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UCD Today...

The past year has been one of remarkable activity for UCD. Quite apart from the process of developing a new strategic plan, the university has stepped up its research efforts and achieved a 50% increase in research funding, embraced a radical modularisation model that will transform the teaching and learning experience for new students and launched the celebration of our 150th anniversary

With so much happening on campus, there was an obvious need to produce a publication, which would provide information on issues that affect staff, students and other UCD stakeholders. *UCD Today* aims to cover these issues as well as providing a forum to highlight the work of academics throughout the university. This edition includes articles on planning, international politics and the genetics of thoroughbred horses. They are just a sample of the incredible range of research activity being carried out at UCD.

UCD has established a Communications, Development and Alumni Relations (CDAR) board to support the objectives set out in the strategic plan. *UCD Today* is just one element of the communications programme. Through members of the CDAR board you have a conduit to promote the research and achievements of your own area and to provide feedback on this publication. The list of members of the CDAR board is on the website: <http://ucd.ie/communications>.

The celebration of UCD's 150th anniversary gave us the opportunity to mark the impact of the university in a national and international context. The *UCD Today* calendar is full of events that publicise the achievements of staff, students and graduates, and provide us with the opportunity to present a positive and vibrant image of UCD to the world outside the campus. We have included a taste of the UCD 150 celebrations in this publication, and more comprehensive details are available on the website: <http://www.ucd.ie/150>.

One issue that repeatedly cropped up during the strategic plan discussions was the identity of the university. As a newcomer to the staff (although twice a graduate), I have been interested in the importance staff and students place on having a visual identity. Market research shows that although stakeholders have positive attitudes towards UCD, they do not tend to have a tangible sense of the university. Part of the reason for this is that we have not articulated adequately how we see ourselves. In the absence of an organisational identity, people describe the university in vague or even nebulous terms.

Developing a "brand" for the UCD 150 was a first step towards a visual articulation. The image we developed is vibrant and confident. To make it easy to use, design guidelines and logo downloads are accessible on the website: <http://www.ucd.ie/150/styleguide.htm>.

The next branding exercise was the development of the UCD Horizons campaign in December. The UCD Horizons branding was the result of several rapid stages of market research with potential and existing students as well as with staff and secondary school teachers. The outcome was a clean, clear campaign, which concentrated on radio with backup from outdoor and press advertisements. The campaign encouraged students to go to a dedicated section on the web <http://www.ucd.ie/horizons/> or to pick up the booklet on frequently asked questions.

Undoubtedly UCD Horizons has achieved high public awareness and by the time the new first years arrive on campus in September, modularisation will certainly be no surprise.

I look forward to receiving your comments and feedback on *UCD Today* through the CADR board, and to receiving your news for inclusion in future editions of this magazine.

Ellis O'Brien
Director of Communications

Contributors:

Suzanne Bailey, Tony Carey, Siobhán Creaton, Séan Duke, Roland French, Dr Gerald Mills, Anne Marie Harvey, Frank Kennedy, Shane Kenny, Susan Muldoon, Patricia McCarron, Lindie Naughton, Maria O'Halloran, Elaine Quinn, James Reilly, Mark Simpson, Micéal Whelan, Charlie Soland, Simon Tierney, Paul Ward

Produced by:

Ellis O'Brien, Victoria Bruce, Paul Keenan

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Loman Cusack Design

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In the compilation of this publication, every care has been taken to ensure accuracy. Any errors or omissions should be brought to the attention of the UCD Communications Office.

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