



Do Not Try This At Home:

Letting Researchers Own Research

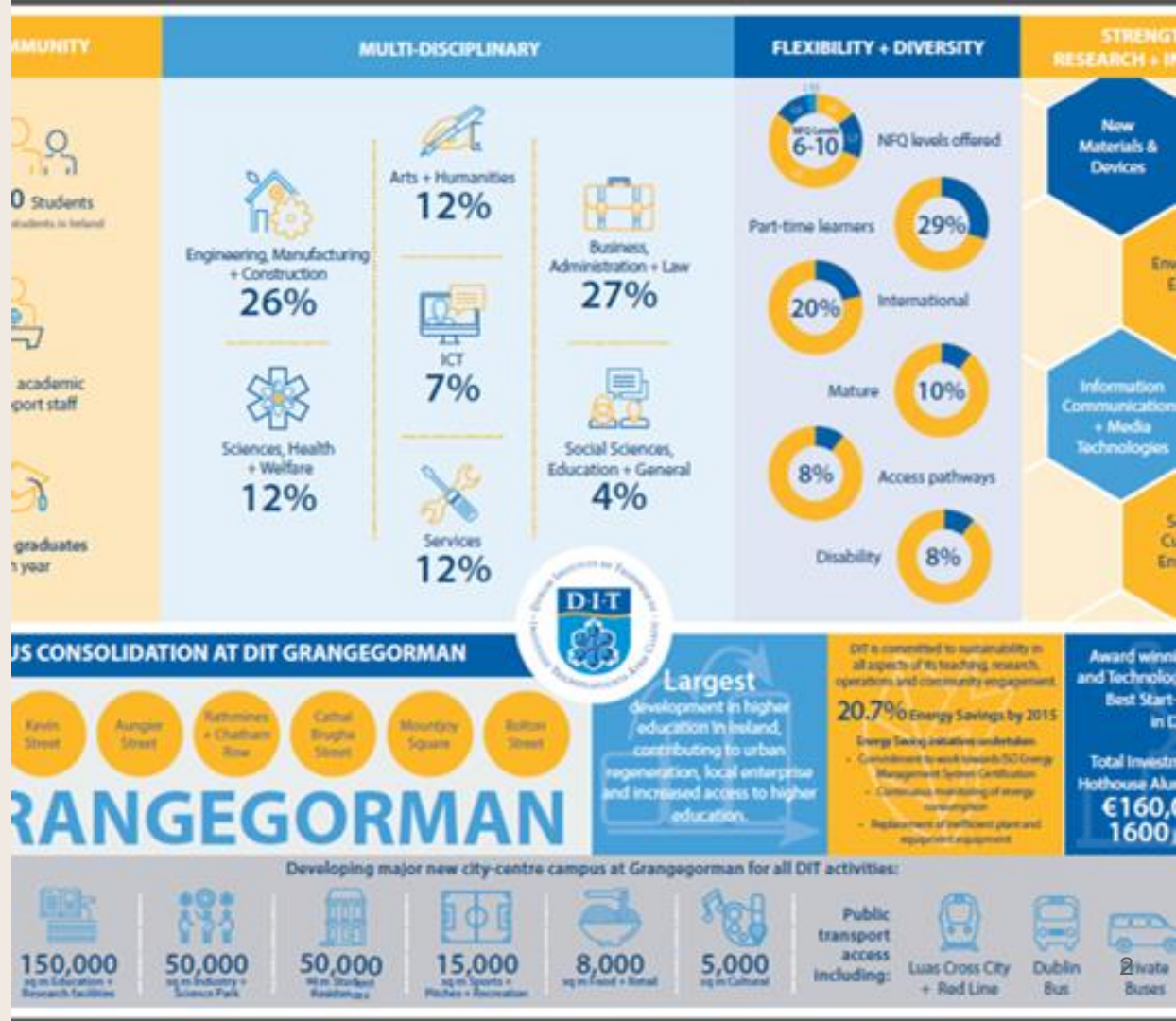
Dr John Donovan, Head of Research, Dublin Institute of Technology, Ireland.

john.donovan@dit.ie, @JTJDonovan

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DIT Facts and Figures

- Established 1992
- Merger of 5 Technical Institutes
- Devolved Awarding Authority
- 80% unique provision
- 3 Major change projects;
 - Grangegorman New Campus (€1.6b);
 - TU Designation;
 - 3 into 1 merger.



DIT and Research

Success depends on these indicators

- Research Strengths
- PhD Numbers
- Staff with a terminal degree
- Research Active Staff



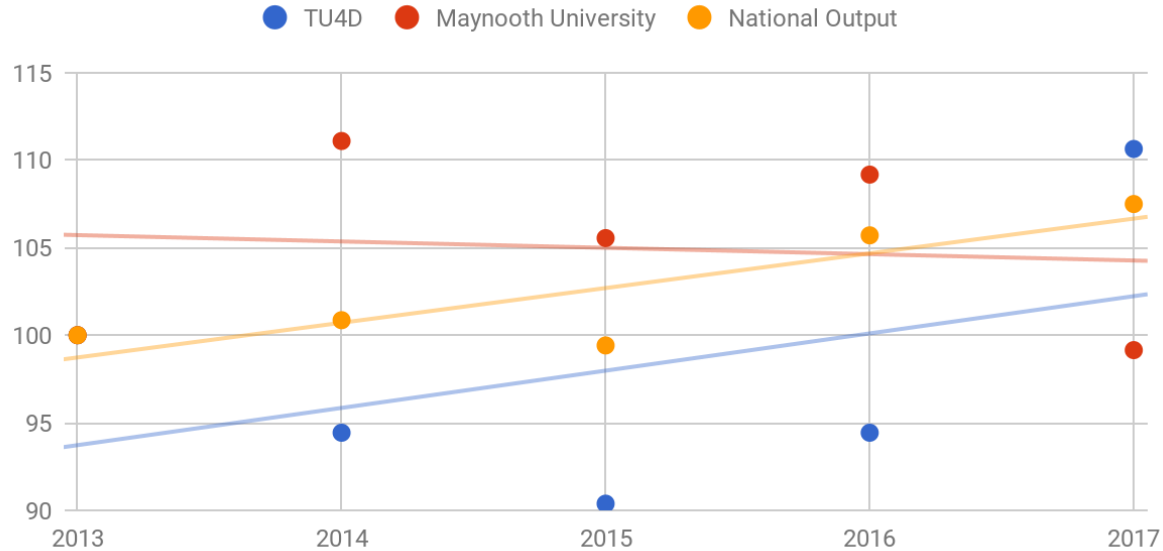


**...build a brand new
Research Culture...**

Where is our culture now? (aka how active are we?)

The Rate of Change in Publication Numbers (indexed to 2013)

SciVal March 27th 2018



What to do *(...to drive academics into doing research)?*

- Central Planning
- Complete decentralisation...

...or is there a middle way



‘Centrally Planned’ Research



- Seen as ‘Command and Control’
- Mandated a ‘Research Plan’ which means very little buy-in and lots of resentment
- Disconnected Teaching and Research

... how did it go?

...what could possibly go wrong?

Directorate of External Affairs became 'the secret police'


You can't tell academics what research they should do - they will let you know quickly and loudly how much they don't like it!

Research Centre, what research centre?


You want me to answer to an administrator? Really?



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A new paradigm - 'Empowering our Schools'



- Objective
 - Promote a sustainable culture change in **schools**, facilitating engagement by staff in research
- Structure
 - RO provides resources and acts as the executive agency
 - Modelled on a regular funding programme
 - Schools define their own programme of research support activities
 - ***International Bounded crowdsourcing*** evaluation in 3 criteria Excellence, Implementation and Impact (including sustainability)



Learned some bitter lessons

- The cost of control scales as a square (at least) of the activity you need to control
- Research offices cannot control everything (so why try?)
- Administrators cannot lead research

Some Sweet Lessons

- The Research Community is more than just PIs and their groups, it's an ecosystem of people and systems.
- Remembering to share the same language is important.
- What do we in the RO do (and what we don't do).



Clarity



The 'Empowering our Schools' was also a great opportunity for DIT to clarify what

it meant by;

- Research
- Research Capacity
- Research Capability
- Research Outputs
- Research Outcomes
- Research Impacts and Sustainability
- Etc.

We publish a set of definitions that we use

Research Principles

- Research activity is an expectation by staff that is legitimate.
- Independence of investigation within an overall TU4D Strategy.
- All teaching at all levels is research informed.
- Activity drives infrastructure.
- Achieving scale is important
- The most important research unit in the TU4D will be the researcher.
- Subsidiarity (decisions and controls should happen at the level closest to that at which they are relevant)



Implications for RO

What does the RO need to do to change its own culture?

1. Advocacy (internal and external)
2. Prospecting (proactively identifying opportunities that the institute should exploit)
3. Proposal development (working with PIs to develop winning proposals)
4. Transition from pre-award to post-award (contract negotiations, 'setting up the project')
5. Project execution
6. Data management and and archiving
7. Exploitation (includes sustainability, commercialisation, dissemination)
8. Project closure
9. Institutional research data tracking
10. HR and student management



New RO Support Investments

- 2 Strategic research proposal coordinators (not writers) providing support in the preparation of bids of scale
- Additional postaward support (particularly around financial reporting)
- Revised 'Indirect Cost' investment plan
- 'Academic Leaders' to bring the community of PIs together in 4 research themes
- Continued investment in the most successful TTO in Europe





Thank You

*Dr. John Donovan,
Head of Research and LEAR
Research, Enterprise, and Innovation
Services,
5th Floor,
Dublin Institute of Technology,
Park House
191 - 193a North Circular Road,
Dublin 7,
D07 EWV4,
Ireland.*