Mission and Values of Athlone Institute of Technology

Our Mission
We are proud of our distinct mission and role in the provision of higher education for the midlands region and beyond. The mission statement encapsulates and reflects the Institute's core values.

"To provide student-centered, career-focused education, training and applied research programmes for our diverse cohort of learners within a professional and supportive environment. We are fully committed to intensive engagement with regional business, enterprise and social communities while maintaining our global orientation."

Our Commitments
AIT is committed to its role within the midlands region and nationally. We pursue our mission across our full range of activities and are focused on fulfilling our commitments, which encapsulate the Institute's priorities, ethos and values:

- AIT is a student-centred institution
- AIT delivers career-focused education and research
- AIT provides inclusive access to higher education
- AIT pays a regional, national and international role

Our Vision
AIT have an ambitious and challenging vision for the strategic development of our Institute, which is that:

"AIT will be a technological university distinguished by outstanding learner experience, international focus, distinctive regional contribution and high quality impact of its staff, teaching, applied research and innovation."

Achieving our Goals
Our strategic goals align with broader national goals including those outlined in the National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030.
This Report has been compiled and edited by the President's Office and the Marketing and Communications Office, Athlone Institute of Technology.
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As Chairman of the Governing Body of Athlone Institute of Technology, I am delighted to present the annual report for the academic year 2016/17.

This past year has proven a huge success for Athlone Institute of Technology, a modern, dynamic higher education institute distinguished by outstanding learner experience, international focus, distinctive regional contribution and the high-quality impact of its staff, teaching, applied research and innovation. Our efforts in these areas, alongside our unwavering commitment to academic excellence, resulted in us receiving The Sunday Times Institute of Technology of the Year 2017 Runner Up. With this award, we moved up the leader board to 10th place in a league comprising of institutes of technology's and universities. This accolade further reinforces our Institute being at the forefront of the higher education sector in Ireland in terms of educational provision, research, our cross cutting collaboration with industry and our engagement with the wider community within the region.

As an Institute, one of our key strengths lies in our ability to identify areas of skills shortages and in working with businesses to improve links between enterprise and academia. Our three Strategic Research Institutes (Bioscience, Materials and Software) are aligned with the regional and national research priorities and work in close collaboration with industry partners. As we look ahead to achieving our status as a Technological University, we have met or exceeded all objectives and performance targets for research and innovation laid out in our HEA Compact for 2014-2016.

Since early 2016, AIT has been part of the CONFIRM consortium led by UL-Tyndall National Institute, which developed and submitted a proposal focused on Advanced Manufacturing under SFI's Research Centres Programme Call 2016. The consortium is led by the University of Limerick - Tyndall National Institute with University College Cork, Cork Institute of Technology, NUI Galway, Maynooth University and Limerick Institute of Technology as academic partner institutions.

In May, SFI announced it will be investing €72 million over the next six years in four new world-class SFI Research Centres in Ireland, including: CONFIRM Centre for Smart Manufacturing. CONFIRM's vision is to transform and grow Irish manufacturing by integrating intelligence within products, machines, production systems and supply chains. To undertake this vision, CONFIRM will undertake fundamental scientific and engineering research to deliver disruptive innovations in digital manufacturing. CONFIRM positions AIT as a centre of excellence for the development of advanced manufacturing processes and technologies and will support sectors that are critical to the Irish economy in joining a Smart Manufacturing ecosystem.

Our ISSE Student Engagement Survey response rate continues to trend upwards in areas such as: Supportive Environment, Quality Interactions, Effective Teaching Practice, Student Faculty Interaction, Collaborative Learning, and Learning Strategies. This year our student response rate progressed from 54% to 61% - a significant number when compared to the national response rate, which stands at 27%. This further demonstrates our student centric approach to education and the warm, friendly environment we have cultivated on campus.

In closing, I wish to recognise the contributions made by the members of our Governing Body over the past year and thank them for their continued support. I would also like to thank our President, staff and students for their contribution to promoting the values of AIT, as we plan ahead to achieve our status as a Technological University.

I also wish to recognise the support of all stakeholders to the important work of the Institute and I thank the Department of Education and Skills and the Higher Education Authority for their continuing strong support.

Frank Ryan
Chairman
President’s Introduction

Professor Ciarán Ó Catháin
President
Athlone Institute of Technology
This past year has been extremely fruitful for us as an institute on both a regional, national and global level. Our academic and professional staff have helped us drive exciting new developments further solidifying our status as an academic centre of excellence. For this, and the continued commitment and support our academic staff have shown, I pay tribute. These individuals have been instrumental in helping shape our institute into the welcoming and vibrant community it is today.

Our success as an institute has always been predicated on our ability to deliver a first-class education that centres on the student experience and practical, applied learning. We’ve been extremely successful in this endeavour thanks to the continued commitment of our innovative staff who, as always, remain focused on supporting students and feeding their intellectual curiosity. We do not take this commitment for granted and will continue to support staff in their quest to provide the best possible learning environment for our students.

Every year, we record the institute’s main achievements and milestones. This Annual Report houses a summary of those activities and acts as a statement of the range and breadth of ambitions we have for ourselves as an Institute. Our recently awarded The Sunday Times ‘Institute of Technology of the Year Runner Up 2017’ accolade exemplifies this. Our impressive graduate employability rate, commitment to strong applied research and raising academic performance, were among the reasons given for the award. The Sunday Times commented that it reflects AIT’s high academic standing and our recently granted authority to award PhDs in the areas of Software Engineering and Network Communications, in addition to the current areas of Polymer Engineering, Microbiology and Toxicology.

We are a particularly ambitious institute and have clearly articulated our vision of becoming a Technological University (TU). The redesignation of our award-winning Institute as a TU will have a marked effect on Athlone and the wider Midlands Region. As the sole HEI provider in the Midlands Region, our institute plays a catalytic role in its social, economic and cultural development. In keeping with this provision, we aim to meet and foresee skills gaps wherever they might appear and to provide industry with a pipeline of suitably qualified, work ready graduates. By increasing the attractiveness of the region, highly skilled graduates will be able to live, raise families and work continuing the cycle for the betterment of the Midlands.

As demand for higher education grows in the Midlands, so too must our campus in order to be an innovative and engaged institute. This year, we look forward to a significant development for our institute and the wider Midlands Region with the plan for a new STEM building. The new state-of-the-art facility will create additional capacity for up to 1,000 additional students, enabling the institute to meet increased demand for STEM graduates. In addition, this STEM building and its academic, industry and research capabilities will bolster AIT’s transition towards becoming a technological university as we continue to be a driver of growth and innovation in the Midlands.

Professor Ciarán Ó Catháin
President
Governance

Governing Body Members

Ex-Officio Members as per Section 4 of the 1992 Act from 1 April 2015
Mr. Frank Ryan [Chairperson Section 2(a)]
Professor Ciarán Ó Catháin [President, Section 2(b)]

Governing Body Members as per Section 4 of the 1994 Act from 1 April 2015 Under

Section 4(1)(a) and (b)
Mr. Pat Gilmore
Cllr. Kathleen Shanagher
Cllr. Tom Farrell
Ms. Laura Leonard
Mr. Denis Magner
Cllr. Pat O’Toole

Under Section 4(1)(c)
Mr. John O’Connor
Ms. Brigid Delamere

Under Section 4(1)(d)
Mr. James Keane

Under Section 4(1)(e)
Mr. Kevin Ronan
Ms. Donna Mulkerrins

Under Section 4(1)(f)
Ms. Geraldine Talty

Under Section 4(1)(g)
Mr. Paul Madden
Ms. Colette Ryan
Mr. Liam Rattigan
Ms. Natasha Kinsella
Mr. Kieran Mulvey

Secretary to the Governing Body
Mr Bill Delaney
GOVERNING BODY MEETINGS
During the period from 1st September 2016 to 31st August 2017 the Governing Body met on eight separate occasions on the following dates:

- 14th September 2016
- 26th October 2016
- 7th December 2016
- 8th February 2017
- 22nd March 2017
- 10th May 2017
- 21st June 2017
- 24th August 2017

MANAGEMENT AND SENIOR STAFF
The Institute has three Faculties: Business and Hospitality, Engineering and Informatics and Science and Health, which in turn are further divided into Departments to provide courses/programmes of study to students. Each Faculty has a Dean of Faculty and relevant Heads of Department.

President
Prof. Ciarán Ó Catháin
Vice President for Academic Affairs and Registrar
Dr Joseph Ryan / Dr Niall Seery
(to 31 Jan 2017 / 1st Feb 2017)
Mr Bill Delaney
Vice President for Financial and Corporate Affairs
M John McKenna
Vice President for Strategic Planning and Institutional Performance
Mr Eoin Langan
Dean of Faculty of Business and Hospitality
Mr Trevor Prendergast
Head of Dept. of Accounting and Business Computing
Mr Owen Ross
Head of Dept. of Business and Management Studies
Dr Anthony Johnston
Head of Dept. of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure Studies
Dr Austin Hanley
Dean of School of Engineering and Informatics
Mr Marcus Rahilly
Head of Dept. of Electronics and Informatics
Mr Joe Lawless
Head of Dept. of Polymer, Mechanical, Civil Engineering & Trades
Dr Don Faller
Dean of Faculty of Science and Health
Dr Donal Faller
Head of Dept. of Life and Physical Sciences
Dr Carol O Donnell
Head of Dept. of Sport and Health Science
Dr Aoife Lane
Head of Dept. of Nursing and Health Sciences
Dr Pearse Murphy
Head of Dept. of Social Sciences and Design
Dr Niall Seery / Mr Oliver Hegarty
(to 31 Jan 2017 / 1st Feb 2017)
Mr Oliver Hegarty
Head of Dept. of Lifelong Learning
Dr Michael Tobin
Director of Marketing and Communications
Ms Orla Thornton
Director of Innovation and Enterprise
Mr Michael Lonergan
Director of International Relations
Ms Mary Simpson
Human Resource Manager
Mr Liam Brennan
Finance Manager
Ms Betty Buckley
Information Technology Manager
Mr Rossa Coleman
Estates Manager
Mr Cormac Cloonan
Health and Safety Officer
Mr Fergal Sweeney
Academic Affairs and Student Administration Manager
Ms Mary Goode
Librarian
Ms Josephine Corkery
Student Services Manager
Ms Sarah La Cumbre
ACADEMIC STAFF AND STUDENT AFFAIRS
The Academic Council is the Statutory Body appointed by the Governing Body to assist in planning, co-ordinating, developing and overseeing the academic/educational activities of the Institute. The Academic Council, and its sub-committees, protect, maintain and develop academic standards throughout the Institute, and advise Governing Body on all relevant matters relating to academic standards. The Academic Council met seven times on the following dates:

- September 16th 2016
- October 14th 2016
- December 2nd 2016
- January 20th 2017
- March 10th 2017
- May 5th 2017
- June 15th 2017

The Institute Executive Management Committee (EMT), chaired by the President or his nominee from within the Board, is a non-statutory committee of the Institute, whose role is to assist the President in the management of the Institute and in formulating Institute strategy and policy for approval by Governing Body. EMT meet on a fortnightly basis and any other times deemed necessary. A recording secretary is present at all meetings to record agreed actions.
EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAM
Professor Ciarán Ó Catháin (Chair)
Mr Bill Delaney
Dr Niall Seery
Mr John McKenna
Dr Don Faller
Mr Eoin Langan
Mr Austin Hanley
Mr Liam Brennan
Ms Orla Thornton

ACADEMIC COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP
Professor Ciarán Ó Catháin (Chair)
Dr Joseph Ryan / Dr Niall Seery
Dr Austin Hanley
Mr Michael Lonergan (from May 2017)
Mr Eoin Langan
Dr Don Faller
Ms. Jo Corkery
Mr Owen Ross
Dr. Michael Tobin
Ms Nicola Ryan
Mr Noel Tierney (replaced from May 2017 by Mr Mike O Dowd)
Mr Paul O Meara
Ms Niamh Foley
Mr Padraig Cooke

Staff numbers
In 2017, AIT had a total of 564 staff members (53% F)
Staff 2017 by gender and category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Female %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>263</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>564</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Academic staff breakdown across STEM by gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2017</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Female %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STEM</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-STEM</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>150</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Equality

Athlone Institute of Technology is committed to the promotion of equality of opportunity and to creating and sustaining an environment that values the diversity of our staff and students at all levels and in all areas of the Institute.

The Institute is committed to the ongoing development of policies and procedures that do not discriminate on the grounds of gender, marital status, age, disability, race, colour, religious belief, ethnic origin or sexual orientation and will always work towards the elimination of unfair practices, and promote and develop an ethos of equality within the Institute.
ISSE
AIT’s response rate continues to be the highest in the country by a considerable margin, which is achieved via a partnership approach between the Quality Office, Academic Staff and the Students Union.

Completion Rates Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>AIT Response Rate</th>
<th>National Response Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How would you evaluate your entire educational experience at this institution?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good/Excellent</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you could start over again, would you go to the same institution you are now attending?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Probably Yes/Definitely Yes</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results for AIT continue to be positive with 87% of students rating their overall academic experience as being good or excellent. This rating has increased from 84% in the first year of ISSE in 2014. In addition, 84% of students would choose AIT if they were to start again in Higher Education. This rating has remained constant since 2014.

ISSE Indices for AIT as benchmarked against all the HEIs that take part in ISSE, all the Institutes of Technology and the Universities. This benchmarking is completed for all students, first year, final year and taught postgraduate students.

The Institute continues to support provision at level 6 and 7 and continues to support the LADDER System.
Students by degree level and gender across AIT and in STEM Departments in 2016/17

In 2016/17, AIT had a population of 4,961 students. 50% of undergraduate students, 50% of postgraduate taught students and 99% of postgraduate research students were in STEM areas. Females represented 52% of AIT students in 2016/17.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Year 2016/17</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Female %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ALL AIT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
<td>2,192</td>
<td>2,388</td>
<td>4,580</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Postgraduate Taught</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Postgraduate Research</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AIT Total</td>
<td>2,406</td>
<td>2,555</td>
<td>4,961</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>STEM AIT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
<td>1,355</td>
<td>936</td>
<td>2,291</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Postgraduate Taught</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Postgraduate Research</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>STEM Total</td>
<td>1,506</td>
<td>1,013</td>
<td>2,519</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AHSS AIT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
<td>837</td>
<td>1,452</td>
<td>2,289</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Postgraduate Taught</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Postgraduate Research</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AHSS Total</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>1,542</td>
<td>2,442</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Student numbers

**NEW ENTRANTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2016/17</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full-time Undergraduate New Entrants</td>
<td>1005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mature New Entrants</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Mature</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**INTERNATIONALISATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Full-time</th>
<th>Part-time</th>
<th>In Service</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>International - EU</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International - Non-EU</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>304</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erasmus Incoming (EU and NonEU)</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Exchange (EU and NonEU)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>467</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>503</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% International</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td></td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Learning and Teaching

Promoting excellence in learning, teaching and assessment, thereby enhancing the learning experience of all students.

A key strategic goal of the Institute is: “To sustain and develop an inclusive learning community that empowers learners to be successful in a dynamic environment”

All activities of the Learning and Teaching Unit are aligned to achieving this objective, informed by findings in the ISSE, National Forum enhancement themes and the Digital Roadmap. By 2016, 51 staff have completed at least one special purpose award at level 9 thereby contributing to AIT Strategic Plan 2014-2018 objective of increasing the number of staff with a pedagogical qualification. In keeping with an objective of the AIT Strategic Plan 2014-2018 the Learning and Teaching Unit devised and implemented a 2-day staff induction process. This was subsequently approved by the Executive Management Team (EMT) for implementation annually with new appointees.

Non-accredited professional development


Technology Enhanced Learning

The restructuring and establishment of three Faculties and changes to the reporting from Banner has led to greater efficiency in deploying learning analytics and the reporting of usage by lecturers and students. This now becomes the baseline data for future reporting. The 2016 data indicates that the virtual learning environment is used across all academic areas to provide a blended learning experience for students across all programmes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of Award</th>
<th>No of Students</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level 6</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>23.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 7</td>
<td>623</td>
<td>29.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 8</td>
<td>647</td>
<td>31.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 9/10</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>2086</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

COURSES APPROVALS

Faculty of Engineering & Informatics
- BSc Polymer Processing Technology – Apprenticeship Programme
- Certificate in Lean Construction Scheduling and Control

Faculty of Science and Health
- BA (Hons) in Early Years Care and Education
- Certificate in Supported Self-Directed Living Special Purpose Award

Faculty of Business & Hospitality
- BA (Hons) Hospitality Management ab initio Level 8
High quality, internationally competitive research and innovation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution objective</th>
<th>Build critical mass around focused areas of core research capability aligned with regional needs and national research priorities, and leverage to drive market-informed research in collaboration with industry partners.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Performance indicator | Number of industry projects  
Number of companies engaged  
Total € value of projects  
Value of industry contribution to projects |
| Baseline              | Projects = 53  
Companies = 48  
€000 value of projects = €625  
€000 industry contribution = €212 |
| Final target, end 2016 | Projects = Revised to 193  
Companies = Revised to 162  
€000 value of projects = Revised to €2,943  
€000 industry contribution = Revised to €526 |
| Progress against 2016 Target, Commentary and data source | Projects = 230  
Companies = 161  
€000 value of projects = €3,551  
€000 industry contribution = €633  
Progress against 2016 targets has been in line with strategic planning and demonstrates continued growth in industry engagement and industry contributions to AIT. Value of projects increased by 2% and value of industry contributions increased by 6%. |
High quality, internationally competitive research and innovation

AIT has met and exceeded all objectives and performance targets for research and innovation for 2016, and over the course of our HEA Compact 2014-16, with a prioritised focus on applied research and meeting/exceeding the criteria for becoming a Technological University.

AIT’s objective has been to build critical mass by focusing our efforts on a number of strategic platforms based on core competencies (namely materials, bioscience and software) built up over the years - aligned with regional needs and national research priorities, driving market-informed research in collaboration with industry partners.

AIT has delivered top quality postgraduate research programmes at levels 9 and 10 aligned with these core areas, and undergraduate programmes, providing a sustainable pipeline of high-caliber researchers to drive our impact-focused applied mission. Other performance indicators have included delegated authority to award at PhD levels (Microbiology, Toxicology, Polymer and Mechanical Engineering, and Software and ICT), a Research HUB facility, appointing a Director of Graduate Studies, providing structured postgraduate training through THEA’s ‘Graduate Research Alliance’ and MEND Cluster programmes, implementing professional development plans and researcher progression processes.

Core crosscutting strategic competencies are mirrored with our Research Institutes, Technology Gateway centres (APT and COMAND) and Centre for Industrial Services & Design (CISD) that outwardly support regional industries and communities and inwardly inform teaching. This transdisciplinary ecosystem of research and innovation delivers improved knowledge/technology transfer to enterprise via commercialisation of AIT’s research activities along with underpinning Horizon 2020 and SFI Research Centre funding success.

Enhanced engagement with enterprise and the community and embedded knowledge exchange

The report of the Enterprise Strategy Group pointed out that:

“After education and research, educational institutions have a third role: the promotion of enterprise….The exploitation of knowledge and commercialisation of research must become embedded in the culture and infrastructure of the higher education system. This requires continued emphasis on new campus company start-ups, a pro-innovation culture of intellectual property protection and exploitation, programmes in entrepreneurship, consulting services, information services, new forms of graduate development programmes and greater links between higher education institutions and private enterprise”.

This “third role” of engagement with enterprise and the community and knowledge exchange is a key strategic priority and differentiator of AIT. We continued to grow this activity during 2016 and remain a support to enterprise in the region in developing its innovation capacity and assisting companies to develop new products, processes and designs. We continued to make support of entrepreneurship in the region part of our core mission. A key strategic priority for AIT – working in partnership with Enterprise Ireland - is to significantly increase the number of high-growth knowledge-intensive export-focused businesses in the Midlands.
AIT was awarded funding by Enterprise Ireland in 2016 for expansion (more than doubling) of the Midlands Innovation and Research Centre, our campus business incubator. An expanded MIRC will increase the research, innovation and entrepreneurship infrastructure and capacity of the Midlands - and will be cross-dimensional in its impact on Ireland’s targets under the EU’s Europe 2020 growth strategy. An expanded MIRC will support smart (knowledge and innovation driven) growth, will improve competitiveness, foster significant job creation, support graduate retention and increase Gross Value Added in the Midlands - in line with the overriding goal of AIT’s Strategic Plan 2014-2018 - the building of regional competitiveness and innovative capacity in the Midlands.

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<th>Technology Gateways</th>
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<th>CIT</th>
<th>DKIT</th>
<th>GMIT</th>
<th>IT Blanch</th>
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Source: Higher Education System Performance Institutional and Sectoral profiles 2013/2014 (most up to date published data)

A clear indicator of our strength in applied research is the awarding of two Technology Gateways to the Institute by Enterprise Ireland.

- Applied Polymer Technology
- COMMAND – Connected Media

Since early 2016, AIT has been a partner in a Consortium led by University of Limerick and Tyndall National Institute, which developed and submitted a proposal focused on Advanced Manufacturing under SFI’s Research Centres Programme Call 2016.

On 2nd May 2017, Science Foundation Ireland announced that it will invest €72 million over the next 6 years in four new world-class SFI Research Centres in Ireland – including the CONFIRM Centre for SMART Manufacturing. The decision followed a comprehensive international peer review process involving leading industry and academic experts over the previous 12 months.

CONFIRM’s vision is to transform and grow Irish manufacturing by integrating intelligence within products, machines, production systems and supply chains. To achieve this vision, CONFIRM will undertake fundamental scientific and engineering research to deliver disruptive innovations in digital manufacturing. CONFIRM will also develop dedicated testbeds and prototype lines for validation of CONFIRM’s technologies.

AIT is involved in or leading a significant number of the Centre’s proposed Work Packages and Targeted Projects.

**New Frontiers**

AIT’s New Frontiers Programme, delivered in the Midlands-Mid-East region in partnership with Maynooth University, supported 14 participant start-ups in 2016/17 – the first cohort under a €1.9m contract awarded to AIT by the Board of Enterprise Ireland in February 2016 to deliver the Programme over the period 2016-2020. Products being developed by the 14 start-ups include project management software, performance enhancing car parts, craft beer and innovative footwear for triathletes.

Five of our New Frontiers 2015/16 clients won €50k Competitive Start Funding from Enterprise Ireland during 2016. Acres Machinery won the Best Farm Machinery Award at the National Ploughing Championships 2016 for its Supercrop1 machine, which improves the wilting process of hay and silage.
ESA Space Solutions Centre Ireland

ESA Space Solutions Centre Ireland – in which AIT is a partner along with Tyndall National Institute, Maynooth University, the Irish Maritime and Energy Resource Cluster, the European Space Agency and Enterprise Ireland – was launched in September 2016. ESA Space Solutions Centre Ireland facilitates access to ESA programmes, promotes the adoption of space solutions and supports the development of Irish companies, new and existing, in space and downstream sectors. ESA Space Solutions Centre Ireland operates across the four partner locations – including the MIRC at AIT. In January 2017, the first meeting of the Tender Evaluation Board of ESA Space Solutions Centre Ireland met in the MIRC to evaluate applications received in response to the Centre’s permanent Open Call for Business Incubation.


AIT leads seven Actions and is a partner with other stakeholders in a broad range of Actions across the Midlands Action Plan for Jobs. During 2016, we submitted six-monthly Progress Reports to the Plan’s Monitoring Committee in relation to the Actions, which we lead.

Local Economic and Community Plans

AIT engaged closely with the County Councils in the region during 2015 in the development of their 6-year Local Economic and Community Plans (as mandated under the Local Government Reform Act 2014). We continued to work with the Councils during 2016 in relation to the extensive range of Actions for which we are either Lead or Partner in the LECPs of Westmeath, Longford, Offaly, Laois and Roscommon County Councils for the period 2016-2021/22.
Student and staff exchange

AIT signed a student and staff exchange agreement with Beijing Information Science and Technology University (BISTU) at the Embassy of Ireland, Beijing on 21 October 2016. This agreement will offer two students from Faculty of Engineering & Informatics AIT the opportunity to complete placement or study period at BISTU in 2017 and AIT is pleased to welcome two exchange students from BISTU during academic year 2017-18.

Photo from left to right:
Mr Peter Yang, Enterprise Ireland China Office, Ms. Mary Doyle, Deputy Secretary General of the Department of Education & Skills, the Irish Ambassador to China, Mr. Paul Kavanagh, Dr. Austin Hanley, Dean of Engineering & Informatics AIT and Ms. Jiang Yuru, Dean of International Relations, BISTU.
Expansion of AITs Office Space in China

Professor Ciarán Ó Catháin travelled to Wuhan to open the second AIT China Office in China on 26 March 2017 with the support of AIT’s Chinese partner, Foundation College of China for Scholarly Cooperation (FCCSC). Wuhan is the capital of Hubei Province and is the ninth largest city in China with a population just over 10 million. Professor Ó Catháin first visited Wuhan in January 2014 and noted the growing trade and educational links between Co. Westmeath and Hubei Province. Governor Wang Guosheng visited Ireland in November 2014 when an agreement of cooperation was signed between Westmeath County Council and Hubei Province. The agreement lays the foundations for economic, social, cultural and educational links. Delegations from the Department of Education and Skills visited Wuhan in October 2014, 2015 and 2016. Delegates from the Education Bureau and economic zones in Hubei provinces have visited Co. Westmeath and AIT hosted numerous education delegations.

AIT has established a joint programme in Design and Multimedia with Jianghan University, Wuhan. A number of visits between Athlone and Wuhan have taken place since the launch of the programme. This relationship has seen an active mobility between AIT and Jianghan University each year since 2014. The Dean of the Faculty of Science and a Design lecturer from AIT have visited the Design students at Jianghan University. More than 20 students participated in a summer programme in Graphic Design at AIT in August 2016 and it is planned to send another group in 2017.

AIT is keen to extend cooperation with Jianghan University and universities in other areas to grow the economy of Hubei Province such as ICT, Mechanical Engineering, Design, Biotechnology, Business and Accounting. The design of programmes with emphasis on practical learning will ensure that students will be industry ready to meet the needs of industry in Hubei Province.

During this visit to Wuhan, Professor Ó Catháin also visited Wuhan University of Science and Technology where discussions focused on collaboration for postgraduate and research programmes.

International students comprise 12% of the student population at AIT during academic year 2016-17 with more than 150 Chinese students at AIT. The majority of Chinese students transfer to AIT from partner universities. During this visit to China, Professor Ó Catháin and Meng Jing travelled to Kunming.

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Professor Ó Catháin (AIT) and President Ni Hongwei (Wuhan University of Science & Technology) exchange signed agreements.
FACULTY OF BUSINESS AND HOSPITALITY

The Faculty of Business was delighted to welcome George Lee from RTE who gave an enthralling and witty talk to a capacity crowd of students of staff. The talk centred on anecdotes from his time as Economics editor with RTE and his experiences as a T.D. in the last Government. He covered a wide variety of topics encompassing economics, the media, the environment, BREXIT and politics and delivered them in a witty and informative style that held his audience captive for over an hour and a half.

Athlone Institute of Technology Legal Information Clinic

The Department of Business and Management Studies launched a Legal Information Clinic in January, 2017. The clinic was run by law students studying in the Faculty of Business, under the supervision of law lecturers employed by the Institute. The clinic was open to AIT students who were seeking legal information on any of the clinic’s practice areas of asylum law and immigration law, employment law and residential tenancy law. The clinic took place on one evening each month from 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm and was supervised by Dr. Chris McDermott, Ms. Mary Corrigan, Ms. Alison Hough and Ms. Elaine Walsh. The purpose of the clinic was to provide AIT law students studying in the department the opportunity to attend legal consultations, to engage in legal research and to provide legal information to fellow students.

FACULTY OF SCIENCE AND HEALTH

2016 marked 21 years of Science Week, which is a national and annual event celebrating the fascinating worlds of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). The aim of Science Week is to promote the relevance of science, technology, engineering and maths in our everyday lives and to demonstrate their importance to the future development of Irish society and to the economy. Science Week is managed by SFI – Science Foundation Ireland.

As part of the Faculty of Science and Health contribution to Science Week in 2016, hosted a Roadshow for Local Primary Schools. Pupils from eight local primary schools attended a highly engaging Science of the Circus show in the Department of Nursing & Healthcare, where they were entertained by Dr Ken Farquhar from The Inspirational Theatre Company in the UK. Dr Farquhar holds a PhD in Chemistry and is an Honorary Lecturer in Science Communication at East Anglia University. He is also a former world-juggling champion, who as part of his show demonstrates the physics underpinning some of the performances in the circus, with live acts involving juggling, dancing, skate-boarding etc.
Environ2017

The largest academic conference ever held in AIT took place from Monday 10th to Wednesday 12th April. Delegates from USA, Germany, UK, Northern Ireland and Ireland attended and the overwhelming success of the conference was largely due to the amazing student volunteers and Institute staff. The three-day conference organised by Dr. Andy Fogarty, Dr. Sile O’Flaherty (Conference Joint Convenors), Marese Ward Shine (Conference Coordinator) and Sinead Macken (Environmental Sciences Association of Ireland - ESAI Liaison) attracted three hundred and fifteen delegates.

Over 100 oral papers and 60 posters, divided into sixteen themes, were presented at the conference.

Themes covered were:
- Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services
- Nanotechnology and the Environment
- Environmental Socioeconomics
- Air Quality
- Urban Development
- Water Quality and Resources
- Invasive Species
- Ecotoxicology
- Sustainable Land Use and Agriculture
- Waste Management
- Environmental Management
- Environmental Policy and Communications
- Marine and Coastal
- Environment and Human Health
- Energy and Climate Change

Some of the highlights of the conference included a public engagement debate entitled - “Draining the Shannon- Flood Mitigation” - which was full to capacity and was addressed by two ministers, Minister Denis Naughten (Department of Communications, Climate Change and Environment) and Minister Sean Canney (Department of Office of Public Works and Flood relief). This debate was reported on the RTE 9 pm News was also featured on Newstalk radio and on all local radio stations. Very unusual for academic conferences, the event trended on Twitter.

The theme of the conference was “Putting the Eco in the Economy”.

The chocolate piece (pictured to the left), which was commissioned specially for the Environ conference, was produced by Mr. Kevin Ward, Department of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure.

A unique feature of Environ 2017 was the production of an edible art centerpiece, which was made entirely from chocolate. The art piece depicted a steel and concrete base, propping up a tree and entangled around the world to represent the intersection between ecology, the environment and the economy.
The Faculty of Engineering & Informatics registered 252 first year students on Thursday 8th September 2016, an increase of 10% from 2015/2016. Mechanical Engineering shows the biggest increase while the built environment courses are now holding their own with modest increases.

The First Year Students team building experience took place on Tuesday 20th September. Students and staff found the exercise very helpful as part of integrating and settling the student body.

DEPARTMENT OF LIFELONG LEARNING

The Department of Lifelong Learning hosted the third National Higher Education Lifelong Learning Ireland Network (HELLIN) Conference on 9th December, here in the Institute. The theme of the conference was Lifelong Learning – 100 years – Remembering, Reflecting and Re-imagining. 22 papers were presented on themes relevant to Lifelong Learning and in excess of 70 delegates attended from higher education institutions nationally (Universities and Institutes).

Keynote presentations were delivered on

- **Lifelong Learning Participation Among Adults in Ireland.** Dr Nora Condon, Skills and Labour Market Research Unit, Dublin, Ireland
- **Lifelong Learning – Achieving Return on Investment.** Mr Ronan Emmett, Head of Learning and Talent Acquisition, Boston Scientific, Cork.
• *Lifelong Learning is the Future and the Future of Lifelong Learning’* Mr Brian Mulligan, Centre for Online Learning, Institute of Technology, Sligo.

The conference was supported internationally by Eucen (European University Continuing Education Network) and the AAACE (American Association for Adult and Continuing Education)

**Achievements of our Institute teams and individuals - 2016/2017 include:**

**ATHLETICS:**

AIT Athletics Club has had another record-breaking year in 2016/2017 and has now firmly established itself as one of the leading third level’s in the country in Athletics.

AIT AC finished third over-all and top Institute of Technology from twenty-two teams at the Irish Universities Indoor Championships, which was held in the AIT International Arena on 10th February. Gold medalists on the day included Andrew Heney in High Jump, Amy McTeggart in the Combined Events and Laura Dolan in the Weight for distance. This was AIT’s largest ever team and highest ever finishing position at these championships.

Liam Brady was crowned Irish Universities Cross Country Champion at the IUAA Championships held in Abbottstown on 4th March and led our men’s team to medals for the fourth year in a row. Our ladies team finished sixth overall and were led home by Nadine Donegan.

AIT finished fourth overall and best Institute of Technology, of twenty-three teams at the 2106 Irish Universities Outdoor T&F Championships. Gold medals went to Ian Rogers (Pole Vault), Amy McTeggart (Combined events) and Dearbhail Foley (Pole Vault). Again, this was AIT’s largest ever team and highest ever finishing position at these championships.

**WOMENS RUGBY:**

This has been a very successful year for the AIT Women’s Rugby team. After two years of building a squad, the team re-entered Division Two of the Women’s Rugby League run by Student Sport Ireland and went through the group stages of the league unbeaten and then had an emphatic victory in the semi-final against IT Sligo. The team also entered the Intervarsity competition hosted by NUIG and played in Division One against the top league sides acquitting themselves very well. The team is made up of a blend of experienced players and players new to the game and with an influx of new players again next year, the future looks bright for AIT Women’s Rugby.

**MENS BASKETBALL:**

The Men’s team maintained the division two status in the College League. The team was unlucky to come out the wrong end of some close games, losing three by a combined nine points. They finished the Club League in second place, AIT’s highest ever finish.

**GAA:**

During the academic year 2016-2017, AIT GAA Club fielded ten teams in national competitions. As always, participation levels were very high with access to GAA games available to all levels of players. Last season the Men’s GAA teams played in the highest division and at the highest levels and competed very well considering AIT has a relatively small student population.

The Hurling Club competed in the Ryan Cup but after a good League campaign, disappointed in the championship when drawn against very superior teams such as the Garda College.

The growth of the Ladies GAA Club in AIT was rewarded with both our Giles and Donaghy Cup teams contesting League finals, winning the Giles and losing the Donaghy to a strong LIT first team. In the championship, both of the Ladies teams did AIT proud. The Giles Cup team lost narrowly to DCU in the final.

In addition, during 2016-2017, AIT fielded two International Students GAA teams who participated in a GAA Blitz Day in UL with both teams reaching group finals.
Inaugural Scholarship of Excellence Awards
Recognising 1st Year Students who Achieved 500+ points in Leaving Certificate

AIT celebrated the success of the inaugural recipients of its Scholarships of Excellence, which were awarded to a select group of first-year students at a special ceremony on Wednesday 23rd November, in recognition of the high points they achieved in their leaving certificate examinations.

In October of this year, AIT were awarded the coveted prize of the “Sunday Times Institute of Technology of the Year – Runner Up 2017”, an achievement which AIT are very proud of. The Scholarships of Excellence were inaugurated to celebrate its students achieving 500 points or more in their leaving certificate examinations.

Professor Ciarán Ó Catháin said, “These scholarships are a great way for us to congratulate our students on their academic endeavor and show that we are supporting them in their academic journey here in the institute.”

Speaking at the ceremony AIT President Professor Ciarán Ó Catháin said, “I am delighted and proud to present these inaugural scholarships to our six recipients in recognition of their hard work and outstanding academic achievements in their leaving certificate results. It is also an opportunity to recognise and give credit to their parents, teachers, principals and guidance counsellors who all played an important role in nurturing and assisting these students in their achievements.”

President Ó Catháin added that AIT is a growing, internationally diverse community with global reach that continues to expand. We stand at the forefront of innovation, teaching and student welfare and we are proud that each of these students have chosen to start their third level education journey with us.

This year’s Scholarship of Excellence recipients were:
- Nicole Mooney – 530, BA (Hons) in Accounting
  Killina Secondary School, Rahan, Co Offaly
- Dayna Mc Callion – 510, BA Business (Hons) in Law
  Colaiste Mhuire, Ballygar, Co Galway
- Gavin Murray – 505, BA (Hons) Accounting
  Moate Community School, Moate, Co Westmeath
- Shannon Lawless-Molyneux – 505, BSc in Veterinary Nursing
  St Joseph’s Secondary School, Rochfortbridge, Co Westmeath
- Maria Foran – 505, BSc in Health Science and Nutrition
  St Mary’s Secondary School, Edenderry, Co Offaly
- Eva Camon – 500, BSc (Hons) in General Nursing
  St Rynagh’s Community College, Banagher, Co Offaly
AIT Scoops “The Sunday Times Institute of Technology of the Year” Runner Up – 2017

After a competitive submission from AIT back in July, the Institute received notification at the start of October that AIT had scooped the coveted prize of the “Sunday Times Institute of Technology of the Year – Runner Up 2017”, moving one place up the ranking and finishing 10th this year of all Institutes nationally in the league table.

AIT’s leading position in graduate employability, strong applied research and raising academic performance were among the reasons for the awards announced today. The Sunday Times commented that it is a reflection of AIT’s high academic standing combined with the fact that AIT has been granted the authority to award PhDs in software engineering and network communications this year, in addition to the current areas of polymer engineering, microbiology and toxicology.

Government departments are increasingly looking to AIT to develop and boost jobs in the Midlands, and to improve production outputs. This year, the Department of agriculture, food and marine is funding a project run by AIT and NUI Galway to upgrade management and efficiency at inland aquaculture sites.

Commenting on the award, President of AIT, Professor Ciarán Ó'Catháin said, “This award recognises the significant contribution, hard work and dedication of all of our staff across the Institute, in making AIT a fantastic Institute for our students, our staff, our stakeholders and the wider community in the Midlands region. We are a small but growing community that continues to expand as we drive forward to be a leader in the IoT sector in innovation, teaching, applied research and student welfare. We set out the vision of the type of higher education Institute we wanted to be in our Strategic Plan 2014/18 and we are well on the route to fully realising that vision and this award today is part of that. AIT is an Institute that continues to adapt and this achievement will add to our bid in making the case for a standalone Technological University in the Midlands.”

91% of the graduate class of 2015 were employed, either in training or in further study 6 months after graduation, which is a further testament to AITs innovative approach and close links with industry.

AIT Nursing Students Engage with Nurture Africa

Ten general nursing students and two academic staff, Dr Des Cawley and Mr Tommy Healy, travelled to Uganda in an overseas volunteering capacity on a programme managed by the Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) Nurture Africa in June and July 2016. It must be acknowledged that the students empiric nursing knowledge, enthusiasm, and general willingness to engage fully each day with the work posed added much value to the work of the organisation (NGO). The whole experience was positive, humbling, gratifying and very worthwhile. It was an excellent experience for students themselves and they would give testament to the benefits accrued.

The volunteer team participated in HBCT training at the laboratory in Nurture Africa facilitated by staff there. This training provided detailed theory and practical skills about HIV screening and included safety precautions in managing the screening and care of client for HIV screening.

The HIV Community Clinics and the School Educational Visits (Health Promotion etc.) were most enjoyable and worthwhile for all. The home-visits and sustainable living projects were very educational for the group and notwithstanding some volunteers’ emotional difficulties at witnessing poverty, ill health, child neglect and abuse; everyone was amazed at the dignity and resilience of the African people in the face of such negative life experience.

All volunteers assisted in the IT recording of service user engagement with the clinic, which clearly demonstrated the close monitoring of the service user experience of care. Finally, a trip to Hope Springs
Haven, where the aim is to increase the knowledge of HIV/AIDS among the vulnerable girls, their families and communities thereby enabling them make informed and healthy life choices as well as receiving appropriate care, formed a most enlightening experience.

At the end of the placement, the group attended an event in the Irish Embassy, which provided a very welcome diversion from the daily routines of work, and this visit enabled the AIT volunteers to meet with and interact with personnel from other Irish NGOs. The Irish Ambassador, Mr Donal Cronin and the Minister for the Diaspora and Overseas Aid, Mr Joe McHugh were both very complementary to, and singled out the Staff and Student volunteers from AIT for their endeavors on this trip and complemented the young nurses for their engagement. This was a great honour and was most beneficial to the students who can now appreciate a wider view on global volunteerism.

Alumni award
The 2016 AIT Polymer Engineering Alumni award went to Mr Pat Whyte. Pat Whyte, a graduate of AIT Polymer Department in 1982, is Managing Director at Irish Micro Mouldings (IMM), one of Ireland’s most influential and cutting edge medical device manufacturers. Pat has served in key positions in the plastics industry, including consultancy for Mannesman Demag and Director of Screentech prior to its sale to Creganna. Pat is a dynamic and passionate advocate for the polymer industry in Ireland and this award recognises his immense contributions to that field since his graduation from Athlone IT. He is a vital and influential figure in the Irish Plastics Industry; helping to create and shape the medical precision moulding arena; working closely with educational institutions to ensure graduates have the necessary skills and core competencies to succeed in this challenging sector and serving on bodies such as the Institute of Materials Plastics Division.

AIT Athletics Grand Prix 2017

Our ambition for the International Grand Prix this year was to continue to grow the event and bring it to a new level in the world indoor rankings. This year’s event, which was our fourth, has elevated us from a position of 14th to 11th in the best indoor athletics meets in the world in a field of over 600 events, an accolade of which we are very proud.

The event garnered significant coverage in the media on a national level but also featured prominently in international media and social conversations. Our TV highlights package was broadcast across Irish and European outlets along with the event being live steamed on YouTube. It is clear from the feedback and correspondence we are receiving post-event, that the AIT International Grand Prix is regarded as a major Irish & International sporting success.

We will continue to build on the positive sentiment and energy in the coming years.
**AIT Students’ Union**

“Your Welfare Week” – “Blindboy”

The Students’ Union organised “Your Welfare Week” which focused on awareness around Mental, Sexual and Physical Health. The event ran the course of the week with activities in all areas of the college campus. The highlight of the week was the “Your Welfare Fair” which gave students an opportunity for students to meet and interact with outside agencies in these three particular fields. Over 20 organisations were present on the day.

Keynote speaker, “Blindboy” of the Rubberbandits spoke about his experiences with anxiety and gave helpful tips and tricks, to the students and staff present with regard to the use of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT). In addition, the Institutes’ counselling service offered a workshop the following day on CBT, which was very well attended.

**Mental Health Talk – Niall “Bressie” Breslin**

AIT Students Union, with thanks to our partners in the AIT branch of Bank of Ireland, were delighted to host Bressie, for the second time in two years. Bressie spoke about his own struggles as a college student and the battles he continues to face as a popular music artist. A huge crowd packed the Students’ Union to hear him speak and answer questions for nearly two hours.

**BIOSCIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTE**

The BRI is pleased to congratulate 3 new Visiting Research Fellows to Athlone Institute of Technology, namely Dr Eoghan Clifford (NUI Galway), Professor Deborah Power (University of Algarve, Portugal) and Mr Seán O’ Laoide (County Veterinary Officer Westmeath County Council and Head of Veterinary function).

These external experts will work closely with Professor Neil Rowan and the BRI Steering Group to advise on strategic direction and progression of the research institute in terms of research, innovation and enterprise activities. These appointments will facilitate networking and the forging of important collaborative links regionally, nationally and internationally in areas of strategic research importance. Other important activities associated with these Visiting Research Fellowships include inter alia assisting in preparation of research funding proposals as Co-PI/collaborators; assisting with the review of postgraduate education and providing formal/informal invited lectures at AIT.

Dr Eoghan Clifford, currently a lecturer in Civil Engineering, NUI Galway with 15 years’ experience in the areas of water, wastewater and sustainable transport. Eoghan manages research funding of about €5m, where he coordinates and partners on various H2020 projects in this area, such as Waternomics worth €2.95 million. He currently manages a team of three postdoctoral researchers, 2 Research Fellows, 1 research assistant, seven PhD students, and two MEngSc students. He collaborates with BRI on DAFM and EPA projects, such as the highly successfully aquaculture project (www.morefish.ie) Eoghan recently won gold cycling in the 2016 Rio Paralympics. Dr Clifford has already met with staff, on time release for research, in the sports science and rehabilitation areas to impart knowledge from his Olympic training, participation and recovery experiences.

Seán O’ Laoide, is currently the County Veterinary Officer, Westmeath County Council and Head of Veterinary Function. He manages and supervises Veterinary Public Health team delivering Service Contract with Food
Safety Authority of Ireland. Sean participates in Environment Sector Management team with specific responsibility for water quality, which includes representation at Shannon International River Basin District management meetings to facilitating planning for WFD. He participates as expert in animal welfare, feed/food safety and animal health for EU. Sean I currently president of the Union of European Veterinary Hygienists; Chairman of Euro FAWC (European forum of animal welfare councils); Irish representative at the European Forum of Welfare Councils. Séan has provided valuable contributions and advice to DAFM and EPA projects and is assisting with the shaping of pending research grant applications for the BRI.

Professor Deborah Power, is currently Director of the Department of Biology and Engineering and holds Professorial chair in Environmental Toxicology, University of Algarve, Portugal. She has Scopus H factor of 35 with over 250 publication is leading toxicology journals and is Editor-in-Chief, General and Comparative Endocrinology (Elsevier Netherlands). Deborah is also a Visiting Professor, Department of Zoophysiology, University of Gothenburg, Sweden and Visiting Professor, University of Shanghai, China. Prof Power is a member of the Comparative Endocrinology and Integrative Biology group (5 Investigators; 6 Postdocs; 7 PhDs; 4 MSc) in Centre for Marine Sciences. Deborah is Vice-Chair for Marie-Sklodowska-Curie Fellowships (Environment) and has collaborated with BRI on previous EU Interreg Sharebiotech project. Prof Power has placed MSc by Research students in the BRI as part of their Erasmus training programme and is currently collaborating on writing of new grant applications for JPI and H2020 for 2017.

Can Ireland can respond to the uncertainty created by the changing international economic environment by pursuing a ‘skills incentivisation strategy’?

The Irish Times published an article by Head of Department of Business and Management Mr Owen Ross on 27 April 2017. The article suggests that Ireland can respond to the uncertainty created by the changing international economic environment by pursuing a ‘skills incentivisation strategy’ that develops school leavers into the most highly skilled graduate workforce on the planet. The full article can be accessed via the following link: http://www.irishtimes.com/news/education/we-should-cut-college-fees-for-courses-linked-to-skills-shortages-1.3027498

Following publication of the article, Owen spoke with Newstalk’s Pat Kenny on his radio programme on 13 April. During the interview, Owen discussed how, if Ireland was to lose its corporate tax rate advantage, a ‘skills incentivisation strategy’ could form a contingency plan if it were to happen.

Engagement with Roscommon County Council

The Institute through the Office for Strategic Planning & Institutional Performance and collaboration with Dr Mary McDonnell Naughton, lecturer in Nursing and Health Science have engaged with Roscommon County Council in relation to both an Age Friendly Initiative and Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme in the Monksland area. Monksland is one of the fastest growing new urban areas in the country with little or no community infrastructure. It is the aim of this group, that through partnership, a body of research can be conducted, which will foster engagement informing Roscommon County Council, Monksland community and Roscommon Leader in their endeavours to maintain a vibrant, attractive and sustainable area which will continue to focus on social and economic growth, while addressing the deficit in provision of facilities for ‘Recreation and Amenity’ as well as ‘Community and Education’.
CONFIRM CENTRE FOR SMART MANUFACTURING
Since early 2016, AIT has been part of a HEI/RPO Consortium led by UL-Tyndall which has developed and submitted a €47m (SFI €25m, Industry cash €8m, Industry in-kind €14m) proposal focused on Advanced Manufacturing under SFI’s Research Centres Programme Call 2016. CONFIRM’s vision is to transform and grow Irish manufacturing by integrating intelligence within products, machines, production systems and supply chains. AIT is involved in or leading a significant number of the Centre’s proposed Work Packages and Targeted Projects. On 10th February the Consortium held a Workshop to collectively determine with industry partners the potential impact of Smart Manufacturing and Industry 4.0 to Irish Industry. The Consortium presented to an SFI Impact Panel on 2nd March.

Recycled polymer | Commercialisation
The MRI research team have engaged in the commercialisation of a new grade of recycled polymer material. March 2017 saw the successful processing trials take place in Italy, by MRI staff members Michael Hopkins Jnr and Crevan O Donnell. This material has been developed as part of an Enterprise Ireland funded commercialisation project over the past 3yrs with the help of the national polymer-processing centre (APT) which is also situated on campus in AIT. This material is in its latter stages of commercialisation, which will see Irish companies availing of this new material by the end of 2018.

AIT Showcase Video
On the 13th June, after a couple of months in the making we were very proud to launch AIT’s new video showcasing our institute, as we see it and experience it every day. The video was created to tie in with our CAO 2017 campaign in order to give people a little glimpse into the world of AIT and to try to encourage people to step in and explore our world to discover theirs. The concept of the video was to show all of the elements of our institute that make it an amazing place at which to study. The video captured the spirit of the different elements and received great reaction on its release.

AIT International Video Showcase
On 19th July we proudly launched the AIT International Student Experience video, which succeeded in capturing the spirit of our international students and why they choose AIT to study in. A wonderful group of international students share their stories and experiences, which show why AIT is a unique and popular destination for these students.
Athlone Institute of Technology

Consolidated Statement of Comprehensive Income
Year ended 31 August 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Note</th>
<th>Consolidated 2017</th>
<th>Institute 2017</th>
<th>Consolidated 2016</th>
<th>Institute 2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31/08/17 €000's</td>
<td>31/08/17 €000's</td>
<td>31/08/16 €000's</td>
<td>31/08/16 €000's</td>
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<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>State Grants</td>
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<td>18,925</td>
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<td>Tuition Fees and Student Contribution</td>
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<td>16,097</td>
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<td>Research Grants &amp; Contracts</td>
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<td>4,164</td>
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<td>Student Support Funding</td>
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<td>601</td>
<td>537</td>
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<td>Other Income</td>
<td>8</td>
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<td>Amortisation of Deferred Capital Grants</td>
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<td>2,782</td>
<td>2,897</td>
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<td>Interest Income</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>29</td>
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<td>Deferred Pension Funding</td>
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<td>11,736</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Income</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>57,322</td>
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<tr>
<td>Expenditure</td>
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<td>Staff Costs</td>
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<td>Retirement Benefit Cost</td>
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<td>9,470</td>
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<td>Other Operating Expenses</td>
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<td>Total Expenditure</td>
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<td></td>
<td>50,309</td>
<td>57,642</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Deficit)/Surplus before other gains and losses</td>
<td>(149)</td>
<td>(341)</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>316</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Experience (losses)/gains on retirement benefit obligations
- Changes in assumptions underlying the present value of retirement benefit obligations
- Total actuarial gains/(losses) in the year
- Adjustment to deferred retirement benefits funding
- Total comprehensive (loss)/income for the year

The Consolidated Statement of Comprehensive Income includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

Notes 1-27 form part of these financial statements.

Signed on behalf of the Governing Body

Chairman: Mr. Frank Ryan

Data: 5/12/18

President: Prof. Charles O'Cathasaigh
Athlone Institute of Technology

Consolidated and Institute Statement of Financial Position
Year ended 31 August 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Note</th>
<th>Consolidated 31/08/2017</th>
<th>Consolidated 31/08/2016</th>
<th>Institute 31/08/2017</th>
<th>Institute 31/08/2016</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td></td>
<td>£000's</td>
<td>£000's</td>
<td>£000's</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fixed Assets</td>
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<td>Property, Plant &amp; Equipment</td>
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<td>Current Assets</td>
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<td>Inventory</td>
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<td>Receivables</td>
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<td>Cash and Cash Equivalents</td>
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<td>Less Payables: amounts falling due within one year</td>
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<td>(6,263)</td>
<td>(7,146)</td>
<td>(7,896)</td>
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<td>Net Current Assets</td>
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<td>Total Assets less Current Liabilities</td>
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<td>93,834</td>
<td>78,133</td>
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<tr>
<td>Less Payables: amounts falling due after more than one year</td>
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<td>(183)</td>
<td>(405)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Provision for Amounts &amp; Charges: Retirement Benefits</td>
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<tr>
<td>Retirement Benefit Obligations</td>
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<td>(170,192)</td>
<td>(179,065)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deferred Retirement Benefit Funding Asset</td>
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<td>170,192</td>
<td>179,065</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Net Assets</td>
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<td>Unrestricted Reserves</td>
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<td>Income &amp; Expenditure Reserve</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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<td>14,732</td>
<td>2,616</td>
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</table>

Notes 1-27 form part of these Financial Statements.

Signed on behalf of the Governing Body

[Signature]

Date 5/11/18

[Signature]

Date 5/12/18

Page 9
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Governing Body Member</th>
<th>Expenses</th>
<th>Fees (Interviews etc.)</th>
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<td>Ryan, Colette</td>
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<td>Talty, Geraldine</td>
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</table>

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Dublin Road
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Co Westmeath N37 HD68
Ireland

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web www.ait.ie