the 2022/23 Times Higher Education Impact Rankings. This is a testament to our collective effort to achieve the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, and create a more sustainable society.

The research projects and philanthropic initiatives highlighted in this report are the results of the core belief we share with our supporters: that research and education can change the world.

In October 2023, DCU launched a new strategic plan, setting out the University's ambitious vision for the future. Our report is structured around three key pillars of this plan: advancing research for society, enhancing our engagement and pioneering a transformative student experience. We hope that you enjoy reading these stories and learning more about your collective impact in 2022/23.

Joe Quinsey,
CEO, DCU Educational Trust

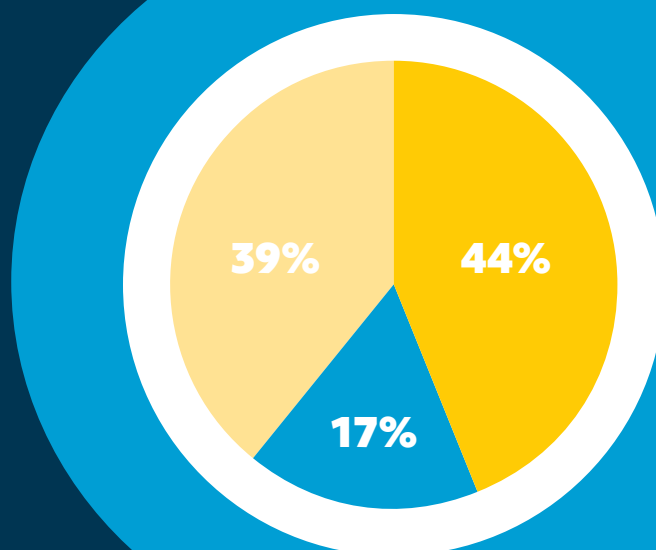
Transforming Lives and Societies Together...

In 2022/23, our supporters pledged over €5 million to enable projects that will deliver DCU's mission to transform lives and societies.



The gifts made by our donors this year supported three key pillars:

Research for Society
Engagement
Student Experience



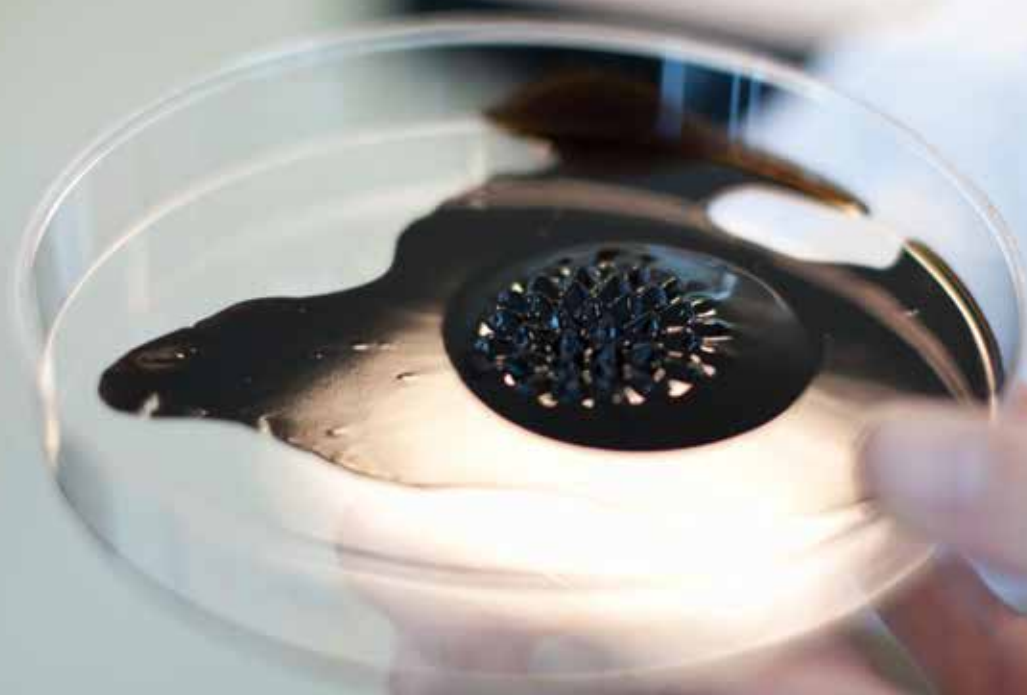
To see our individual online donor roll, please visit:
dcuedtrust.ie/our-individual-supporters

To see our organisational online donor roll, please visit:
dcuedtrust.ie/our-supporters/corporate-supporters

For further information on our governance, please visit:
dcuedtrust.ie/about-us/governance



Research for Society





970,522

steps for people living with paralysis - DCU Exoskeleton Programme



5

PhD candidates supported by philanthropy



77

publications by the National Centre for Family Business



37

researchers in the DCU Centre for Climate and Society



1st

fully funded Access doctoral scholarship at DCU



Driving Cutting-Edge Research...

Research is at the heart of who we are and where we are going. As a leading young university, we are powered by innovation and a drive to find breakthrough solutions for a better world.

Our research tackles some of the world's most complex challenges – and our philanthropic partnerships enhance our ability to make a transformative impact. Support from our partners expands our capacity for cutting-edge research and grows our doctoral student community through PhD scholarships that support young academic talent to flourish.

Together, we are harnessing DCU's unique research expertise in areas such as health, education, economics and climate solutions, furthering our mission to transform lives and societies and enabling DCU to advance its research reputation and impact.

Research for Society supported by philanthropy in 2022/23 included:

Doctoral Research: This year saw the creation of DCU's first fully funded Access PhD Scholarship, thanks to the philanthropic support of **Susan and Harry Hartford**. Established to tackle the underrepresentation of people from disadvantaged backgrounds in doctoral study, this scholarship will enable a talented student to pursue research that makes an impact for society.

In 2022/23, we further increased our doctoral student community by supporting five PhD candidates to pursue research in fields ranging from law to biotechnology thanks to the Orla Benson Memorial Scholarship, Paul Kerley Autism Education Scholarships, Paddy Moriarty Memorial Scholarship and the Strain – Goldman Sachs Endowed Women in STEM Postgraduate Scholarship. Support from an anonymous donor has also established a new Choral Studies Research Scholarship.





Minister Eamon Ryan speaks at the 2023 DCU Centre for Climate and Society conference

DCU Centre for Climate and Society: It was an eventful year for Ireland's first academic research centre devoted to leading societal responses to the climate crisis. Supported by founding partner **Deloitte**, the Centre has grown to include 37 academic members and 12 PhD students, who are shaping responses to climate change in arenas such as politics, media, education and policy. In 2022/23, Centre Director Dr David Robbins advised Ireland's top media organisations on their climate coverage, while Co-Director Dr Diarmuid Torney led the Children and Young People's Assembly on Biodiversity Loss. In April, the Centre hosted a conference titled 'Rewild and Renew', where Minister for the Environment, Climate, Communications, and Transport Eamon Ryan gave a keynote address to over 300 attendees.

Naughton Family Chair in STEM Education: This Chair is the first in Ireland to focus on STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) education at primary level and in early childhood education. As Chair, Professor Hamsa Venkat made a significant impact on education research, policy and practice

in 2022/23, including presenting to the Oireachtas Committee on Education, Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science on the 'Future of STEM in Irish Education'. Her contribution emphasised the importance of building confidence and enthusiasm for STEM disciplines in early learning, before negative or gendered stereotypes set in. Her vital research this year included a review for the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, and explorations of models that can support student teachers with teaching STEM in primary schools.

DCU Changemaker Schools Network: This network is based on the simple but powerful idea that all children can be Changemakers, with the skills and confidence to lead change in their home, school, community and society. With philanthropic support from **basis.point**, **Rethink Ireland** and a group of individual donors, the network is growing to 29 member schools in 2023. Each year, the network equips over 5,000 students with the essential skills of empathy, creativity, leadership and teamwork so they are ready to thrive in an unscripted future and to lead change in our society.

DCU Anti-Bullying Centre: A recent Government study found that 17% of 9- to 17-year-olds reported experiencing some form of bullying, either online or offline, in the past year. The FUSE Anti-Bullying and Online Safety Programme developed by DCU's Anti-Bullying Centre is a vital intervention that gives teachers, students and parents the tools they need to tackle bullying and promote online safety. Last year, with support from **Rethink Ireland**, the programme reached 8,842 students in 115 primary schools. Thanks to support from the **Department of Education**, FUSE also worked with 70,000 students in 407 post-primary schools. The Centre's experts also collaborated with **Vodafone Foundation Ireland** to develop the exciting new Tozi app to tackle cyberbullying and create a safer, more positive online space for young people.

Prometric Chair in Assessment: Professor Ernesto Panadero, a world-leading expert in educational psychology and assessment, has been appointed as Prometric Chair in Educational Assessment at DCU. In this role, he will lead the DCU Centre for Assessment Research, Policy and Professional Practice in Education (CARPE), continuing the work of the inaugural chair, Professor Michael O'Leary,

who recently retired, and of interim director Dr Zita Lysaght. CARPE was established in 2015, with philanthropic support from **Prometric**, to enhance research and practice in assessment across all levels of the education system, from early childhood to fourth level and beyond.

National Centre for Family Business: With support from **AIB** in 2022/23, DCU's National Centre for Family Business continued to conduct world-class research and translate it into best practice insights that enable family firms to succeed and grow into the future. To date, the Centre has produced 77 publications on family business matters, with 53 of these in top-ranking peer reviewed journals. This year, the Centre engaged with a network of over 1,750 family business practitioners through newsletters, podcasts and the Family Business Continuity executive education programme. At this year's conference, titled 'Continuity through Regeneration and Resilience', Mr Gavin Duffy led a discussion on resilience in Irish family business, building on the Centre's groundbreaking new research on the topic. Panellists included leaders of multi-generational family firms such as Glenisk, General Paints and Mount Charles Group.



Pictured (L-R): John Brennan, Head of SME Banking at AIB, Associate Director of NCFB Dr Catherine Faherty and NCFB Director Dr Eric Clinton

Focus on: Understanding the Economic Impacts of a United Ireland



All available economic data tells us that the Northern Ireland economy is weak compared to the Republic of Ireland and other regions of the United Kingdom. It is consistently in the three poorest regions in the UK, with 22% of the working age population relying on benefits. Living standards are 12% lower than in the Republic, while Foreign Direct Investment and tourism revenues are just 15% of levels in the Republic, adjusted for size of population.

In 2022, with philanthropic support from **Denis O'Brien**, DCU's School of Law and Government commenced an ambitious research project, working with the Ulster University Economic Policy Centre to add vital evidence to the debate on why Northern Ireland's economy has not benefitted from an economic peace dividend since the Good Friday Agreement in 1998, and whether key economic indicators would be likely to improve in a united Ireland.

Under the guidance of Principal Investigators Professor John Doyle (DCU) and Dr Eoin Magennis (Ulster University), this research proceeded apace in 2022/23 with the completion of two contextual studies on the key economic issues in the debate on Irish unity and the Northern Ireland subvention. Data collection also commenced on the core project which will deliver three thematic studies on tourism, regional development and foreign direct investment. With additional support, a further study on health economics will also be completed. By 2026, the project aims to secure sufficient funding to produce an unparalleled overview and source of comparable socio-economic data on Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland that would be shared through publications and an interactive data-driven website to provide reliable information on north-south economic performance and on the economic impacts of a united Ireland.



“With a referendum on a united Ireland a real possibility before 2030, this study aims to avoid the mistakes of a Brexit style debate by ensuring voters have reliable, impartial and rigorously researched information to inform decisions during a polarising debate.”

Professor John Doyle
Vice President for Research, DCU

DCU has secured 50 percent of the funding required for this significant project. We are seeking a visionary partner to enable completion of this first impartial, rigorously researched evidence-base on the transition to an island economy in a united Ireland. For more information, contact Jason Sherlock, Director of Development at jason.sherlock@dcu.ie.

Focus on: DCU Exoskeleton Programme



The DCU Exoskeleton Programme enables vital research into the future of paralysis treatment, and provides a range of health benefits to service users.

Thanks to the vision and generosity of our donors, the DCU Exoskeleton Programme powered 970,522 steps for people living with paralysis in 2022/23. Through six parallel research studies led by Dr Brendan Egan, Dr Kieran Moran and Clinical Lead Ronan Langan, the programme is investigating the health impacts of exoskeleton walking sessions for wheelchair users. Philanthropic support has equipped the programme with two robotic exoskeleton suits for adult users, enabling 40 to 50 people each week to achieve key exercise recommendations. The research carried out with these individuals will shape the future of paralysis treatment.



This year, new philanthropic funding through **Community Foundation Ireland** and the **Cerebral Palsy Foundation** will enable us to run the world's first paediatric exoskeleton programme for children with neuromuscular conditions. Support from individual donors has funded the purchase of a cutting-edge paediatric exoskeleton suit, which will become part of our transformative research and rehabilitation programme in early 2024.

In the coming year, our researchers will be able to investigate whether regular walking in a paediatric exoskeleton suit could delay the development of scoliosis in children with neuromuscular conditions such as Cerebral Palsy, as well as reduce walking difficulties and improve respiratory function. This will be the world's first study into the efficacy of exoskeleton walking sessions for children, research that will lead the way in informing evidence-based paediatric physiotherapy practice.

“There are no words for what a thrill it is getting up and standing. The biggest benefit is the way it helps with the spasms. It gets sore, sitting for hours not moving. After using the suit, I can feel my legs are more relaxed.”

Wayne Garrett, Service User

Focus on: Doctoral Research - Lauren Kearney



With less than 1% of doctoral students coming from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds, this year saw the creation of DCU's first fully funded Access PhD scholarship by Susan and Harry Hartford. This scholarship will remove barriers to success and will support talented students like PhD candidate Lauren Kearney to realise their full potential. Here, Lauren shares her story of how DCU's Access Programme and the Strain-Goldman Sachs Endowed Women in STEM Postgraduate Scholarship have enabled her to pursue her passion for science and research for a cleaner, greener world.

"Although only a small number of students from my secondary school typically went to university, I always saw myself going to college. My mam shared this vision. She had left school before her Leaving Certificate, and so when I secured a place to study Common Entry Science at DCU, I became the first person in my family to attend university. When my guidance counsellor told me about the support available through the SUSI grant and the DCU Access Programme, it really put our minds at ease. I also successfully applied for a competitive scholarship for students in disadvantaged (DEIS) schools who want to study STEM. These supports enabled me to go straight to university instead of taking a year out to save up.

In fourth year, I started working on a research project with Dr Mary Pryce. I loved working in a lab, using my hands and doing experiments. When I was offered a PhD position with the Pryce Research Group, I was delighted to accept it and continue our research.

I'm now in the final year of my PhD programme, and I'm researching how we can produce renewable energy such as green hydrogen by harvesting solar energy. We're designing and synthesising new photosensitisers that can capture energy from the sun more efficiently and generate green hydrogen through artificial photosynthesis. I also work on capturing carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, and I'm due to publish a peer-reviewed paper on this shortly.

"It's great to have the opportunity to work on something that will hopefully make a cleaner and more sustainable world."

I was honoured to receive the Strain-Goldman Sachs Endowed Women in STEM Postgraduate Scholarship this year. My mam has had a tough year as my granny recently passed away, so it has been nice to be able to help her a bit more, especially with the cost of living soaring at the moment. I'm lucky that I'm from Dublin and I've been able to live at home. Otherwise, living on a PhD stipend would be very difficult.

I've had a lot of supports that have made my journey to do a PhD possible. Looking back, I have a better appreciation of the difference they make in helping people from underrepresented backgrounds to overcome barriers and break the cycle of not attending college. I hope that many more girls from my old school in Finglas will follow in my footsteps."

Engagement





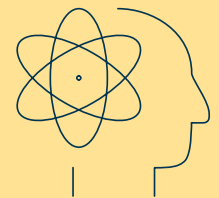
95

Access to the Workplace partner companies since 2019



318

Access to the Workplace student internships since 2019



960,000

learners will benefit from STEM Teacher Internship Programme



5

year strategic partnership with KPMG and DCU Business School



3

philanthropic leadership awards presented

Philanthropic Partnerships for a Better Future...

A university grows stronger through connection – to society, to alumni and to industry. DCU is proud to be a partner of choice for leaders in social innovation, industry and enterprise. Our focussed partnerships reinforce the career readiness of our students, enable powerful research collaborations, and have a transformative impact on lives and society.

KPMG Partners with DCU Business School



Joe O'Mara, Head of Aviation Finance at KPMG with Professor Dáire Keogh, President of DCU and Business School students Nicole Emezie and Olivia Cody

For over four decades, **KPMG** has been a strong supporter of accounting education at DCU. With a new five-year strategic partnership with DCU Business School announced in 2022, one of the leading providers of professional services is now deepening its contribution to business education in Ireland.

Through a substantial philanthropic commitment, this agreement will make a significant contribution to DCU Business School's mission to educate leaders and professionals for the global marketplace and to contribute to the development of individuals, industry and

society through its teaching, research and engagement with industry.

Expanding and building upon existing engagements, this partnership will see collaboration on curriculum development, guest lectures, student awards, deeper ties with DCU's work placement programme and human capital enrichment. It will also enable research collaborations related to accounting, talent development, leadership, innovation and digitalisation. Additionally, it offers professional development and training opportunities for KPMG staff.

"At KPMG we believe in the importance of investing in education for our people, our business and our communities. Our new partnership with DCU Business School will help students develop fulfilling and exciting careers whilst contributing to the pool of talented graduates so fundamental to Ireland's success."

STEM Teacher Internship (STInt) Programme



Pictured (L-R): STInt alumnus Jason Moriarty, Minister Simon Harris, STInt alumna Lucy Greene, Professor Dáire Keogh

This March, Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science Simon Harris TD announced the expansion of the STEM Teacher Internship (STInt) Programme. STInt is a DCU initiative, led by Dr Eilish McLoughlin and Prof Deirdre Butler, that promotes innovative learning in STEM education by supporting internship opportunities for pre-service and early career teachers from seven universities in Ireland. Funding by our partners **Skillnet Ireland, Science Foundation Ireland, the Department of Education** and **Intel** is facilitating the further development of the STInt Programme over the next three years.

This summer, 66 pre-service and early career teachers worked as interns in 47 host companies. Through these 12-week paid internships, teachers gained first-hand experience of the diverse range

of STEM careers and opportunities available. To date, STInt has placed 243 STEM teachers in hands-on roles in 56 of Ireland's leading companies, a track record of success that has led to the programme being shortlisted for the prestigious Times Higher Education Awards Knowledge Exchange/Transfer Initiative of the Year for 2023.

These placements are only possible thanks to the strong engagement of STInt's industry partners across sectors ranging from technology, pharma and medical devices to financial and professional services. Thanks to our partners, our STInt interns will go on to inspire a passion for STEM studies and careers in future generations, impacting on over 960,000 learners during their careers in Irish classrooms.

“This collaborative approach between higher education, government agencies and industry provides STEM teachers with unique and engaging learning opportunities, and ultimately helps develop a more diverse future STEM talent workforce for our economy.”

Simon Harris, Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science

DCU Access to the Workplace



The award-winning DCU Access to the Workplace Programme aims to level the playing field for student groups who experience disadvantage in the workplace following graduation. Since 2019, the programme has provided 318 high-quality summer internships for DCU Access students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds, and for neurodivergent students. This summer, over 50 partner companies offered placements to 73 DCU students.

In 2023, we announced a new partnership with **LinkedIn** that will fund the growth

and expansion of Access to the Workplace from 2023 to 2025, including the development of a post-internship mentoring programme. Their support will enable 450 students to engage with Access to the Workplace, and will provide up to 1,000 Access students in the final year of their studies with the opportunity to attend LinkedIn career workshops.

DCU Access to the Workplace is also supported by **Rethink Ireland's** Scaling Education Fund, enabling the programme's growth and development to 2025.

“Everybody should have the same opportunities in life regardless of their background. DCU's Access to the Workplace programme illustrates this perfectly, and at LinkedIn, we also believe that no-one should be left behind.”

Sharon McCooey, Former LinkedIn Country Manager

“We at Rethink Ireland are on a mission to make Ireland a more equal, just and sustainable place to live. By backing projects like Access to the Workplace, disadvantaged students are provided with better opportunities, workplaces experience more talent and diversity and Ireland benefits as a whole.”

Clare Allen, Fund Manager at Rethink Ireland



Celebrating Our Philanthropic Partners



In February 2023, our annual Leadership Circle Dinner brought together over 200 of DCU's leading supporters to celebrate their collective contribution to DCU's mission to transform lives and societies.

CRH was announced as the winner of the DCU Corporate Leadership Award for 2023 at the event. The leading provider of building materials solutions has supported the DCU Access Programme since 2007, enabling hundreds of DCU students from disadvantaged backgrounds to pursue their dream of higher education. In 2014, CRH extended this support to a postgraduate scholarship programme, which has since enabled 100 students to progress their studies to Master's level.

The Individual Leadership Award was presented to husband-and-wife **Siobhán Fay and Edward McGivney**, in recognition of the DCU alumni's long-standing support for the DCU Access Programme.

Professor Anne Looney, Executive Dean of DCU Institute of Education, was presented with the DCU Staff Leadership Award at the event, in celebration of her leadership in working with the university's philanthropic partners to advance Irish education.



DCU Alumni Give Back



We are immensely grateful to all our alumni donors who supported our Spring 2023 appeal by making a donation to DCU's Excellence and Opportunity Fund. Support for the fund enables bright minds to excel at DCU by providing doctoral research opportunities and life-changing scholarships.

At the launch, President of DCU Professor Dáire Keogh was joined by graduates including pilot Lisa Cusack and Dublin GAA star Paddy Andrews, who came together to show their support for the new fundraising campaign.

Student Experience





1,122

Access students enrolled at DCU



16

University of Sanctuary Scholarships



2,280

visitors to the Colm Delves Leadership Lab



225

elite student athletes supported



6,000

students engaged in DCU sports clubs

Supporting Students to Excel...

At DCU, we are passionate about pioneering a transformative student experience. We innovate in our teaching, empower our students to excel, and ensure our doors are open to all.

The vision and generosity of our donors make this world-class student experience possible. Thanks to our supporters, we continued to lead the way in widening participation in higher education in Ireland last year, in recognising academic and sporting excellence, and in providing cutting-edge educational, academic and sporting facilities that enable our students to fulfil their potential and make their mark on the world.

Student experience initiatives supported by philanthropy in 2022/23 included:



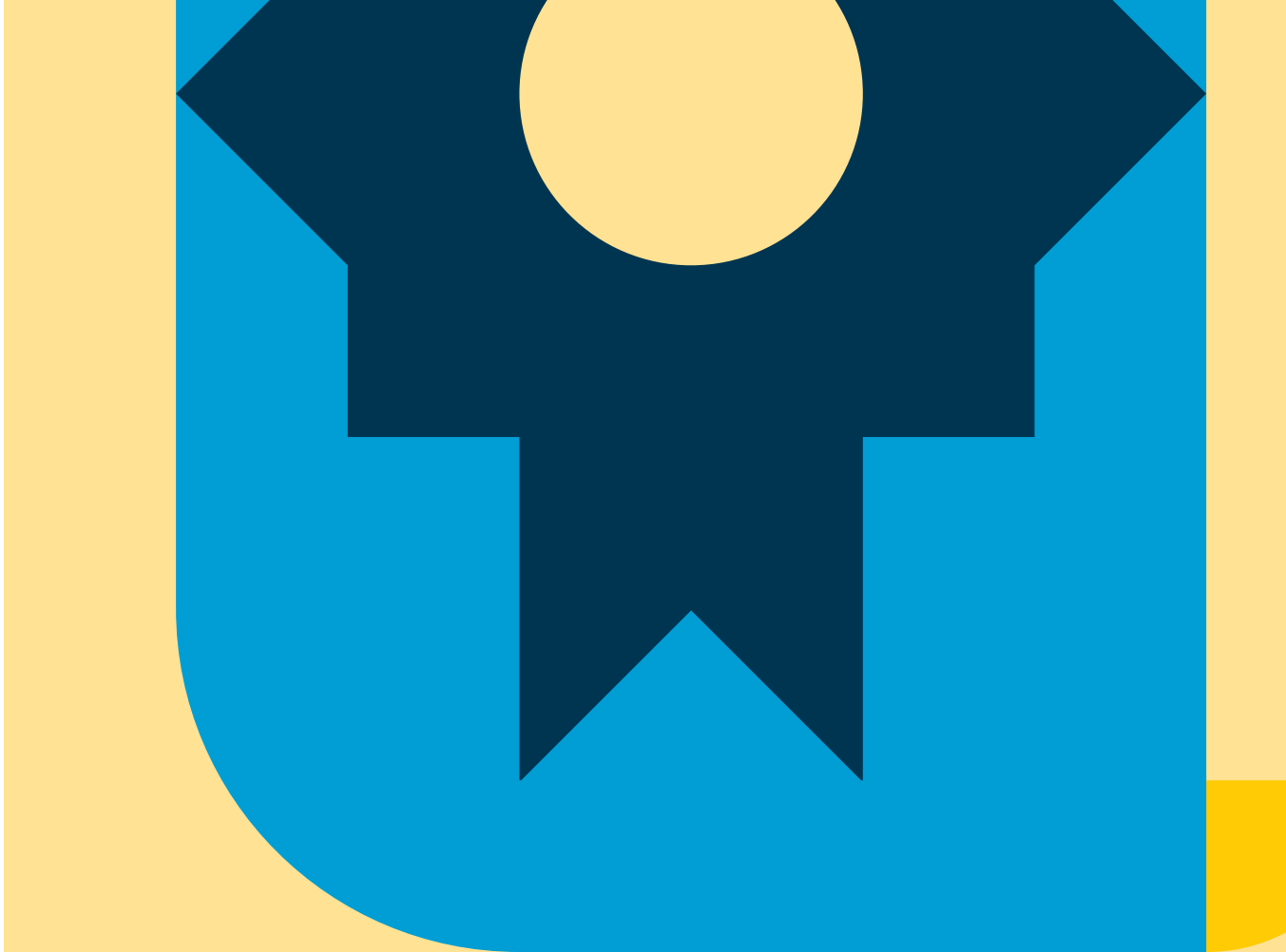
Memorial and Endowed Scholarships:

In 2022/23, we were pleased to award 28 scholarships created in memory of some of the University's most cherished past students, staff and friends. This year, a new memorial scholarship was created in memory of leading Irish businessman and senator, Feargal Quinn. A further 16 students were awarded DCU's endowed scholarships and ICON scholarships, generously created by friends and supporters of the university. A new endowed scholarship, the Strain - Goldman Sachs Endowed Women in STEM Postgraduate Scholarship was also presented for the first time to support an exceptional female STEM student engaged in postgraduate study.



Dr Séamus McDermott Entrepreneurial Scholarship:

In March 2023, the inaugural Dr Séamus McDermott Entrepreneurial Scholarship was awarded to first-year Business student Oscar Bourke. This scholarship was created thanks to a generous philanthropic donation from **The Liffey Trust** and was presented by the Trust's founder, Dr Séamus McDermott. Oscar, who has proven his entrepreneurial spirit by founding two businesses, was chosen from almost 700 applicants for the scholarship, which is worth €9,000 over the course of his studies.



Access Scholarships: Our supporters helped to provide life-changing scholarships to all 1,122 Access students enrolled at DCU in 2022/23. This scholarship support removes barriers to success for students from disadvantaged backgrounds, enabling bright minds to achieve even more. In over 30 years running Ireland's first and largest Access programme, we have developed a comprehensive package of personal, financial and academic supports that empowers students to excel in their studies and fulfil their potential, with 98% of graduates in 2022 achieving a higher honours degree.



Access Outreach: Thanks to support from **JPMorgan Chase**, DCU's Step Up in STEM Programme has continued to raise student aspirations and promote a career in science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) as a real possibility for students living in disadvantaged north Dublin communities. Last year, this programme worked with over 680 Transition Year students in 21 partner schools to increase engagement in STEM subjects. In an independent evaluation, 74.5% of students reported that the programme made them more aware of opportunities to study STEM in university.



Colm Delves Leadership Lab: Designed to develop next generation leaders, this lab is one of the first dedicated mixed reality classrooms in Europe. This state-of-the-art leadership lab was established with philanthropic support from **Digicel** in memory of business leader and DCU alumnus Colm Delves. This year, the lab delivered immersive virtual reality experiences to over 2,280 visitors, including DCU students, industry partners, and students from local secondary schools. Through over 4,750 virtual reality hours, the lab empowered students to develop key digital and leadership skills, learning about and through virtual reality.



DCU Sport: Support from **Ballymore** and **Decathlon** in 2022/23 continued to power the success of DCU Sport in encouraging students to enjoy the wellbeing benefits of physical activity, and in enabling elite athletes to be the best they can be in sport and in life. Last year, 6,000 students engaged in physical activity through DCU's 26 sports clubs, while 225 elite athletes received a package of sports scholarships, performance, academic and personal supports. Our 2022/23 sporting highlights included winning the O'Connor Cup, the top women's collegiate Gaelic football competition, and taking home the SSI/IRFU Women's Tier 1 Cup in rugby. DCU Athletics continued their dominance on the university athletics scene, winning the overall team prize at the Irish University Athletics Association Championships for the 15th consecutive year.

Building a Campus for the Future



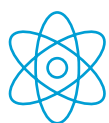
DCU Polaris is more than just a new building. It's a guiding light for the future of education and a catalyst that will kick-start DCU's ambitious next chapter. Polaris will be a new home for STEM at DCU, accelerating advances in how we educate, research, innovate and connect.

DCU Polaris is rapidly taking shape on campus, and is set to open to students and researchers in 2024. This project will be a key focus for us in the coming year, as we seek further philanthropic support for an anticipated investment of €80 million to deliver a truly world-class facility.

With 30,000 visitors a year, DCU Polaris will be a hub of innovation and collaboration where DCU researchers, students, industry partners and community members can work together in new ways to solve society's greatest challenges. In addition, Polaris will be Ireland's most advanced teaching and learning facility for STEM subjects.

DCU Polaris will help us build on our research strengths in a wide range of areas, from deepening our work in children's health and physical literacy to expanding our exploration of AI for better living and continuing to lead innovation and advance knowledge in elite sports performance and the Internet of Things.

Annually powering:



4,500

STEM students advancing knowledge



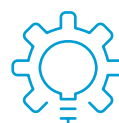
19,000

students accessing innovative, collaborative facilities



38,000

hours of mixed reality learning



100,000

hours of prototyping solutions to the world's most pressing challenges

Focus On: Veronica Guerin Washington Scholarships



From left: Professor Kevin Rafter, DCU; Cormac Bourke, Mediahuis Ireland Editor-in-Chief; DCU journalism students Liam Coates and Erin Murphy, and President of DCU Professor Dáire Keogh.
Photo: Gerry Mooney/Mediahuis

In 2023, DCU journalism students Liam Coates and Erin Murphy were awarded the first Veronica Guerin Washington Scholarships. These scholarships were established by DCU's School of Communications, **Mediahuis Ireland** (formerly Independent News & Media) and an anonymous donor in memory of investigative journalist Veronica Guerin, who was murdered in 1996.

The scholarship allows two DCU journalism students to complete their work experience placements in the United States, further enhancing their learning experience on Ireland's top-ranked journalism course. From May to August 2023, the students worked at the Washington Bureau of the Cronkite School of Journalism as part of a global partnership

arrangement between DCU and Arizona State University (ASU). Based at the ASU Washington Bureau, the students developed digital and broadcast news content for Cronkite News, a division of Arizona Public Broadcasting Service, and worked with US journalism students in delivering a news programme for Cronkite News.

Erin and Liam are both final-year undergraduate students on DCU's BA in Journalism at the School of Communications. Erin is currently Deputy Editor of Arts and Culture of The College View, the DCU student newspaper. Liam is Arts Editor at The College View, and was nominated for two National Student Media Awards in 2022.

“Mediahuis Ireland is delighted to continue its association with the Veronica Guerin Scholarship at DCU and to see two journalism students getting this very exciting opportunity to gain valuable work experience in the United States. Veronica Guerin was a fearless investigative reporter whose work as a journalist, and commitment to press freedom, remains an inspiration for everyone working in the Irish media.”

Focus on: Excellence and Opportunity - Aaron's Story



Aviation has traditionally been seen as an elitist career, with research showing that young people from socio-economically disadvantaged groups are less likely to believe a career in aviation could be open to them. DCU pioneers inclusion in aviation – and in this piece, Aviation Management student Aaron shares how support from the DCU Access Programme is helping him to achieve his dreams.

"I've wanted to be a pilot ever since I can remember. For me, Aviation Management at DCU is a stepping-stone to that dream.

I was born in Dublin, but we moved to Cavan when I was ten. We'd had some problems before that, so it was meant to be a new start. But that wasn't how things worked out, and my sisters and I were taken into care. Growing up, I was in foster care with four different families. Because I moved around a lot, it was hard trying to settle in or make friends. I still had visits with my mam, and I think she saw the potential for a better life for us. She didn't get the chance to do what she wanted to do in life, but she encouraged us to do our best. Our secondary school really had a focus on helping people go on to third level too. It was through school that I heard about the DCU Access Programme.

When I first came to DCU, it was overwhelming, but the support from the Access Programme really helped me settle in. One of my main worries is still finance. I absolutely wouldn't be here at all without the SUSI grant and the Access Programme. That support has really boosted my confidence and I feel like I can do a lot more.

This year, I am completing my INTRA placement with Emerald Airlines. Through my internship, I've experienced countless different aspects of airline operations, from rerouting customers and processing baggage to liaising with pilots and marshalling flights in to land. I am problem-solving on the spot every day, and that experience has given me more confidence in my own abilities.

It was great to have the opportunity to put what I learned at university into practice in a real-world setting, and I've accomplished a lot.

"By speaking to the pilots at Emerald, I've also learned more about the different paths you can take to the pilot seat. My dream already feels more achievable."

The people I've met at DCU have changed my life forever. I'm part of the DCU Aviation Society, and I love to travel too. After college, I might work in airports for a while to save up some money, then maybe get a loan to cover pilot training. It's expensive, so it will take a few years to get there, but I'm 100% going to be a pilot.

I think I've come a long way as a person. I grew up in care, and a lot of foster kids have the odds stacked against them. I think what I'm doing shows other foster kids what they can achieve. It was tough for me in life, and I'm proud of how far I've come."

Focus On: Excellence and Opportunity - Mellisa's Story



Mellisa was one of 16 students supported by DCU's University of Sanctuary programme in 2022/23, thanks to the generosity of Aircastle and Siemens. Mellisa left Zimbabwe in 2016, when the country was under the regime of Robert Mugabe. During her final year as a Nursing (Mental Health) student, she reflects on how far she has come.

"I came to Ireland from Zimbabwe as an asylum seeker in 2016. At first, it was a bit of a culture shock. It was so cold that winter, I wore a puffer jacket all the time, even in the house!

Soon after I arrived, I began a Level 5 course in healthcare, and what I learned about dementia and schizophrenia sparked my interest in mental health nursing. At the time, I didn't have the papers I needed to work in healthcare, so I continued my studies on a Level 6 course, and later applied to study Nursing at DCU. When I was accepted, I was delighted. This was my dream, and I was determined not to let the fees stand in my way. I wanted to become someone and make a difference.

It was a relief to be accepted into the University of Sanctuary programme and to know that I wouldn't have to pay international student fees. Through the programme, I was able to get a laptop and financial support. Thanks to that support, I'm not always stressed and I'm able to get the school supplies I need. We get lunch vouchers too, so I always have food at college, and it really helps out.

I chose to study Mental Health Nursing because it is close to my heart. Where I come from, people have challenges with mental health, but they don't address it. There isn't as much education about mental health back home, and there are a lot of stereotypes around it.

I'm on my final-year nursing placement now in Phoenix Care Centre, and reflecting on where I started, I can see how far I've come. My journey is easier now that I'm not worried about fees. It was sometimes challenging to balance college work with placement work, especially when I was also working part-time with the Peter McVerry Trust. But I was glad to be able to help people out as they navigate life, and navigate homelessness and addiction. After my course, I hope I'll be able to keep working in mental health services, and I'd like to apply for a Master's after a few years' experience. I would like to thank the people who have supported this programme. To have this opportunity makes such a huge difference. It is usually financial problems that cause people to drop out, but now everything is taken care of."

"It means a lot to grant us that security, where all we need to do for a better life is to study, without worrying about tuition fees and what you have to eat. There are different ways people empower themselves, but I think education can give everyone a chance in life."

Focus on: DCU Sport - Kate Kenny



Biomedical Engineering student Kate Kenny is a dual Gaelic football and camogie star from Offaly. Named LGFA Player of the Month in March 2023 for her exploits with DCU's O'Connor Cup winning football team, here she explains how DCU Sport helps her to excel on and off the pitch.

As a student athlete, what drew you to DCU?
I'd be lying if I said it wasn't for sport! It's a dream come true to be able to play at such a high level while studying at the same time and being surrounded by likeminded people.

In our family, sport was always part of life. At club level, I play football for Naomh Ciarán club and camogie with St Rynagh's – they're actually major rivals, but my local club didn't have a girls' camogie team, so I had to make the leap!

In college sport, making good memories and getting to know people is the real goal. Sometimes you even end up playing on the same college team as a rival of your club team. You might think you know someone from playing against them, but when you're on the same team you get to become friends.

I think winning the O'Connor Cup with DCU Dóchas Éireann was probably one of my proudest moments in football. In camogie, our team won the Ashbourne Cup last year, which is the main college camogie competition. DCU had never won that cup before, so it was great to be part of that team making history.

Biggest challenges balancing high performance sport and university?

I think they really complement each other, but you need a good routine. Knowing that you have a match or training sets time limits

for your college work – so if there's a day where I don't have training, I'm more likely to procrastinate! I also use training and going to the gym as a break from studying, so I have a nice balance. It's helping me to build my time management skills and stay organised.

The MSc in Biomedical Engineering appealed to me because it's an ever-changing field. I'm on placement now in a pharmaceutical company, and I could see myself going into this industry. I might like to work in Rehabilitation Engineering either, with prosthetics and helping people after injury – and that definitely ties in with sports.

How has DCU Sport helped you achieve your goals?

Thanks to my sports scholarship, I live with other athletes, and we have the same lifestyle. We don't go out regularly, because we all have training and we all understand that. I'm lucky to be living with likeminded people. Having access to the gym and the pool through DCU Sport is brilliant too, it's great to have those facilities as an athlete.

In DCU, if there's anything I need help with, all I have to do is ask. DCU Careers Service has been a big help lately, and I feel lucky to have so many other student supports available if I need them.

“It's a dream come true to be able to play at such a high level while studying at the same time and being surrounded by likeminded people.”

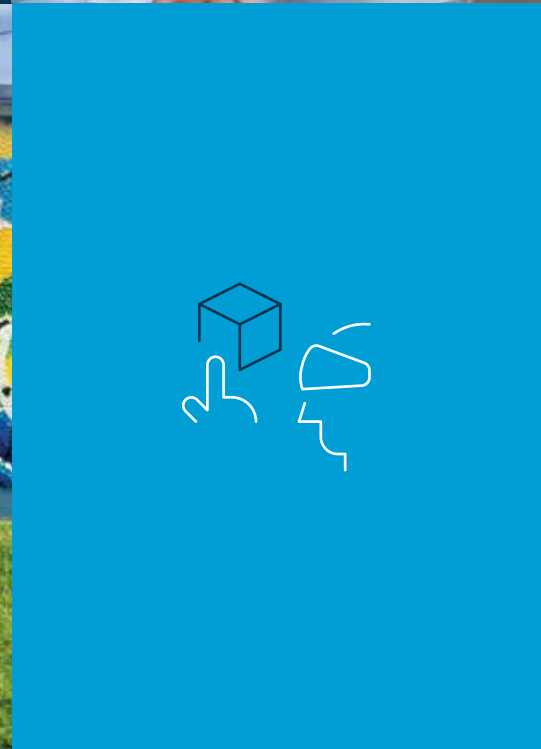




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