

# CUA NEWSLETTER

**WORKING TOGETHER TOWARDS A  
TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY**

CONNACHT-ULSTER  
ALLIANCE 

ISSUE 1



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**Welcome from Dr Seán Duffy  
CUA Executive Project Lead**



# CUA meets TU submission criteria



*Cover of the CUA submission document.*

The CUA is delighted to state that the criteria for TU designation, as specified in the Technological Universities Act 2018, has been met by the three institutes. Section 28 of the TU Act (2018) states that applicant institutes shall comply with a series of eligibility criteria in order to become a TU. In part preparation for the submission of an application, the three CUA institutes engaged Deloitte Consultants and Auditors to undertake a preliminary review of the CUA TU metrics, conducted between October and December last year (2020).

Deloitte assessed the methodology applied under each of the legislative references of the TU Act 2018 and compared their results to those set out by the CUA. The Act details specific targets relating to percentage of - research students; flexible, industry, and part time programmes; staff qualifications and research capacity. The independent audit shows that the CUA meets the statutory criteria for designation as a TU.

## Due diligence reviews completed



*Paul Hannigan, President LYIT, Dr Brendan McCormack, President IT Sligo, Martin Cronin, Chairman CUA, Dr Seán Duffy, CUA Executive Project Lead, Dr Orla Flynn, President, GMIT.*

The TU will be a new academic entity that will build on the complementary strengths of the three partner institutions and will drive sustainable economic, social and regional development in the West and North-West. The institutes developed an implementation plan outlining the application process and the transition to TU status.

As part of this plan the CUA procured Mazars Consulting professional services to complete legal, financial, corporate governance and HR due diligence, to ensure the new TU would not be burdened with unforeseen issues. The process was conducted

over a six month period which began in March 2020. A legal due diligence review was also conducted by KOSI Corporation over a six-month period, from April.

Mazars concluded their report stating;

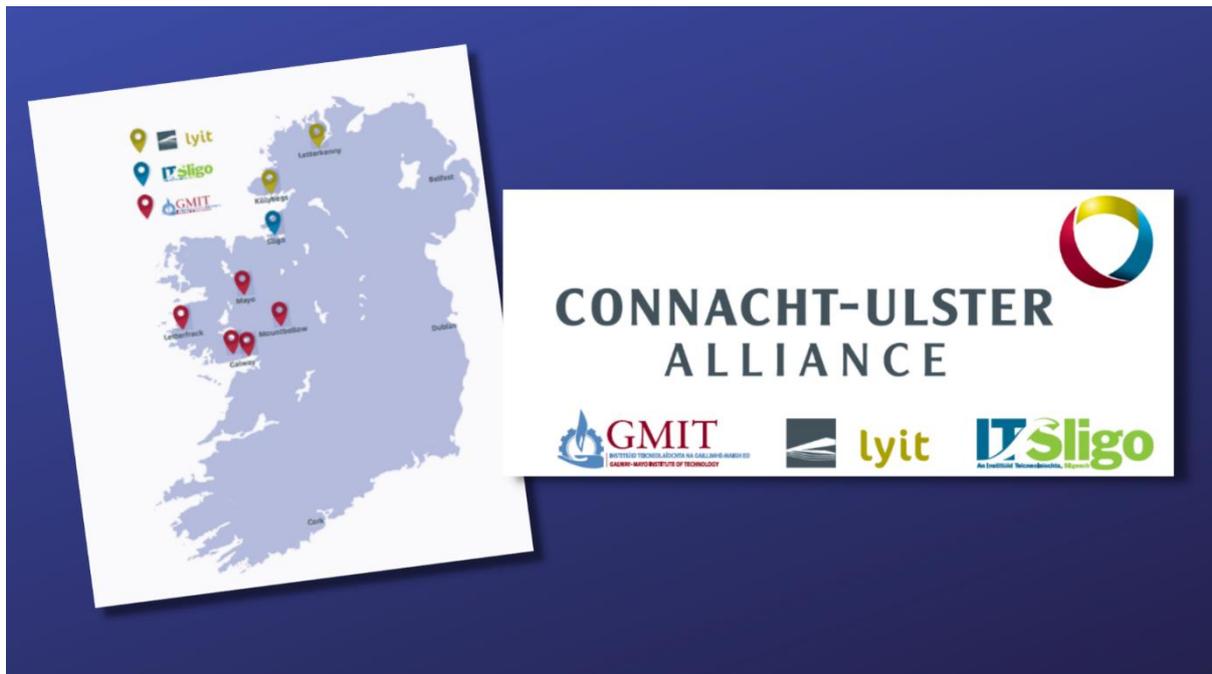
*"... we did not see anything in the areas examined that would pose serious concerns for the TU application. Moreover, over the six months of the project, we saw credible evidence of cross-institute teamwork. This is noteworthy as, whilst this exercise is entirely separate to the formal TU submission process, it can provide demonstrable evidence to the International Panel that the three partners are already acting in concert and that the cultural antecedents of a new TU are already in place."*

KOSI Corporation stated;

*"Notwithstanding that issues within Institutes and inconsistencies in processes and practices between institutes have been reported, no systemic issues have been identified during the legal due diligence review which would fundamentally undermine the partnership's proposed application for TU status."*

Both due diligence reports included key observations and recommendations for the CUA Institutes. The next stage will be the development of an action plan which will include risk mitigation. The plan will be implemented via the four CUA Working Groups and their respective sub-groups.

**TU name & brand goes to tender**



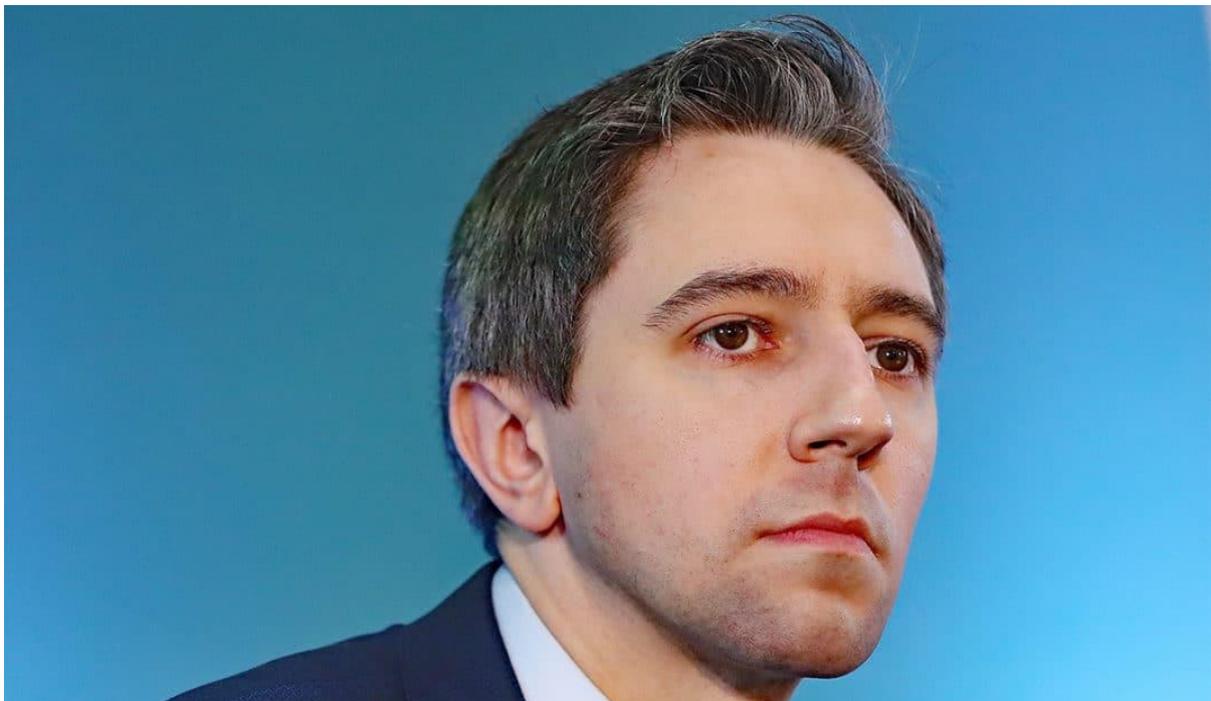
The naming and branding of the new TU will shortly be going to tender. Developing a new brand is a complex process that requires consultation with internal and external stakeholders. The TU brand will aim to best represent what stakeholders including students, staff, graduates, employers and funders expect of the TU.

The CUA had started consultation on a name with staff and students in April 2019 through an online survey, to indicate preference for one of three suggested names, and to submit an alternative name for the TU. The findings were presented to the CUA Steering Group in June of that year.

There were 2,662 responses, with 1,895 from students. A range of potential names emerged with Atlantic Technological University (ATU) being the most popular (with an overseas identity of ATU Ireland also proposed). While the survey represented very positive engagement with staff and students, the responses were limited to internal stakeholders.

As there was no substantive engagement with external stakeholders in that initial naming consultation, this tender will incorporate research with those external groups e.g. potential students, schools, guidance counsellors, public bodies, government agencies, industry partners, community, alumni, professional bodies, etc. This will explore the viability of the suggested name and a process to come up with other names. The tender process will include the development of branding criteria which will be concluded in advance of TU designation.

## CUA awarded €5.7m under TUTF



*Simon Harris, TD, Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science announces €5.7m funding for CUA*

The CUA was awarded €5.7m under Technological University Transformation funding (TUTF), as part of a new €90 million fund announced last October by the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science.

Allocated by the Higher Education Authority (HEA), the funds are to assist in the development and progression of TUs. The CUA successfully competed for and won the €5.7m funding which will cover costs arising out of:

*a) working towards designation as a TU, in line with the Technological Universities Act 2018.*

*b) developing and progressing recently designated TUs, through the implementation of recommendations set out within the TURN report.*

In its submission to the HEA's TUT Fund the CUA proposed a series of development projects that will be instrumental in preparing for and establishing the TU during the period 2020 to 2023. The key objectives of the new fund are to ensure that by 2023 the established TUs will be enabled to show evidence of:

- the highest quality of teaching and research
- increased national and international student numbers
- a consistently high-quality student experience in terms of facilities, resources and the TU environment
- retention and recruitment of the highest calibre staff to drive research and teaching agendas
- competitiveness to attract national and international research funding
- durable collaborations with industry, employers and other partners

# CUA Governing Body & Academic Council sub-committees formed



*Joint meeting of CUA Governing Bodies, Donegal November 2019*

The three CUA Governing Bodies have actively supported the CUA project since its inception in 2012. In September 2020, the CUA established a sub-committee of each of the three Governing Bodies. The Chairs of the Governing Bodies, the CUA Chair and the Institute Presidents meet on a regular basis. Following Covid-19 guidelines, meetings of the group are now held online. The group meets on a monthly basis to oversee the development of a submission to become a TU and it reports to the respective Governing Bodies on a regular basis.

The Governing Bodies met formally for the first time in November 2019 and committed to the Department of Education to meet all criteria necessary for TU designation. The governance, academic and organisational structures of the new TU are part of the planning by the three institutions toward becoming a TU. The three sub-committees operate as one group, chaired by the CUA chair, with the sole focus of bringing the new TU into existence at designation.

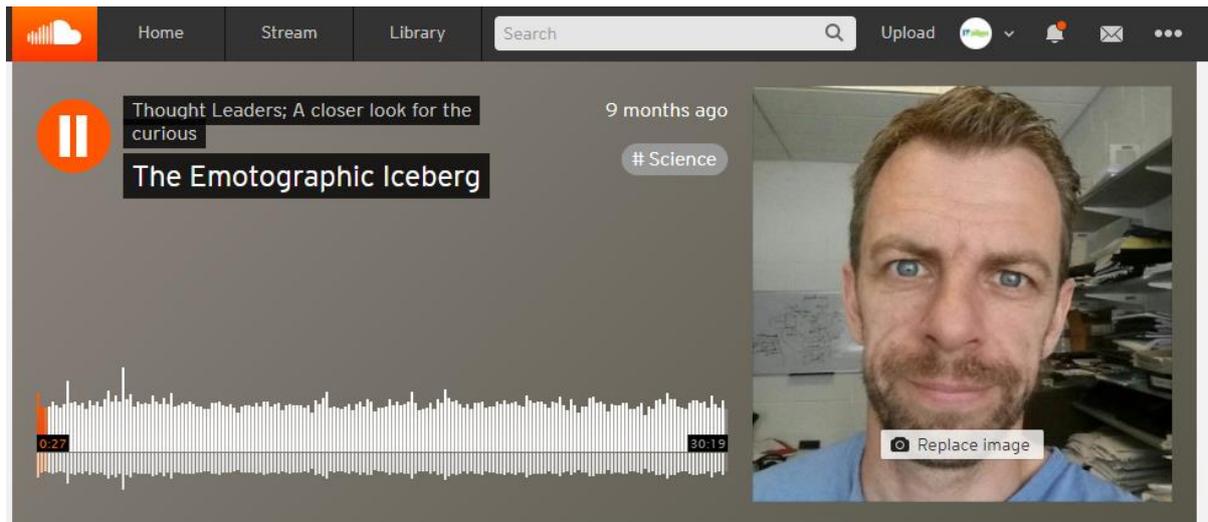
The CUA Steering Group propose establishing a sub-committee of each of the three Academic Councils (AC) to support the establishment of a TU in the region. The AC subcommittees will form part of a wider structure which includes the three Governing Body sub-committees. The membership of the AC subcommittees will comprise five members from each institute's Academic Council, the CUA presidents and VP Academic Affairs & Registrars. The group plans to meet in the near future.

The AC sub-committees will aim to promote a culture of communication and collaboration in advance of the TU vesting date. This preparation period will allow the combined sub-committees to consider the academic functions associated with a new institution.

## CUA monthly podcast

[Listen to our CUA podcasts in every issue.](#) Recorded at the CUA Research Symposium January 2020. In this issue Dr Eoghan Furey, Letterkenny Institute of Technology discusses his research titled; *The Emotographic Iceberg: Modelling Deep Emotional Affect Utilizing Intelligent Assistants and the IoT*  
Personal data has never been more valuable. The phenomenon of the Internet of

Things (IoT) has cultivated a societal shift where sensors and applications gather data relating to daily life. This data is centralized by devices such as Voice Command Devices and accessible via Intelligent Assistants such as the Amazon Echo and Alexa.





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