

Forty years of service to region

When RTC Galway opened its doors on Monday, September 18, 1972 there were 1,213 students registered on a range of courses designed for trade and industry. As GMIT marks its 40th anniversary this academic year, the Institute continues to respond to the needs of the region despite uncertain times, providing quality third level education to almost 8,000 students in a range of disciplines across five campuses in Galway and Mayo.

Times were as challenging then as they are now, as GMIT President Michael Carmody tells journalist Brian McDonald in a revealing interview on page 3: “We’ve lost 13 per cent of our staff since 2008 and our budget has also been cut 12 to 13 per cent over the same period...whatever we do, it has to be the best thing for the students and graduates”.

GMIT’s hopes and plans for the future and the many achievements of students and staff in all of its campuses are laid out across these pages under themes reflecting the five pillars of the Institute’s Strategic Development Plan 2010-2015: Learning & Teaching; Community Engagement; Research & Innovation; Student Environment; and Internationalisation & Collaboration.

Former Registrar Bernard O’Hara, who retired in 2010 after 39 years of dedicated service, takes us back to GMIT’s beginnings and outlines the milestones along the way, with some very special archive photographs provided by the Connacht Tribune.

Volunteering and fund-raising have always been a huge part of student life in GMIT, with students and staff raising hundreds of thousands of euro over the years for the Galway Lions Club, Croí, RNLI and many more. Working with community partners and charity organisations is now embedded in most GMIT programmes, giving students a keen understanding of the society in which they live and the importance of being a good citizen.

GMIT is very proud of its graduates who have gone on to forge successful careers, among them furniture designer, John Lee, who came to national prominence last November when he designed and made the Presidential Inauguration Chair for Michael D Higgins’ inauguration ceremony, and Film & TV graduate, Gary Shore, who is making waves in Hollywood as a promising young film director.

GMIT has played an important role in the social, cultural and economic development of the region over the past 40 years and there is no doubt it will continue to be an invaluable contributor to Irish education in the years to come.



Regina Daly,
Editor



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Oifig an Taoisigh Office of the Taoiseach



Message from An Taoiseach, Mr Enda Kenny T.D.

I am delighted to have this opportunity to mark the 40th anniversary of the Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology and would like to offer my sincere congratulations to the staff, students and all who have been involved in the development of the Institute through the years.

Since its birth in 1972, this Institute has made a major contribution to the development of the western region, facilitating access to third-level education for so many young people from Galway, Mayo and beyond. Moreover, it has played a vital role in developing business and industry in the region.

The past 40 years have seen remarkable changes in higher education in Ireland. Third-level education has now become the norm for large numbers of young people. More and more mature men and women are returning to learning, facilitated, strategically, by GMIT.

Those years have seen GMIT numbers grow from 1,000 students to 8,000 students, working in five campuses across the region. The Castlebar campus, established in 1994, was timely and welcome, bringing new life to the town and its environs.

The new Connacht-Ulster Alliance sees Letterkenny Institute of Technology, the Institute of Technology, Sligo and GMIT, form a new strategic partnership which will be of enormous academic benefit facilitating networks between individual institutions through shared, undergraduate and postgraduate programmes.

Furthermore, I am aware of a €12.5 million National Outdoor Pursuits Academy currently being planned. If approved, this will involve building a cluster of new facilities around Lough Lannagh in Castlebar, as a joint-venture between GMIT, Mayo County Council and Castlebar Town Council.

It is an excellent example of 'community co-operation' and 'shared services' provision, an approach that is needed now more than ever.

The progress GMIT has made in the last 40 years is a tribute to the leadership and staff.

I'm confident that GMIT will lead national and regional development in the years ahead. I wish the Institute, its staff and students every fulfilment and success.

Teachtaireacht ón Taoiseach, an tUasal Enda Kenny T.D.

Is ábhar ríméid dom an deis seo a fháil 40ú comóradh bliana Institiúid Teicneolaíochta na Gaillimhe-Maigh Eo a shonrú agus ba mhian liom comhghairdeas croí a dhéanamh leis an bhfoireann, leis na neacha léinn agus le gach duine a raibh baint acu le forbairt na hInstitiúide le linn na mblianta.

Óna tús in 1972, rinne an Institiúid seo cion mór d'fhorbairt réigiún an Iarthair, agus rochtain ar an oideachas tríú leibhéal á éascú aici don oiread sin daoine óga as Gaillimh, Maigh Eo agus níos faide i gcéin. Lena chois sin, d'imir sí ról ríthábhachtach i bhforbairt gnó agus tionscail sa réigiún.

Tharla athruithe suntasacha ar an ardoideachas in Éirinn le linn na 40 bliain seo caite. Is norm anois é an t-ardoideachas do líon mór daoine óga. Níos mó agus níos mó tá fir agus mná lánfhásta ag filleadh ar an léann agus é sin á éascú go straitéiseach ag GMIT.

I gcaitheamh na mblianta sin d'fhás líon na neach léinn ó 1,000 go 8,000 neach léinn i gcúig champas ar fud an réigiúin. Cuireadh fáilte roimh theacht in am tráth do Champas Chaisleán an Bharraigh (1994), rud a chuir beocht sa bhaile agus sa cheantar máguaird.

Leis an gComhaontas Chonnacht-Uladh déanfaidh Institiúid Teicneolaíochta Leitir Ceanainn, Institiúid Teicneolaíochta Shligigh agus GMIT comhpháirtíocht nua straitéiseach a rachaidh chun tairbhe go mór do chúrsaí acadúla, agus gréasán á éascú aige idir na hinstitiúidí ar leith trí chomhchláir fhochéime agus iarchéime.

Chomh maith leis sin, is eol dom Acadamh Náisiúnta Gníomhaíochtaí Allamuigh ar chostas €12.5m a bheith á phleanáil faoi láthair. Má fhaomhtar é, is é a bheidh i gceist cnuasach saoráidí nua a tógáil thart timpeall ar Loch Chaisleán an Bharraigh mar chomhfhiontar idir GMIT, Comhairle Contae Mhaigh Eo agus Comhairle Baile Chaisleán an Bharraigh.

Eiseamláir iontach é sin den soláthar don 'chomhoibriú pobail' agus do na 'seirbhísí i gcomhar', ar cur chuige é a bhfuil gá níos mó ná riamh leis.

Is a bhuí don cheannaireacht agus don fhoireann a rinne GMIT an dul chun cinn sin sna 40 bliain seo caite.

Táim cinnte go mbeidh GMIT ar thús cadhnaíochta i gcúrsaí forbartha go náisiúnta agus go réigiúnach sna blianta atá romhainn. Guím sonas agus rath thar na bearta ar an Institiúid agus ar a cuid foirne agus neach léinn.

TESting times are being met head-on

BY BRIAN McDONALD

Michael Carmody is too polite to directly quote US political consultant James Carville, the man credited with devising the strategy that saw Bill Clinton win the 1992 US Presidential election. But he might well have done when asked about the biggest challenge facing GMIT right now.



GMIT chief charts an ambitious future

Carville’s response to the Clinton campaign team 20 years ago was “The Economy Stupid” and TES has since taken its place in the lexicon of non-nonsense insights into difficult times.

It’s inescapable, the GMIT President simply notes, as he reflects on the reality of running the biggest Institute of Technology on the western seaboard. “We’ve lost 13 per cent of our staff since 2008 and our budget has also been cut 12-13pc over the same period”.

Throw in the series of wage-cuts applied across the public sector, top off with the requirement for two hours extra teaching per week as required under the Croke Park Agreement and you begin to get an idea of the scale of the task that greeted the Salthill native when he succeeded Marion Coy in April of last year.

Right now he’s trying to juggle an annual budget of 50 million euro, provide leadership and vision to 620 staff and see to it that 8,000 students across five campuses get the third-level education to which they are entitled. But it’s a challenge he relishes and the reason he called time on his ten-year tenure as President of IT Tralee. Arriving at GMIT was also, of course, a homecoming as he grew up on Dalysfort Road, attended Scoil Iognaid NS and later Colaiste Iognaid, before qualifying as a civil engineer at UCG and afterwards gaining an MEngSc.

He worked with the Office of Public Works and subsequently with the ESB on the design and project management of the Moneypoint power station construction project in Co Clare before entering the world of academia in 1987. Three years as lecturer at IT Tralee were followed by his appointment as Head of the Department of Civil Engineering and

in 1993 he became the first Registrar of the Institute. His decade-long term as President of ITT began in 2001.

“GMIT is a bigger operation, It’s twice the size of Tralee and it’s spread over five campuses, so it’s a different dynamic. It tends to run itself like a big liner and moves steadily along in a certain direction.

“The five campuses are quite different. The two campuses based in Galway have a natural advantage in being located in a city which is a very popular destination for students but that can perhaps lead to a degree of complacency. Castlebar, on the other hand, has about 800 full-time students and it tends to be more adaptable and open to change and try new things, because they’re in a smaller environment.

‘The challenge here... is we are becoming fee collectors’

“There is also a much bigger mature student population in Castlebar and a lot of module-sharing and cross-disciplinary activity. The Letterfrack and Mountbellew campuses on the other hand offer specialist programmes and have a close-knit student and academic community as a result.

“I had known a lot of the staff over the years in GMIT and was familiar with it (GMIT). I found the staff really positive when I came here. I went around to the five campuses and had a number of meetings with the staff and I must say I found them very supportive—a very committed group”.

‘Ultimately, whatever we do, it has to be the best thing for the students and graduates—that’s the bottom line.’

GMIT is certainly going to need that continuing commitment as there is more pain on the way. Michael Carmody is under no illusions about what lies ahead.

“There are more cuts coming down the line in 2013 and 2014 and there are so many things that we have to do. The academic staff are doing an extra two hours lecturing under Croke Park and, while that’s a productivity gain, they have less time to devote to other things we’d like them to be involved in.

“We want to expand our international activities, we need to get more involved in research and innovation with industry and we’re trying to develop new types of programmes of work for workforce upskilling. All of these challenges have to be met and we’re doing them with less staff and more financial constraints, so it’s very difficult.”

It’s very difficult for students too, he readily acknowledges. The increase in student fees (described as contributions) in last December’s budget, has posed grave problems for the undergraduates and their families themselves—and for GMIT. The student contribution now stands at €2,250 and the impact is being sorely felt. All third-level institutions have attempted to point out that this is not extra funding. There has simply been a shift in State funding—instead of the State writing the cheque, the students have to write it.

“The challenge here, and we’re only beginning to appreciate it, is that we are now becoming fee collectors. When the amount was small, it wasn’t an issue because people just paid it, but we are now seeing defaults on it. The difficulty, of course, is trying to get the fee in while also trying to keep the students on the programme which is of course the primary objective. Effectively, it has become a huge issue for us. We’ve become collection agents, which is putting huge resources—which we haven’t got—into trying to collect the money”.

Yet another major task facing GMIT over the next decade is the inevitable drive towards Technological University status. The Governing Body

of GMIT has made it clear that it is the ambition to achieve TU designation, but this will require a merger with at least one other similar institute in order to meet the first of a series of demanding criteria put in place by the Higher Education Authority.

“At this stage we would see Sligo and Letterkenny as the obvious partners. But it is very early days yet and the first thing we are doing is carrying out a feasibility plan to see what is involved for us in becoming a TU and how long that could take.



“It will be at least five years. We couldn’t see it happening in less than five. Other criteria involve the student profile, the number of postgraduate students, the amount of research, the staff profile, engagement with industry—those sorts of things. Ultimately, whatever we do, it has to be the best thing for the students and graduates—that’s the bottom line”.

Despite the ever-present and looming challenges, the GMIT President doesn’t hide his pride in the achievements of the Institute, not least in fulfilling its remit as a public sector provider of education excellence.

And he doesn’t need to be reminded of the continuing barrage of criticism by media commentators that public sector seats of learning provide poor value for money. It’s something he meets head-on and rejects out of hand.

“A private institution can decide, as they do, to provide business-type programmes which may be very cheap to deliver and very profitable, but we have to deliver the full spectrum of programmes at all levels to service the needs of the region - engineering,

science, computing, hospitality, tourism, creative arts, furniture design, etc and they can be expensive to deliver. You won’t find many private sector companies delivering these types of programme.

“...and yes, I would think institutions such as ours are delivering value for money. The staff are very committed; if you read the reviews of GMIT—and they’re carried out by external experts as peer reviews of the college—they are hugely positive of the staff and the interaction of our staff with students. Really, that’s what it’s all about”.

Just the business for accountancy students

GMIT Business School celebrated a milestone during the past academic year when Accountancy students completed the ACCA Professional Level Programme delivered in GMIT for the first time.

The students progressed directly onto the one-year ACCA programme following completion of a three-year Bachelor of Business (Hons) in Accounting degree in GMIT Business School.

Dr Larry Elwood, Head of International Affairs and Marketing, says the Institute now offers GMIT students the opportunity to study accounting at all levels - undergraduate, postgraduate and professional level.

“Students who start studying accounting at GMIT have the option to go on to complete their final professional examinations here.”

“There has been a definite upturn in the number of accounting graduates



Tara Lavin

gaining full-time trainee positions this year and we are delighted to have a number of local and national accounting firms recruit our graduates”.

One of the ACCA students, Tara

Lavin from Claregalway, Co Galway, was successful in securing a position in one of the big three accounting companies in Ireland while pursuing her finals in GMIT. She commenced her training contract in Deloitte after graduation and unlike many of the trainees she will be working with, she has all her exams completed and looks forward to gaining professional accounting experience.

“Having completed my undergraduate studies in GMIT helped make my transition to professional level in the



Rosemary Atuokwu

college easier. The familiar learning environment helped me take on the challenge of professional exams and I found the support and encouragement of lecturers in GMIT very helpful.”

Another student, Rosemary Atuowku from Oranmore, who also passed her ACCA finals, is working in fund administration with Credit Suisse in Galway. “I found the ACCA Professional programme excellent, the lecturers and tutors were experienced subject experts and always approachable. I can now look forward to building on my ACCA success and becoming an investment manager in the hedge fund industry.”

Jobs future is bright, say experts

There are good job opportunities for business and accounting students in the SME sector, according to professional accountancy bodies attending a forum hosted by the GMIT Castlebar Business Department for accounting and business students.

Organisations in attendance included the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Ireland (ICAI), Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA) and the Institute of Certified Public Accountants (CPA) as well as local career guidance teachers and secondary school students.

GMIT Castlebar Accountancy lecturer Caroline Clarke says a professional qualification in accountancy allows students to use their qualification both in Ireland and abroad.

“GMIT offers excellent opportunities to accountancy students. Exemptions are agreed with the ICAI, CPA and ACCA. For example, students obtaining the Bachelor of Arts in Accounting and Financial Management (Level 7) and the Bachelor of Business Honours in



L to R: Ciara Murphy, CPA, Michael Shovelin lecturer, Carmel Brennan, Head of Accountancy Dept., GMIT Galway, Don Doyle, Mountbellew, Caroline Gordon, Gordon Accountants, Swinford, Caroline Clarke, Programme Chair, Bachelor of Arts in Accounting and Financial Management, GMIT Castlebar, Michele Kavanagh, CIMA (speaker), and Michael Gill, Head of the Department of Business, Humanities and Technology, GMIT Castlebar.

Accounting (Level 8) can qualify for exemptions from the professional bodies”.

A number of post graduate opportunities are also available, in particular

the Postgraduate Diploma in Accountancy, ACCA Professional Level 9 and Master of Business in Strategy and Innovation in the Galway city (Dublin Road) campus.

Architects of their own future



Fourth year student Anita Koitka, studying the B.Sc. (Hons) in Construction Economics and Quantity Surveying in GMIT, who won Best Poster Award.



Second year student Urzula Jedrol, studying the B.Sc. in Architectural Technology in GMIT, who won Best Project Award.

An extensive exhibition of projects by Architectural Technology students opened to the public in GMIT during the summer and at the Open House Festival in the city during October. It showcased the work of students in each year of the four year B.Sc. (Hons) in Architectural Technology programme, accredited by the Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland (RIAI).

“Our students are steeped in the use of new technologies required to provide performance and efficiencies within the field of building and design,” says Mary Rogers, Head of the Department of Building and Civil Engineering. “Across the broad range of disciplines within the department - Architectural Technology, Civil Engineering, Construction Management and Quantity Surveying, we aim to use Building Information Modelling as a tool for inter-disciplinary projects.”

“GMIT has committed significant funding to the training and equipment required by students in their learning. The potential of both the students and the technology to meet the needs of industry into the future is evident at this exhibition.”

Lecturer Denise Dillon, Programme Co-ordinator, says: “The project briefs provide for student learning, relevant to the current construction climate. The fourth year student projects are two live retro-fit and extension projects, one in Galway and one in Clare”.

Fulbright scholar at GMIT

GMIT and NUIG presidents welcomed a group of US Fulbright Awardees to Galway recently to mark the commencement of Inter-changes: an Orientation Programme for 2011 – 2012. Two Fulbright scholars are based in Galway, Professor Gurram Gopal in GMIT and Dr Kathryn Laity in NUI Galway.

Professor Gopal has been teaching modules in Marketing and Entrepreneurship and is collaborating with the



Pictured with Prof Gurram Gopal (centre), L to R: GMIT President Michael Carmody, Outgoing Mayor of Galway City, Cllr Hildegarde Naughton, Colleen Dube, Fulbright Commission, and Dr Larry Elwood, Head of International Affairs and Marketing.

School of Business on a number of research projects. He is also exchanging information on teaching

methodologies, peer-based learning and alumni relations, and has been providing career guidance to students.

Worldwide audience view students' work

GMIT was delighted to be invited to showcase students' work at the 2012 Volvo Ocean Race Global Village from 30 June to 8 July.

A multi-disciplinary working group of staff from all campuses curated a selection of the best examples of student work from areas such as Art & Design, Furniture Design & Technology, Film & TV, Engineering, Hotel, Computing, Science, Maths, Business, Nursing & Health Sciences and Outdoor Education.

"The working group's vision was to create a dynamic platform in the heart



Lecturer Marion McEnroy with President Michael D Higgins and Mrs Sabina Higgins viewing GMIT students' work in the GMIT Pavilion during the Volvo Ocean Race.

of the Global Village while the eyes of the world were focused on Galway," explains Marion McEnroy, lecturer at the GMIT Centre for Creative Arts & Media and Chair of the Working

Group. "Visitor numbers were unprecedented and we were proud to provide an opportunity for our students to showcase the standards of excellence across so many disciplines."

Sinéad proves herself a classic innovator



Sinéad Kelly, Innovation Award winner 2012, and student on the B.A. in Outdoor Education programme.

GMIT Castlebar student Sinéad Kelly won €1,000 and business supports in the 2012 GMIT Castlebar Innovation Awards for her start-up business concept, an innovative therapeutic recreational service for teenagers.

The Dublin student was one of eight finalists in the 'Dragons Den' style competition which gives students at the Castlebar campus a unique opportunity to test their creative business ideas and win prize money and business mentoring support. Sinéad is

studying on the B.A. in Outdoor Education programme which attracts students from all over Ireland.

Over fifty students entered the competition this year, says Maria Staunton, Manager of the Innovation in Business Centre (iBC) at the GMIT Castlebar campus. "These annual innovation awards give students the chance to explore ideas and see if they are commercially viable. A panel of external judges decide which idea and presentation has the greatest potential."

Big demand for maths, computing graduates

Job prospects continue to be excellent for students of Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) related programmes despite the economic recession, with local and national software and IT companies continually seeking maths, physics & instrumentation and computing graduates.

Dr Sean Duignan, Dept of Maths & Computing, GMIT, says there is still very strong demand for computing graduates: "The demand for honours graduates of the B.Sc (hons) in Software Development—a four-year programme offered by the Department of Maths & Computing (School of Science)—is particularly strong with close to a 100% success rate for those graduates seeking industry employment.

"We have had a number of graduates receiving multiple job offers, and, in most cases employment has been secured by these students in advance of completing their final exams".

"As with previous years the demand for graduates is well spread across the spectrum; from small indigenous software companies, to the large multinational software / IT houses".

Apps are making quite an impression

Software Development students are fast gaining recognition for apps they are developing for the Windows Phone market – Labyrinth Madness, Space Shooter, Translate the World, Funix and Xylofun, to name just a few.

The students have been developing apps and getting them certified and onto the Windows Phone market on a regular basis in recent months in areas such as games, education, information and novelty.



GMIT students on the B.Sc. in Software Development programme.

Damien Costello, lecturer in the Dept of Maths & Computing, says the increasing use of mobile telephony and smart phones has prompted significant changes in GMIT computing programmes to adapt to changing demands on graduates. “We have been using apps as a teaching & learning tool and our final year students are developing these apps for Microsoft Windows Phone as part of their course work”.

“Our students are developing a portfolio of work that they can easily demonstrate at an interview, for instance. It’s great for them and it’s an exciting time also for software development”.

Helping hand for brothers



Pictured at home with Ben (left) and Joe Styles are Sharon Boyle, lecturer, Jenny Parkes GMIT student, and Noreen Henry, lecturer.

A technology student and lecturers in Castlebar have shown how communications technology can enrich the lives of people with severe physical disabilities.

Student Jenny Parkes and lecturers Noreen Henry and Sharon Boyle took on a project to help twin brothers, Joe and Ben Styles who have muscular dystrophy, communicate more easily with family and friends. They equipped their computers with high quality mouse-operated cameras and voice recognition software, enabling

them to get on Facebook and Skype family and friends around the world.

Noreen Henry, Project Co-ordinator, says educational projects such as these are very important. “The traditional academic disciplines of social care and technology have been very distinct and are now converged into a new programme.

A new B.Sc. (Hons) in Digital Media & Society (GA884) will be offered in the Castlebar campus, through the CAO, commencing during the academic year 2013/14.”

This new aid is a gift



Students Christopher Duane and Mark McClean with Ray Weldon, lecturer, Des O’Reilly, Head of Dept, and Basil Larkin, Flaherty Markets, Galway.

Second year B. Eng Electrical Services and Automation students are benefiting from the Allen-Bradley programmable controller and simulator gifted to the college by US company Rockwell Automation this year through Galway agent Flaherty Markets. The majority of students on this programme are experienced, fully

qualified electricians who were eligible to enter year two of the three-year degree due to their prior learning and experience.

Lecturer Barry Finnegan says: “All 18 students who started in 2011 are still on-board and in full attendance. Many had never been in full-time third level education before”.

Hotel students come up with winning strategy

Four GMIT students, representing Fáilte Ireland's Trainee Management Development Programme (TMDP), took the top prize in the 2011 Irish Hospitality Institute (IHI) National Business Management Game. The GMIT team, who work in the hospitality industry and attended GMIT's College of Tourism & Arts for a block study period each academic year, scored top marks in the competition that attracted 11 teams from all over Ireland.

The winning team, under the tutorage of GMIT College of Tourism & Arts lecturer George Finnegan, included Captain Matti Reuter of the Sligo Clarion Hotel, Sebastian Block, Knock House Hotel, Co Mayo, Eoin Jacob, Lyrath County House Hotel and Estate

in Kilkenny, and Patrick Hogan, Heritage Hotel in Portlaoise. They competed against Institutes of Technology Cork, Athlone, Dundalk, Dublin, Letterkenny, Waterford, and the Shannon College of Hotel Management.

The participants spent two days devising a strategy, planning and managing a fictitious hospitality business in a simulated Irish business environment that reflects current economic and social constraints. The overall prize was a three day tutored trip for the team and its tutor to Champagne Taittinger's historic Château de la Marquetterie and Vineyards in Reims, North East France, courtesy of international wine importers Febvre and Company.



Front row, L to R: Sebastian Block, Knock House Hotel, Fergal O'Connell, FIHI President, Matti Reuter (Capt), Sligo Clarion Hotel, George Finnegan, GMIT lecturer. Back row, L to R: Sean O'Malley, Fáilte Ireland, Eoin Jacob, Lyrath County House Hotel & Estate, Kilkenny, Patrick Hogan, Heritage Hotel, Portlaoise, and Monica Murphy, Febvre & Co.



Cathal's iSpeak a winner

GMIT won first prize in the individual category of Galway's first app competition, CodeNinja, designed by local businesses and academics to train and encourage students to be creative in the cultivation of their own technology-based ideas.

GMIT's Cathal Mac Donnacha (pictured above), a student on the B.Sc. (Hons) in Software Development programme, won an iPad for his app 'iSpeak' which allows people with differing native languages to communicate with each other through a Windows Phone 7 Mobile application. One person speaks in their phrase, it is converted to text and sent to a translation service, and the result is spoken to the second person in their native language.

Cathal was bestowed with an "Honourable Mention" at the 2012 Worldwide Community App Awards for Windows Phone 7 hosted by WP7applist.com. The Windows Phone community voted for the one hundred plus apps that were nominated. His iSpeak app also featured worldwide as "App of the Month" by Microsoft in May 2012.

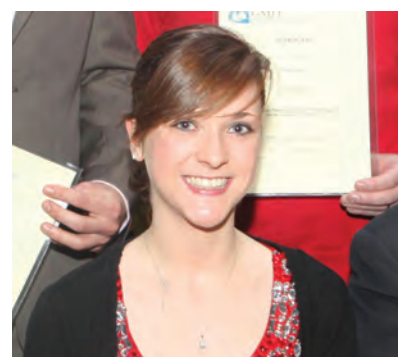
Mayoral accolade for Katherine

Katherine Long, student of the Bachelor of Business in Event Management with PR programme, won the "Galway Young Volunteer of the year" award for her work promoting and running the GMIT Best Buddies (BB) charity, a voluntary college and civic service which helps people with intellectual disabilities.

Student volunteers keep in contact with their buddies once or twice a week and meet up every two weeks to take

part in an activity. Katherine (right), a GMIT Academic scholarship recipient (2010), is President, chief organiser and administrator of the club in GMIT.

Tomás Mangan, lecturer in Event Management & PR, College of Tourism & Arts, says: "Katherine and her team organised the inter-college soccer tournament as part of an elected module which greatly helped promote the BB programme."



2011 - Barry McMillan honoured for his vast contribution

Barry McMillan, a lecturer in Ethics & Religious Studies, joined the teaching staff of GMIT in September 2008 and currently lectures in the Schools of Humanities, Business, and College of Tourism and Arts. His academic specialities are Ethics, Religious Studies, English, Communications and Research Supervision. He is a widely-published writer, an acclaimed conference speaker, and an experienced broadcaster.

Mr McMillan has worked, nationally and internationally, in the fields of education and community development since the 1990s. He believes that every student can flourish if appropriately challenged and supported. His commitment to this ideal is reflected in the personal testimonials of some of his students:

"He was never less than passionate, inspiring, supportive and encouraging" – Ms Trish Thompson.

"His open and honest approach



Barry McMillan (left) receiving the award from GMIT President Michael Carmody.

brought all subjects to life and stimulated and fuelled broader independent learning and research" – Ms Aoife Ralph.

"He is so supportive of students, believing in them even at times when they didn't believe in themselves" – Ms

Edel Mulvihill.

Mary MacCague, former Head of the GMIT School of Humanities, said: "Barry is a consummate professional, who has the ability to bring out the best in all his students, regardless of their level."

2010 - Anthony Clare's dedication and enthusiasm

GMIT Letterfrack lecturer Anthony Clare is described by colleagues as "a dedicated, committed lecturer who has enthused and nurtured students of furniture design and making in GMIT Letterfrack for over 20 years".

Anthony Clare has been lecturing in the discipline of furniture design and manufacture at the Connemara campus since 1991. He served as a member of the GMIT Academic Council for several years up until 2006 and is Programme Chair of the Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) in Furniture Design & Manufacture programme since it was first set up as a National Certificate course in the campus in the early 90s.

He has prepared students for various prestigious national and international competitions with many winning top awards in the National Skills Competition in Cabinetmaking, and the House & Homes/Crafts Council of Ireland Student Design Awards. He has also led numerous 'live' student design and make projects, with Áras an Uachtaráin (to design and make three lecterns for use



Anthony Clare receiving the award from former GMIT President Marion Coy.

by the President of Ireland), the National Museum of Ireland – Country Life in Castlebar (to design and make innovative gallery seating), and Kylemore Abbey (a children's play trail). Projects such as these provide very rich educational experiences for both the students and staff at the Letterfrack campus.

"Anthony was one of the first employees of GMIT Letterfrack and

has been instrumental in the progression, development and expansion of the campus over those years", says Dermot O'Donovan, Head of GMIT Letterfrack.

Letterfrack graduate Davin Larkin describes Anthony Clare as "having a passion for what he teaches and it shows in his enthusiastic approach to every project and lecture he leads with his students".

Anthony, Diarmaid tops for skills



A student in GMIT Letterfrack has scooped the coveted top award in this year's National Skills Competition in Cabinet Making, making it the fourth year in a row that Letterfrack has won this award. Winner Anthony O'Neill (above) from Tullow, Co. Carlow, is a fourth year student on the Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Furniture Design and Manufacture degree programme. Five of the six finalists were GMIT Letterfrack students.



And Diarmaid Ó Conghaile (above) won the 2011 National Skills Competition. GMIT Letterfrack has also won the accolade in 2010, 2009 and 2007.

National Skills Co-ordinator, Anthony Clare stressed that the standard was very high and the competition as keen as ever.

"This achievement by Diarmaid and Anthony demonstrates clearly the exceptional skill level attained by students undertaking GMIT Letterfrack courses, given the other finalists were apprentices working in industry".

Microsoft awards heading west



L to R: Laize Wang, Helen Roberts and Yuxian Chen, Michael Meagher, Microsoft Academic Engagements Manager, Daniel O'Meara, Cathal Tummon, and David O'Connor.

Maths & Computing students scooped three awards in the 2011 XNA Ireland Challenge, a Microsoft sponsored games programming competition.

The GMIT students won "Best Xbox 360 Game", "Best in Original Audio Music" and "Best Multiplayer Game" in the competition judged by industry experts.

Third and fourth year students on the B.Sc. (Hons) in Software Development programme honoured a classic

from the Golden Age of Video Arcade Games, "Frogger© Konami Digital Entertainment"; Frogger was released by Konami in 1981 and is still recognised as one of the iconic games from the past three decades. It has featured on TV programmes, cartoons, car bumper-stickers, T-shirts and celebrated its 25th anniversary with the release of a special edition on games consoles such as Xbox 360.

It's Castlebar's title



Participants in the Kayaking Intersivities, which was hosted by GMIT Castlebar.

GMIT's Kayak and Canoe Club won the national canoe polo title in this year's Kayaking Intersivities which was hosted for the first time by GMIT Castlebar. Over 18 colleges participated in the national event.

The winning GMIT team were Keith Byrne, Feidhlim Dignan, Eric Conway, Shona O'Dowd, Mark Brogan, Ken Hynes, Carol Dunphy,

Kevin Pierce and Gavin Porter.

Nigel Jennings, GMIT Castlebar Sports Officer, praised the team for their intense preparations during the winter and paid tribute to the students for organising and hosting this hugely successful competition which brought over 500 visitors to Castlebar and surrounding villages for the four day event.

Julia wins gold and it's all thanks to Snow White

Three culinary arts students won Gold, Silver and Bronze medals, respectively, at the 2012 IFEX ChefSkills national competition. BA Culinary Arts student Julia Babikova won a gold medal for her “Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs” novelty cake. Judges were very impressed by the level of skill used to make the features so perfectly.

Brian Dermody, a second year student on the Higher Certificate in Culinary Arts programme, won a silver medal in the Ethnic International Competition. He had 45 minutes to prepare a two-course Italian meal. And Mihai Schirlui, a first year student on the Higher Certificate in Culinary Arts programme, and a trainee chef working in the Twelve’s West Restaurant, Galway, won a bronze medal for his fish dish, preparing and cooking the meal in 35 minutes.

Renowned for its high level of skill, the ChefSkills competitions has a long history of honouring some of Ireland’s



Julia Babikova (main) pictured with her “Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs” novelty cake. Inset, L to R: Brian Dermody (Bronze), Julia Babikova (Gold), and Mihai Schirlui (Silver) with GMIT Culinary Arts lecturer Maria Conboy.



most celebrated chefs in the early stages of their careers.

Maria Conboy, Culinary Arts lecturer, GMIT College of Tourism & Arts, says: “With 220 young chefs

taking part in 25 competitions in the IFEX ChefSkills 2012, the three GMIT students did exceptionally well to win awards in their categories.”

Traditional form, contemporary context

Heritage Studies lecturer and acclaimed Irish traditional performer John Tunney was selected as one of eight singers tasked with writing a suite of new songs in the unaccompanied style of the Irish tradition as part of a national project ‘As I roved Out’.

As his theme, he chose the contemporary story of a Bosnian refugee who escapes the Balkan war and comes to live in the West of Ireland, but composes it in the traditional style.

As part of his practice-based research, he shared with his students the process by which his song came into being. “I wanted to take the typical emigration song of the Irish tradition and turn it on its head. So, in this case, Ireland is not the country being ‘escaped from’, but the country that is ‘being fled to’. Having placed the infamous Srebrenica Massacre at the centre of the narrative, the deci-

sion to make the subject of the song a Muslim was simply a logical one. The story is a thoroughly contemporary one, right down to the hero now being employed by an Irish-based multi-national.”

“For me lecturing on Irish music here in GMIT is probably the most fun anyone could have at work. When you see yourself as a performing artist, participating in something like this project is simply another dimension of practice-based research. It feeds directly into my teaching. For example, I shared with students the process by which this particular new song came into being, the nuts and bolts of how someone working within the tradition creates something that is at the same time both contemporary and traditional.”

‘I roved out’ is supported by the Arts Council of Ireland, the National



John Tunney performing one of his new compositions.

Library of Ireland, the Irish Traditional Music Archive and The Bealtaine Festival. Singers involved in the project include: Jerry O’Reilly, John Tunney, Brigid Tunney, Cliona Ni Suilleabhán, Brendan Kennedy, Larry Joy, Roisín Gaffney and Dick Hogan.



Artists of the future set the standard

Hundreds of people attended the annual GMIT Graduate Art Show in the GMIT Centre for Creative Arts & Media in Cluain Mhuire in June to see the work of 78 art & design students in Textiles, Painting, Print, Sculpture, Ceramics, Video/Sound work, Photography, Drawing, Performance and Installation.

Themes ranged from personal memories and reflections, the environment and social issues to conceptual ideas around art practices.

The show had both a contemporary and traditional feel. Paintings and prints were seen alongside works in new media and technologies. The scale and presence of some larger sculptural works sat comfortably with the delicacy of small-scale drawings and constructions in textiles.

Works ranged from a suspended traditional wooden currach (centre, left) to cloned terracotta dolls; from video installations in specially constructed dark rooms to live art performances. The standard was again very high.

‘Works ranged from a suspended traditional wooden currach... to live art performances.’



Emergency Services impressed by clever new car safety app

Students on the B.Sc. programme in Software Development have created an innovative app that provides automatic assistance in the event of an accident.

It works with the driver starting the app at the beginning of the journey. If an accident occurs, a loud alarm sounds on the phone and a count-down timer begins. If the driver is conscious and doesn't need help they just press the stop button. Should the driver be unconscious and the timer reaches zero, then the app automatically requests for help from emergency services via SMS. The message contains the user's details and GPS location. The in-case-of-emergency contact will also receive a message. The app also stores personal medical details which will be of use to the first responders. Some of these details can be sent with the SMS emergency message.

The emergency services have been very impressed with the provision of GPS location data to them in the event of an incident as this can save time for the first responders.

The three app developers, Jeremy Freeley from Claremorris, Co. Mayo, Alan O'Connor from Moyross, Limerick and Gerard Nee from Williamstown, Co. Galway are very excited about the interest the app is



Students Alan O'Connor (left) and Gerard Nee (right) with their lecturer Damien Costello.

generating although it is not on the market yet.

Having consulted with the Road Safety Authority (RSA) and the Traffic Corps in the early design and development stages, the students have been encouraged greatly by the response they received and are working to get the app to market by Christmas.

Initially, the app will be available to the Microsoft Windows Phone market, with Android and iPhone to follow. The students recently showcased their work at the Volvo Ocean Race Global Village in Galway where they met and

got positive feedback from members of the public.

President of Ireland, Mr Michael D Higgins, was very impressed with their innovation and enthusiasm when he stopped by the stand in the GMIT Pavilion.

Jeremy Freeley says: "The Software Development programme has given us the skills and know-how to develop apps. Also, the encouragement and support from all of the staff in the Department of Mathematics & Computing, especially our lecturer, Damien Costello, has been crucial".

Donall's project is tops

PhD research student Donall Dowd helped construction firm John Sisk & Son win "Sustainable construction and demolition project of the year award" at the annual Chartered Institution of Wastes Management (CIWM) Awards for Environmental Excellence.

Donall worked on the Mater Adult Hospital (Dublin) development as part of his research into elimination of construction waste at the design stage of construction projects which helps architects and engineers prevent waste becoming an issue on site.

He is a member of the GMIT construction and demolition waste research group led by Dr Mark Kelly



PhD research student Donall Dowd (centre) receiving his award from CIWM members.

and John Hanahoe, lecturers in construction and environmental studies.

"The Dept of Building & Civil Engineering is delighted with Donall's achievement. It demonstrates the potential of collaborative research between industry and the third-level

sector to have a positive impact on the built environment, specifically focusing on resource efficiency at a time when innovative approaches to sustainability will play a key role in competitiveness of the Irish construction sector", says Dr Kelly.

Castlebar course proves a major plus for employees

GMIT Castlebar continues to develop strong links with Cisco and the private sector as part of its Cisco Academy programme with students continuing to study the Cisco CCNA qualification in GMIT Castlebar. GMIT Castlebar has been offering the part-time programme to full-time students of GMIT since 2005.

The one-year programme, aimed at the private sector, is for individuals currently working in the areas of electronics, computers or telecommunications who wish to acquire an industry recognised qualification. A basic appreciation of computers and broadband internet access is a prerequisite.

The programme provides students with the training necessary, in both theory and hands-on practical work, to achieve the qualification of Cisco Certified Network Associate.

Mark Frain, lecturer, Dept of Business, Humanities and Technology, GMIT Castlebar, says there is a big demand for this course from people currently working in the IT area. "The Cisco programme is an upskilling exercise and directly relevant to the work the participants are currently doing. Some participants are sometimes between jobs, or looking, and this course certainly increases their employment prospects".

David McDonnell, who is currently

working in the networking area with Westnet in Ballina, says: "I have been working in the network industry for a few years and wanted to get a full and proper understanding of the networking protocols and concepts. The CCNA course delivered all the knowledge I needed and more to continue comfortably on my networking career path".

GMIT Castlebar is currently accepting applications for this course for the next academic year. Contact Mark Frain, tel. 094-9043116 email: mark.frain@gmit.ie for further information.



GMIT tutors and students of the Cisco CCNA course which was delivered in GMIT Castlebar during the last academic year. L to R: Seamus Dowling, lecturer, GMIT, Patrick McDonald from Louisburgh (Western Care Association), Eadaoin Earley from Claremorris, David Grehan from Claremorris (Schneider Electric Galway), Mark Frain, lecturer, GMIT, David Donnelly from Sligo (CBE Claremorris), John McDonald from Westport (Ergo IT Services) and David McDonnell from Sligo (CBE Claremorris).

Funding to help jobless get back to work

GMIT has been awarded HEA funding for unemployed people to commence Science and Engineering programmes, as well as some special purpose awards this academic year under the 2012 Springboard initiative.

Over 130 people have commenced programmes in Energy Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Computing,

Medical Device Technology, Pharmaceutical Science, Biopharmaceutical Science, Food Science and Building Information Modeling. Twenty-three people started on a new conversion programme, the Higher Diploma in Software Development, in September, which gives graduates of other Engineering and Science disciplines an

opportunity to upskill.

Peter Butler, GMIT Lifelong Learning Co-ordinator, GMIT Galway, says the HEA initiative helps people who are out of work get back on their feet: "Having the right qualification is crucial to unemployed people getting back into employment in time for growth areas for the future".

Online training a huge boost at energy lab



Members of the GMIT-led Innovret energy technologies consortium, back, L to R: John Shaughnessy Daikin Ireland, Professor Dietrich Albert, TU Graz, Simone Koplenc, TU Graz, Dr Attracta Brennan, GMIT, Dr Aurora Dimache, GMIT. Front, L to R: Dr Tom Roche, GMIT, Dr Siobhán Wallace, Leargas, April McCale, Unitherm Heating Ltd.

Galway-Mayo IT has been awarded substantial funding to develop innovative online training in renewable energy systems using the Institute's state-of-the-art online energy laboratory.

Engineering lecturers and researchers were awarded €250,000 from the EU Leonardo Da Vinci programme to develop high-quality, industry-relevant online training and upskilling programmes for undergraduates as well as individuals wishing to upskill or enter the renewable energy sector.

Some 45 academic staff have recently been trained on online learning technologies.

Dr Tom Roche, Principal Investigator of the Innovret EU Project which GMIT is leading, says that once the research programme is completed, students countrywide will be able to carry out online experiments through distance learning that would otherwise have required their presence in the lab. People working in the renewable energy industry will be able to avail of individual online accredited modules from September 2013.

"Our lab is unique in that our students can interact with systems and learn about the installation, analysis and performance of integrated, real-working renewable energy systems using a sophisticated web enabled interface. The results of this EU

project will allow students to carry out their lab work while not being physically present in the lab. The funding we've received will enable us to research and develop best practice teaching for further online experimentation."

GMIT currently offers a range of evening courses (accredited modules) such as renewable energy installation maintenance and system designs in addition to full-time degree programmes.

The consortium on this Innovret EU Project, led by GMIT, comprises experts from academia and industry.

...and Science goes online too

GMIT Science School is now offering the add-on honours degree in Applied Biopharmaceutical & Healthcare Science online. The one year add-on was previously offered on a blended learning basis over several years.

Now, students log in for weekly lectures using the Adobe Connect

virtual classroom facility which allows for interaction between the lecturer and students during the lecture and is also archived and accessible to students at later dates.

"Such a delivery mechanism better suits the students of this course who are based at various locations around

Ireland and in Europe," says Dr Seamus Lennon. "A level 6 Higher Certificate in Science is also being delivered online, having commenced in January 2012. The online learning student cohort now represents approximately 10% of students in the Dept of Life & Physical Sciences."

Nurturing students' start-up ideas

A website promoting Irish summer schools, a device that helps remove wetsuits, and unique furniture pieces are three of seven start-up projects currently being developed by graduates of GMIT who recently won places on GMIT's Graduate Entrepreneurship Programme (GEP).

The graduates were awarded places on the GEP during the 2011/12 academic year, giving them valuable start up supports including desk space, mentoring and training in GMIT's thriving Innovation in Business Centres (iBCs) at the Galway and Castlebar campuses.

Many of their concepts stemmed from projects they worked on during

their final year of study in GMIT. The successful GEP candidates this year are:

Michael Smyth, from Athboy, Co Meath, graduate of the BA i Gno agus Cumarsáid GMIT Galway, who has developed a bilingual website for Irish summer schools in the Gaeltacht.

Laura Taylor from Gort, Co Galway, graduate of the BA in Outdoor Education in GMIT Castlebar, who has developed a device called EasyOff which helps remove wetsuits easily;

Jens Kosak from Germany and now living in Oughterard, Co Galway, graduate of the Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Furniture Design & Manufacture, who offers unique furniture pieces and lighting as well as modular flat-packed sustainable items;

Patrick Dolan from Crossmolina, Co Mayo, and Alan Prendergast from Claremorris, Co Mayo, graduates of the Bachelor of Business in Culinary Arts, who developed gluten free products;

Bill Buckley from Kinvara, Co Galway, graduate of the Bachelor of Business degree, who has developed a chair that improves attention span and increases physical flexibility;

John Kavanagh from Borris, Co Carlow, graduate of the Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Furniture Design & Manufacture, who developed a range of outdoor and bathroom furniture.

Danny Coleman from Tuam, Co Galway, graduate of the Professional Cookery programme, who offers low-carb recipes using natural ingredients.



Pictured at a reception announcing the winners, L to R: Alan Prendergast, Claremorris, Jens Kosak, Oughterard (and Germany), Laura Taylor, Gort, John Kavanagh, Borris, Co Carlow, Michael Smyth, Athboy, Co Meath, and Bill Buckley, Kinvara. Front row: George McCourt, Manager of the GMIT Innovation Centre, Galway, Des Mahon, Chairman, GMIT, Michael Carmody, President of GMIT, and Declan Dooley, President of Galway Chamber.

New research scholarships

GMIT has launched a new annual research scholarship competition marking its 40th anniversary. The Institute will award seven fully funded

three-year PhD scholarships each year from September 2012.

The scholarships will cover fees and provide a €16,000 tax-free stipend across the disciplines of:

- Marine Science
- Biomedical Engineering,
- Sustainable Energy Technologies
- Humanities.

Proud record of entrepreneurship



Pictured at the Spirit of Entrepreneurship event hosted by the Innovation Centre at GMIT Castlebar. Front, L to R: Alan Dowling, MD Visual Brand Communication, Stephanie O'Malley, Education Destine and Colm Rochford, Powersavvy. Back, L to R: Joe Cawley, AIB branch Manager, Castlebar, Liam Horan, MC, Maria Staunton, Manager iIBC Castlebar, Barry Egan, Enterprise Ireland, George McCourt, Manager, IIBC Galway and Michael Culligan, National Director H Ban.

The Innovation in Business Centres (iIBC) at GMIT have nurtured a culture of entrepreneurship in the west of Ireland and in the GMIT student community since their establishment in 2006.

Start-up companies in both centres have created over 170 jobs and client companies have raised some €50m funding in recent years.

Successful companies have transitioned to new larger premises making way for new start-ups every year. Two major success stories are Tradecert and Neosurgical:

Tradecert.com provides Certificate of Origin and other documentation and certification services to exporters around the world, saving time, money, promoting efficiency and enhancing productivity. The company employs seven people, including a number of GMIT graduates.

Co-founder Tom Kelly has great praise for the staff of the iIBC at GMIT. "The manager, George MacCourt has lots of experience and is a very good mentor with a good handle on the dos and don'ts of starting a business".

Medical devices firm, NeoSurgical, develops innovative products for laproscopic abdominal surgery and is now gearing up for commercial launch as it appoints partners in the US, Europe, the Middle East and Africa and prepares technical files for the NSAI and the FDA for access to the EU and US markets.

The company utilised the GMIT medical testing facility, GMedTech, while located at the Innovation Centre in GMIT Galway and engaged in student projects with the Department of Mechanical Engineering.

The GMIT Innovation Centres host several public information events each year. Several hundred people attended the recent "Spirit of Entrepreneurship" event in the Mayo campus where GMIT President Michael Carmody described the supports offered by GMIT, Enterprise Ireland and a range of development agencies. Among the initiatives and supports are EI's new Competitive Feasibility Fund, Voucher Scheme, GMIT's Graduate Entrepreneurship Programme (GEP) Enterprise Acceleration Programme (EAP), the New Frontiers Programme and many others.

Figures reveal story of success

New iIBC client companies

- CGA Software – Integrated Software Systems using SAAS
- Cloud Strong – Services for SMEs using Cloud Technology
- Radio Internet Global Technologies – App development
- Hillwalk tours – Self Guided Hiking Tours, Ireland & Scotland
- Xyea Ltd – Compliance software that enables organisations to meet compliance obligations
- Siscin – 3D Visualisation and Animation company providing rendering and CAD training
- Visual Brand Communication (VBC) - Innovative Interactive Signage and Digital Communication
- Horizon West - Engineering technical service provider
- 24handi – 24/7 Emergency Trade & Service provider for your home, business or transport needs
- DoTheTour.com – Audio City Tours

Recent transitioned clients

- eMedia – Interactive 3D Media and iPhone Apps
- Neosurgical – Innovative products for laparoscopic abdominal surgery
- Tradecert – Automated Internet Solutions for Export Compliance Documentation
- Anacores – Designs integrated circuits for microchips
- The Geek Store – Online Reseller for technology gadgets

iIBC output

- 170+ jobs created
- €50m funding raised by client companies
- 14 HPSU (high potential start-up) companies created
- 28 successful spin-outs

Researchers sight rare albatross

Marine research staff and students conducting a research survey on board the state vessel, the RV Celtic Explorer, off the southwest coast of Ireland, sighted groups of fin whales and a rare black-browed albatross normally found in the Southern Ocean.

The GMIT team was among a group of 20 scientists from Ireland and Scotland, including the Irish Whale and Dolphin Group, carrying out a survey of cetacean, seabird and plankton along the Irish coast over 11 days. Birdwatch Ireland said a sighting of a black-browed albatross is “very rare”.

The team was led by GMIT researchers Dr Joanne O’Brien and PhD student Conor Ryan. It was the third in a series of surveys GMIT has been involved in on board the Celtic Explorer. The team was awarded funding for the trip under the annual Marine Institute Ship Time call.



Rare black-browed albatross pictured off the southwest Irish coast by GMIT marine research staff.



Sineád Mitchell, post-grad researcher, who received a best paper award.

International award for research on waste practices

GMIT has received international recognition for its ongoing research on waste practices and environmental methodologies in small and medium enterprises, as part of an EU research project “FutureSME” involving 26 partners in eight countries.

Sineád Mitchell, a post-graduate researcher in the Dept of Mechanical & Industrial Engineering, received a best paper award for ‘*The Issue of Waste in European Manufacturing SMEs*’ at the

13th International Waste Management and Landfill Symposium in Italy. Over 1,000 submissions and over 800 papers were published and presented under 13 themes.

Sineád is one of a team of researchers in GMIT working on the FutureSME research project. Co-authors of the paper are lecturers Dr Paul O’Dowd and Dr Thomas Roche, and post-doctoral researcher Dr Aurora Dimache.

New food products hit the spot

Coeliac-friendly sauces, chocolate-flavoured hummus squeeze... just two of many innovative new food products developed by part-time Culinary Arts students who work as chefs in the hospitality sector.

The students travel to GMIT one day a week from Kerry, Limerick, Westmeath, Roscommon, Mayo and County Galway to participate in the degree programme and recently showcased their food products to a panel of experts including Bord Bia.

The chefs are now pitching to retailers and local markets with a view to commercialising their products.

Bord Bia’s Eimear O’Donnell said the products were “well developed and executed – a very high standard overall reflecting the dedication and expertise of the lecturing staff at GMIT.”



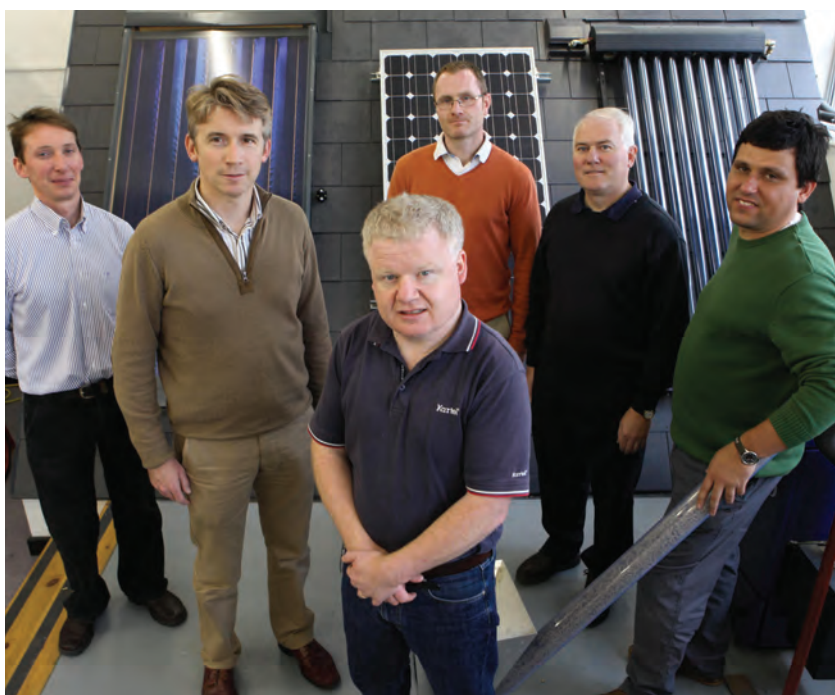
L to R: Cáit Noone, Head of the GMIT College of Tourism and Arts, Tony O’Kelly, GMIT Innovation Centre, Eimear O’Donnell, Bord Bia, Richard Nielson, Food Product Development lecturer.

Centre for the integration of Sustainable Energy Technologies (CiSET)

CiSET was established in 2007 with the aim of addressing concerns over rising energy costs and security of energy supplies. The Centre conducts applied research to design, integrate, optimise and demonstrate the potential of sustainable energy solutions to deliver cost-effective and reliable energy in cool-marine climate regions.

Over the past five years, CiSET has developed a unique research capability based around ten multi-disciplinary researchers from engineering and science who share a common interest and commitment to sustainable energy system development. The team has worked on over 40 projects involving a range of industrial and public-body stakeholders that support the energy sector and/or consumer. Some €2.5m has been invested in fully-integrated and functioning research grade equipment in the centre.

“Projects span from energy auditing and monitoring to the use of artificial intelligence to generate optimised, hybrid energy supply solutions for specific energy demand profiles,”



The GMIT CiSET group, L to R: Dr John Lohan, Principal Investigator, Willie Geraghty, Dr Tom Roche (front), Dr PJ McAllen, Dr Gabriel J Costello and PhD student and lecturer Larentiu Dimache.

explains Dr John Lohan, Principal Investigator of CiSET. “We have already sponsored and completed 15

research Masters and PhD programmes and published over 50 conference and journal papers.”

CiSET projects are already making quite a difference

- **Total Energy Solutions for Sustainable Aquaculture (TESSA)**

TESSA sought to reduce the energy consumption of typical Irish re-circulating aquaculture systems and use sustainable energy technologies to replace traditional fossil fuel. The project delivered a fully functional aquaculture system that reduced energy consumption by between 20-80% and derived its thermal energy from a combination of an air source heat pump and a solar thermal collector. This project was supported by a consortium of 12 aquaculture enterprises and received funding from the Department of Education & Science, BIM and IRCSET.

- **Improved temperature control for transport refrigeration units**

A combination of electronic throttling valves and fuzzy logic control was implemented to reduce the time

required to reach set-point, increase temperature control and minimise temperature interaction between neighbouring temperature zones. Other projects boosted the heating capacity and introduced intelligent defrost control. These projects were supported by four Enterprise Ireland Innovation Partnerships and Thermo King Europe (Ireland) Ltd., Galway.

- **Characterisation of an Air-to-Air heat recovery system**

A series of projects were undertaken in conjunction with ProAir Ltd., to characterise the thermal efficiency of their air-to-air heat recovery system, access the influence of building envelop air tightness on system performance and design a new frost protection feature. GMIT now operates a fully functional, instrumented and monitored system to access the influence of such aspects on a 24/7 basis. These projects were

supported by an Enterprise Ireland Innovation Partnership Feasibility Study and ProAir Ltd., Tuam, Co. Galway.

- **Thermal characterisation and optimisation of a heat pump ground collector**

The goal of this industrial research project was to establish and increase the thermal performance of a 15kW ground source heat pump’s horizontal collector. This was achieved by experimental characterisation and numerical simulation of the 430m² ground collector positioned 1m below the surface. While the collector performed at the upper end of best practice, validated simulation showed that output could be boosted by a further 10% by altering the collector layout, ground surface layer & feedback. This project was funded by an Enterprise Ireland Innovation Partnership in conjunction with Dunstar Ltd, Clonakilty, Co Cork.

Marine and Freshwater Research Centre (MFRC)

GMIT has been conducting research on Marine and Freshwater resources since the 1990s. In 2009 the HEA's investment of €1.5m in GMIT's Marine and Freshwater Research Centre consolidated the centre's capacity in a new, state of the art facility to explore research synergies and collaboration.

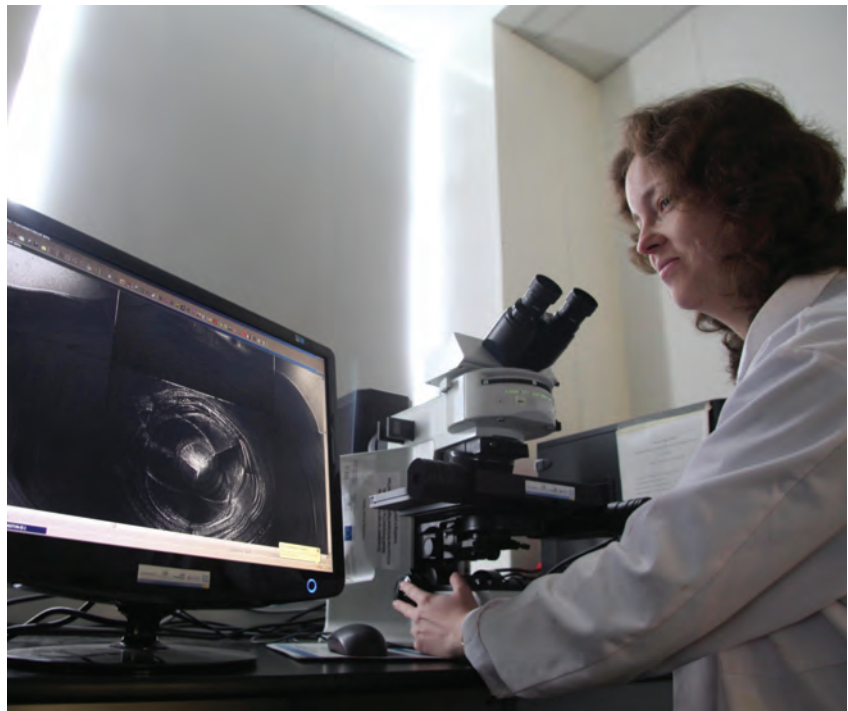
Nine academic staff and eight research staff currently collaborate with some 20 postgraduate students on applied research that informs the sustainable management and utilisation of aquatic living resources. The Centre's research focus aligns with current national and international research needs and is strongly policy-driven.

Research outputs that underpin the future management of marine and freshwater ecosystems with sound, credible scientific advice are carried out in collaboration with national agencies such as The Marine Institute, National Parks and Wildlife Service, Environment Protection Agency and BordIascaighMhara. Commercial aspects of the Centre's research aim to mitigate the impacts, and maximise the value from utilisation of living aquatic resources.

The Centre works with commercial partners in the seafood capture, processing and transport industries, aligning strongly with the priorities for Sustainable Food Production and Processing identified recently by Forfás in its Research Prioritisation report.



James Keating analyses blue whiting as part of his PhD on stock identification.



GMIT PhD marine scientist Melanie Zoelck uses an image analysis microscope and software.

The following are some projects researchers in the Marine and Freshwater Research Centre are working on:

Shelltec research enhancement centre

GMIT's Shelltec was established with EI support in 2005 to conduct multi-disciplinary research on the condition and responses of crustaceans and molluscs to manmade and natural stressors. Shelltec's research explores:

- Post-capture handling, storage & transport stresses in live shellfish marketing chains, and the development of new technologies to reduce their impacts;
- Development of environmental monitoring techniques and protocols for novel contaminants in the aquatic environment using shellfish as markers;
- Shellfish pathogens and parasites in the wild and captivity, and ways in which management can prevent or reduce associated impacts.

Environmental factors affecting growth, survival and migration of Atlantic salmon

In recent decades populations of North-east Atlantic salmon have decreased. GMIT scientists have partnered with the Marine Institute to determine the biologi-

cal and environmental drivers causing changes in salmon growth and associated stock declines. Multi-decadal trends in growth during the post-smolt phase will be analysed using archived datasets, and controlled rearing experiments. Successful completion of the project will allow further development of models that forecast the numbers and size of salmon returning to Irish rivers and lakes.

Assessment and monitoring of ocean noise in Irish waters

Noise caused by human activities is now recognised as a pollutant in the marine environment. Noise from seismic surveys, sonar, pile-driving, acoustic deterrents and the use of explosives each effect marine life. These effects are of growing concern to scientists, legislators and the public. GMIT scientists, funded by the Irish Environmental Protection Agency, have assessed and monitored ocean noise in Irish waters.

GMIT's research has quantified seismic activity within Irish waters highlighting particular areas with a greater frequency of seismic exploration and seismic intensity. The research has delivered a national obligation of Ireland's commitment to the Marine Strategy Framework Directive on behalf of the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government.

Galway Medical Technologies Centre (GMedTech)

Since 2006, the GMedTech centre which was formerly established under the Enterprise Ireland Applied Research Enhancement scheme, has developed capabilities in generating realistic vascular models from medical images with the main objective of computationally and experimentally modeling different physiological flow conditions through these vessels.

These systems provide the best physiological dynamic models neces-

sary for assessing medical procedures and optimising medical devices for industrial proposes.

The unique feature within the GMedTech centre is the capacity for designing and developing in vitro testing systems for replicating various haemodynamic conditions through different parts of the cardiovascular system that may or may not incorporate a disease type.

This unique capability was recognised at last Summer's ASME Summer biomedical engineering conference in Farmington, Pennsylvania, USA at

which the researchers within the GMedTech centre were approached by the Fluids Committee to provide benchmarking test data for next year's ASME summer biomedical engineering conference for the inaugural CFD challenge workshop.

These test systems can prove the feasibility of a product or surgical procedure, assess various disease conditions and provide benchmarking data for the validation of computational analysis. A successful in vitro test system can keep animal testing and clinical trials to a minimum.



The GMedTech team, L to R: Dr Liam Morris, Dr Patrick Delassus, PhD students Florian Stefanov and Paul Fahy, and Dr Eugene McCarthy.

Novate CEO pays tribute to GMedTech

As part of its pre-clinical trials, medical devices SME Novate turned to GMedTech to develop an artificial vein that would simulate real-life conditions. In many ways, the choice of innovation partner was a natural one, according to Novate's CEO Paul Gilson.

Both GMedTech and Novate are based at Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology (GMIT), where Gilson is also on the board of GMIT's business incubation centre. "We knew that GMedTech were looking for research projects, and we knew that they could

help us with ours," he says. "The piece of equipment—a polymeric vena cava—was only one part of the overall testing system, but it was an important one."

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How was the Titanic 11-course meal? First Class!

BY ROSITA BOLAND

It's not often you have a dinner at which 70 guests use more than 840 glasses. In Galway's GMIT (College of Tourism and Arts), 70 people sat down to virtually the same 11-course menu that was served to first-class passengers on the Titanic the night it sank.

As was the case in 1912, a different wine was served with each course, and there were so many wine glasses required – plus a water glass – that there was only room for six per setting on the table at any one time.



L to R: Noel Loughnane, Liz Fox and Máirtín Clancy, lecturers in the College of Tourism & Arts, Cáit Noone, Head of the College, and Ciara O'Byrne, Chairperson of the Galway RNLI Lifeboat Fundraising Committee.

THE MENU

- Reception on arrival with Oysters and Champagne
- Hors d'oeuvre Asparagus Salad with Champagne-Saffron Vinaigrette
- Soups Duet of Consommé Olga/Cream of Barley
- Fish Salmon with mousseline sauce
- Entrées Filet mignon of beef Lili
- Sorbet Punch Romaine
- Removes Calvados-glazed Duckling
- Lamb with mint jelly
- Sirloin of Beef Forestière
- Served with a selection of vegetables and potatoes
- Cold Dish Pâté de foie gras
- Sweet Peaches in Chartreuse jelly, Waldorf pudding, Chocolate Éclairs, Vanilla Ice cream
- Dessert Assorted fresh fruit and cheeses
- Petit Fours
- Coffee with Port

board. The only difference was that some courses, such as the salad, were served in a different order.

“The size of the 1912 menu is the biggest difference from today,” Loughnane says. “It’s just not done today. It was all about showing your wealth – using expensive ingredients and serving lots of meat.” Loughnane estimates dinner on the ship in 1912 would have taken four hours – about the same time the Galway dinner took last night.

“Dinner was such a big part of the day on ships in those days,” he says. “There was a string quartet, but no entertainment of the kind you’d get on cruise ships today.”

From a social history perspective, Loughnane points out that some courses had Russian references, such as Oysters a la Russe and Consommé Olga. “The tsars were still in power in 1912, of course.”

“It was a very, very rich menu,” he admits. “Was cholesterol even known about that time?”

Second-year student Jason Mullen from Sligo said: “We’ve been talking about nothing else except preparing for this dinner for the last six months.”

Among the guests was Noel McGrady, whose father, William, had worked at Harland and Wolff in Belfast

The €100-a-head sold-out dinner was the idea of Noel Loughnane, a lecturer in culinary arts at GMIT, who first started thinking about reproducing the period menu as a teaching experience for students three years ago.

“This is about commemorating the sinking of the Titanic, but it is not a celebration,” he stressed. “It’s a learning experience for over 100 of our students, and it’s a fundraiser for the RNLI, who risk their lives every time they get into a boat.”

Among the 11 courses were consommé, cream of barley soup, a fish course, two meat courses, foie gras, three desserts, and a cheese-



Former Mayor of Galway Hildegard Naughton looks on as the Corrib String Quartet play at the GMIT Hotel School's Titanic Commemorative Dinner in aid of the Galway RNLI Lifeboat.



Event Management students greeting guests at the Titanic Commemorative Dinner in the College of Tourism and Arts. Right: Table setting replicating the dinner table in first class.



as an iron turner until 1920. He never worked on the Titanic, but as he went about his daily work at the docks, he witnessed White Star Line's biggest ever commission ship being constructed, and its departure from Belfast.

"He never wanted to talk about the ship," McGrady said. "Because of what has happened to the Titanic, there was shame attached."

Elizabeth Fox, a wine lecturer at GMIT, discovered the wine glasses of 1912 were much smaller than modern glasses in the course of her research.

"They may have had 11 courses and wine with each course, and Irish people often only have two courses when they eat out in restaurants today, but we almost certainly drink more in volume than they did," she concludes.

As part of their preparation for the night, students gathered 1,513 small pebbles from around Ireland; one for each life lost in the sinking. Each guest was given a bag of pebbles at the end of the evening and invited to return them to the sea as an act of commemoration.



GMIT staff Coleman Shaughnessy (left) and Tom Frawley demonstrating a spark-gap radio transmitter as was used on the Titanic.

Just before the end of the evening, a four-foot reproduction of the Titanic, complete with 20 lifeboats and constructed of icing sugar and pastillage, was wheeled in by Mary Reid, a lecturer in advanced pastry. She explained that huge centrepieces, usually sculpted from ice or butter, were common for the period. Diners fearing a 12th course were spared: the

icing-sugar ship is inedible, apparently lasts for years, and will go on show in the College of Tourism and Arts.

The GMIT students got as many period details right as possible. However, our modern smoking regulations meant the cigars the gentlemen were given at the end of dinner went home unlit in their pockets.

This article has been reproduced, courtesy of the Irish Times (2012)



Lecturer Mary Reid (right) and student Paula Stakelum put the finishing touches to their pastillage replica of the Titanic.



Cheque it out



Helping hand for Cancer Care West

GMIT presented a cheque for €3,605 to Cancer Care West recently, the proceeds of fundraising by staff in the Galway campus who ran the Dublin City Mini Marathon.

L to R: GMIT staff Linda Gilchrest, Paula Cannon, Valerie Madden (organiser), Lorna Moynihan, Suzanne O'Gorman, Sharon Fitzpatrick, Cancer Care West; Paula Melady, Jennifer Duffy and Mena Costello.

[Missing from the picture are Evelyn Robinson, Ann Robinson, Marie Maher, Debbie Molloy and Susan Carolan]



Catwalk cash fund

Business Event Management students hosted a very successful fashion show in aid of COPE in the Radisson Blu assisted by city college GTI and Galway retailers Anthony Ryans, Born Clothing, Jack 'n Jones and Tommy Hilfiger. Models were recruited from within GMIT and trained by Galway's Catwalk Agency. Lecturer Monica Nielsen says the event required problem-solving, time management, interpersonal skills and teamwork. "These can be difficult to impart in the lecture hall and are highly valued by employers.

Monica Nielson (left) with the students presenting a cheque for almost €1,200 to Fintan Maher, Cope Galway.



Titanic night helps Lifeboat

Students and staff recently presented a cheque for €4,000 to Galway RNLI Lifeboat, proceeds from the Titanic Commemorative Dinner hosted by the GMIT College of Tourism and Arts.

Initiated by Culinary Arts lecturer Noel Loughnane, the event was a learning experience for students and a fund-raiser marking the 100 year anniversary of the sinking of the Titanic. Students and staff gave generously of their time and expertise ensuring the night was unforgettable for the 70 guests, many of whom said it was the best culinary experience of their lives.

L to R: Pierce Purcell, Noel Loughnane, Jamie Mullen, Cait Noone, Anne McInerney and Sharon Langan, Lifeboat Fundraising Committee.

Farmleigh showcases standards of excellence at Letterfrack

GMIT celebrates its 40th anniversary this year but it also celebrates 25 years in its Letterfrack campus which is run as a partnership with Connemara West Development PLC.

This year, in recognition of its impact both nationally and internationally on the industry, the campus is being designated as a National Centre for Excellence in Furniture Design and Technology.

Over the years GMIT Letterfrack has established itself as the leading provider of third level programmes related to the furniture industry. The college has a number of programmes for initial teacher education, which qualifies graduates to teach a range of technology-based subjects in post-primary schools.

As part of the 25th anniversary celebration, the OPW is hosting a GMIT Letterfrack exhibition of student, staff



The President of Ireland Michael D Higgins and Mrs Sabina Higgins on a recent visit to the Connemara campus, with Dermot O'Donovan, Head of the GMIT Letterfrack National Centre for Excellence in Furniture Design & Technology.



Ardu coffee table by graduate Martin Gallagher.

and graduate work in Farmleigh Gallery in the Phoenix Park. The exhibition, which runs from 1 November to 20 December, was officially opened by President Michael D Higgins. It celebrates excellence and innovation in the fields of furniture design and manufacture, wood technology and education. In advance of the opening of the exhibition, President Higgins paid a courtesy visit to the Letterfrack campus in May.

Head of GMIT Letterfrack Dermot O'Donovan recognises the importance of celebrating such a milestone. "Each year brings something new to the campus, so it's important to get an opportunity to reflect on the last 25 years and celebrate the achievements of both staff and students".



Wave table by graduate John Lee.



Chair by student Simon Doyle.



Drift Tallboy by graduates Tim and Sean Dunleavy.

Child's play for students



Pupils from Gaelscoil na Cruaiche, Westport, enjoying the new seating designed and made by Letterfrack students.

Furniture students at GMIT Letterfrack took on a major challenge to design and make appealing, fun, engaging and functional pieces of furniture for Gaelscoil na Cruaiche in Westport as part of their 'live project' degree studies.

Some 28 pieces were unveiled at a formal opening of the school by An Taoiseach Enda Kenny during the summer of 2012, all designed and made by students on the B.Sc. degree programme in Furniture Design & Manufacture.

The idea for the collaborative project came about after the Gaelscoil became aware of last year's live project—a children's play trail through the grounds of Kylemore Abbey. GMIT

Letterfrack staff member Gary Graham, who has children in the Gaelscoil, initiated contact between GMIT Letterfrack and the Westport primary school and the project took shape.

The students were briefed on the requirements at the project launch in February and met the pupils, parents and teachers. Later, they presented interim designs and got feedback during a full day of four rotating panels in Letterfrack, getting the views of the entire school community.

GMIT programme lecturer Anthony Clare says the students were given an excellent opportunity to learn, develop and understand the nuances of working and presenting their work to an actual client.

"The resulting work produced is a credit to each of them. The diverse nature of the pieces facilitated active collaborative learning for the students and we are delighted that Taoiseach Enda Kenny was the first person to use the new lectern specifically designed for visiting dignitaries to Gaelscoil na Cruaiche".

Gaelscoil na Cruaiche Principal Mairéad Ní Ruáin said "We are delighted to have been afforded this unique opportunity to work in collaboration with a third-level institution such as the GMIT in Letterfrack. The creativity and professionalism shown by the students and their lecturers is truly inspiring and as a result, their carefully crafted furniture now adorn our school."



GMIT Academic Scholarship recipients with GMIT President Michael Carmody, L to R: Ann Marie Curran (mature student), Loughrea, Aisling Moran, Westport, Aoife Wan, Bishop O'Donnell Road, Galway, Colin Folan, Cappagh Road, Galway, Michael Carmody, Emer McDermott, Leckaun, Co. Leitrim, Kalila Keane, Ballina, and Ogie Hollywood, Moate, Co. Westmeath. [Missing from the picture are Diarmuid Reynolds, Corrandulla and Ross Mennie, Craughwell]

€56,000 in scholarships

GMIT awarded 18 scholarships worth almost €56,000 this academic year. Nine first year students were awarded academic scholarships for achieving high marks in the Leaving Certificate in 2011. Each of the students received a cheque for €1,200 at a reception hosted by the Institute for the students, their families and teachers.

Access Scholarships were also awarded to nine First Year students for this academic year. Each student receives €5,000 over the duration of the programme they study in GMIT.

Timber treats in store for kids



GMIT Letterfrack student Diarmuid O'Conghaile (National Skills 2011 winner) presenting his design to Mother Máire Hickey, OSB of Kylemore Abbey.

One of the most beautiful places in Ireland has become a children's wonderland, thanks to the skill of students on the B.Sc. (Hons) in Furniture Design & Manufacture programme at GMIT Letterfrack.

The students and staff accepted an invitation from the owners of Kylemore Abbey to design and build an outdoor children's furniture and play trail to commemorate the life of Mitchell Henry who built the castle for his wife and nine children in the 1850s.

Each student was assigned a specific location and asked to capture its essence and adapt the furniture to its particular environment. They used timber from trees that fell naturally on the Kylemore estate, just a few of the 300,000 trees planted by Mitchell Henry 140 years ago.

The finished pieces form part of a permanent interactive exhibition on the Kylemore estate. With 200,000 vis-

itors to Kylemore every year, it also provides a wonderful opportunity for students to have their names—as furniture designer/makers—in the public domain.

GMIT lecturer Anthony Clare says “The potential of engaging the creative minds and technical ability of our students with a project centred on fun, imagination, exploration and discovery for young children has brought about a project of huge significance, with inspired results. This framed within the backdrop of the grounds of Kylemore Abbey has made it all the more impressive.”

Bríd Connell of Kylemore Tourism says, “We are delighted with the work of GMIT Letterfrack. They have an international reputation for excellence

in design quality and manufacturing expertise. The students and their lecturers have a great energy and enthusiasm for the project which has translated into unique pieces of interactive furniture.”



Sheep made by second year student Gavin Griffin who is studying the B.Sc. in Furniture Design and Manufacture.

Students share their know-how



The GMIT Scratch Tutor Team (Electronic and Electrical Engineering students) with their Student Achievement Awards 2012. L to R: Outgoing SU Vice-President, Alan O'Doherty; Abdul Alharbi, Fiona Daly, Brian Quinn, James Gleeson, Gints Petersons, JJ Mahony, Kieran Canavan and Martin Greanham.

Students in the GMIT Electronic and Electrical Engineering Department are using their technical know-how to assist people in the local and global community with projects ranging from teaching primary school children the programming language ‘Scratch’, to developing websites for local charities and refurbishing PCs for distribution to schools in Africa.

The students' work has been incorporated into their programme of study as a Civic Engagement (CE) module or work placement.

Natasha Rohan, lecturer in the Department and volunteering co-ordinator, says: “The students have done fantastic work and both they and the community partners have benefited greatly from the experience”.

Lecturers win top EU award for language learning kit

Two GMIT lecturers have won a top European award for a free innovative web-based language learning kit called “EuroCatering”, www.eurocatering.org, which caters specifically for workers and trainees in the hospitality and tourism industry.

GMIT’s Anne Brindley, French lecturer, and Colin Gilligan, Hotel lecturer, represent Ireland on the seven-country team who won the European Language Label of the Labels, a prestigious European Commission award. They were presented with the award in Cyprus by the European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth, Mrs Androulla Vassiliou and the Vice-President of the European Parliament Mr Miguel Angel Martinez.

www.eurocatering.org is now available in 12 languages; English, French, Spanish, Dutch, Norwegian, Slovenian, Galician, German, Irish, Italian, Finnish and Polish. The website provides realistic language training with virtual scenes in the



Eurocatering team with Anne Brindley (centre front) and Colin Gilligan (fifth from left).

kitchen and restaurant; illustrated glossaries of professional terminology in each of the languages, a pedagogical tool with interactions and exercises for reinforcements, a glossary of pertinent cultural work-orientation facts, a video of pertinent gesture and more.

Dr Larry Elwood, Head of International Affairs, GMIT, says the Institute is delighted to be involved in

developing this excellent learning product with other EU partners.

“This award combining language training with interactive technologies is a wonderful example of how GMIT continues to play a leading role in the hospitality and tourism sectors, both nationally and internationally.”



The Marine Science team with Dr Joanne O'Brien (second right) and Suzanne Beck (centre).

GMIT marine scientists are leading a national research project “Monitoring Ocean Noise in Irish waters” to help Ireland achieve Good Environmental Status (GES) in European marine waters by 2020.

The GMIT Marine Biodiversity

Research Group has won EPA funding for the www.monitoringoceannoise.com project and are assisted by The Marine Institute, Technical University of Catalonia (UPC), and Biospheric Engineering Ltd. They will also work closely with the Irish Navy

Marine scientists making waves

and the Petroleum Affairs Division of the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources.

Dr Joanne O'Brien, Principal Investigator, says: “The team is working on the development of criteria no. 11, that the introduction of energy, including underwater noise, is at levels that do not adversely affect the marine environment. We recently deployed the first devices with TU of Catalonia and work is progressing well”.

The team includes Suzanne Beck, Research Scientist, Dr Simon Berrow and Dr Ian O'Connor.

RTÉ now making the headlines at GMIT

GMIT and RTÉ have formed a new partnership involving the GMIT Centre for the Creative Arts & Media (Cluain Mhuire campus).

A new agreement, approved by the GMIT Governing Body, will see RTÉ having an on-campus broadcasting facility in the Centre from early 2013. The agreement aims to provide opportunities for GMIT media students to undertake work placements and graduate internships in RTÉ; support and advice from RTÉ in relation to the development and review of programmes; potential for RTÉ staff as adjunct staff or external examiners; the possibility of creating an Ideas Laboratory in the Centre; and access to new technologies in RTÉ.

GMIT President Michael Carmody says the collaboration is an important step in establishing the Centre for Creative Arts and Media as a focal point for media-related higher education in Galway.



The GMIT Centre for the Creative Arts and Media at Cluain Mhuire, which will accommodate RTÉ Galway's studios.

“The association with RTÉ and its expertise in modern media technologies will add a new dimension to our B.A. (Hons) in Film & Documentary, along with providing work experience and employment opportunities for our students and graduates”, Mr Carmody adds.

GMIT is one of five Institutes of Technology partnering with RTÉ. Joint working groups have been established between each IT and RTÉ to look at the range and potential of these new relationships.

Alliance briefing for Oireachtas members

GMIT, IT Sligo and Letterkenny IT held a briefing in Dublin in September for TDs and Senators from the west and north-west region about the new Connacht-Ulster alliance, signed in Castlebar during the summer in the presence of An Taoiseach Enda Kenny.

The agreement aims to enhance collaboration and co-operation between the three Institutes in areas such as:



- Programme provision
- Programme delivery
- Online/blended delivery
- Shared services
- Research

Chairman of GMIT; Michael Carmody, President of GMIT; Senator Fidelma Healy-Eames (FG).

The ultimate aim of the three institutes is to achieve designation as a Technological University (TU).

Pictured (left), L to R: Eamon O’Cúiv TD (FF), Galway West; Des Mahon,

Pictured (above) at the briefing in Dublin, L to R: Michael Carmody, GMIT President; Noel Greally TD (Ind), Galway West, Des Mahon, Chairman of GMIT, Michael Comiskey TD (FG), Leitrim; Dara Calleary TD (FF), Mayo, and Frank Feehan TD (FG), Roscommon.



Zambia project a model for future success



Dr Paddy Tobin (back left), who initiated Letterfrack's involvement in the Zambia project, with graduate Ann Foley and Dermot O'Donovan, Head of the Letterfrack campus. Front, L to R: Graduates Fiachra McInerney, Dan Wright and Ray Griffin with Sr Mary Fallon.

An innovative woodwork programme, developed and delivered by GMIT Letterfrack students and staff in a poverty stricken area of Zambia has been

such a success the model is to be rolled out in other African locations.

Graduates Fiachra McInerney, Dan Wright, Ann Foley, and Ray Griffin,

with the support of GMIT and lecturer Dr Paddy Tobin, helped set up the facility in 2009 in Maamba in addition to teaching at the centre where some of the students are now qualified to teach the skills programme. The centre is currently preparing to take commercial orders which will make it self-sustaining.

Plans are also underway to set up an independent charity organisation dedicated to establishing more woodwork training centres in other parts of Zambia and Africa, involving student and graduate volunteers led by graduate Fiachra McInerney and supported by Dr Tobin.



GMIT Letterfrack graduate Ann Foley teaching her class in Zambia.

Increase in number of international students

Galway-Mayo IT has increased its number of exchange agreements with higher education institutes in Europe, the US, Middle East and China in recent years with some 340 international students now studying a range of undergraduate programmes in all campuses.

The majority of GMIT's international students are from Saudi Arabia and China, with all Saudi students undertaking English courses on campus before being admitted to degree programmes and Chinese students (Nanchang University and Wuxi South Ocean College) transferring directly into the third year of GMIT programmes.

Erasmus students from France, Germany and Spain have been coming on exchange programmes to GMIT since the late 80s and numbers have been increasing from Scandinavia, with interest also from the Central Gulf states, India and China.

Dr Larry Elwood, Head of International Affairs, GMIT, says international student numbers are expected to grow strongly over the coming years, with English language degree programmes in strong demand.

"International students make a very significant contribution to GMIT, culturally as well as educationally and economically. We are justifiably proud of our achievement as the Institute of Technology with the highest number of outgoing Erasmus students last year

when 97 GMIT students went on Erasmus placements abroad. We hope to grow these numbers even further in the coming years.

"Next year, GMIT staff and students will lecture and study in areas as far away as China and Australia, and we will welcome faculty and students from Europe, America and China".

Erasmus students in GMIT come from France, Spain, Germany, Norway and Sweden. Non-EU students come from China, United States and Saudi Arabia.

US HE institutions are Western Carolina University, Columbus State University, Johnson and Wales University, Southern Utah University, and University of Wisconsin Platteville.

Only way is up for construction industry

Over 150 GMIT students and staff were joined by some 50 practitioners at the second annual conference hosted by the GMIT Department of Building & Civil Engineering to mark International Construction Management Day.

Organisations in attendance included Davis Langdon; CIF; Stewarts; Quigg Golden; SIAC; CIOB, as well as GMIT graduates.

“It is estimated that 30,000 new construction managers will be needed in the UK between now and 2016”

Many of the speakers believe the level of activity in the industry has reached the bottom of the cycle and is now well below the level required to sustain the Irish economy into the future. The more optimistic predictions suggest the industry will double from its current size by 2016 with an increasing focus on management and organisation and technology leading to significant job opportunities for Irish graduates.

Chris Blyth, CIOB, described how



L to R: John O'Regan, Davis Langdon; Joe Collier, CIOB; Mary Rogers, Head of the Department of Building & Civil Engineering; Steven McGee, Stewarts; Michael Connaghan CBRE/ Google; Martin Taggart, lecturer, conference organiser and Chair; Niall Crosson, Ecological Building Systems; and John Hanahoe, lecturer.

the industry is changing with a reduction in manual trades and a rapidly increasing demand for qualified construction managers worldwide. “It is estimated that 30,000 new construction managers will be needed in the UK between now and 2016. This provides tremendous opportunities for Construction Management graduates.” he said.

Stephen McGee of locally based Stewarts (JSL) spoke about his company’s use of Building Information

Modelling (BIM) which identifies and eliminates design faults before they reach the construction phase.

The BSc (Hons) Architectural Technology at GMIT has a focus on the use of BIM and the graduates this year will be at the leading edge of this industry.

GMIT is also planning to provide a B.Eng (Hons) Civil Engineering this year with a focus on the use of BIM and related software systems.

Whale of a time at cetacean conference

Over 500 international marine mammal biologists gathered in the Galway Bay Hotel for the 26th annual conference of the European Cetacean Society (ECS) organised by GMIT and the Irish Whale and Dolphin Group (IWDG).

The event was formally opened by the Minister of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht Jimmy Deenihan and the President of GMIT Michael Carmody and included two days of workshops in GMIT’s Galway campus.

Keynote speakers were Professor Louis Herman of Hawaii, an international expert on dolphin cognitive

abilities and author of ‘Cetacean Behavior and Language and Communication’ and Greg Donovan, Head of Science at the International Whaling Commission.

The scientific programme saw 40 oral presentations, 30 short communications and over 240 poster presentations. Dr Thierry Jauniaux, President of the European Cetacean Society, paid tribute to GMIT’s organising committee led by Dr Ian O’Connor and Dr Simon Berrow. “The organising team did excellent work. ECS Galway will stay in the memory of all participants.” he said.



Some of the delegates attending the ECS conference.

Strategic alliances are key to a brighter future

GMIT is continuously engaging with external stakeholders including industry, employers, professional bodies, public organisations and voluntary and community groups to inform key decisions. A number of strategic alliances have been put in place in recent years:

Connacht-Ulster Alliance: This new agreement sees GMIT, IT Sligo and Letterkenny IT working together on areas such as flexible learning delivery, research and innovation, bespoke delivery for industry, links to local Education and Training Boards, international student recruitment and staff development. One of the key objectives is to meet the rigorous criteria required to achieve re-designation as a Technological University. This alliance forms part of a cluster of higher and further education providers in the region and includes collaborations with cross-border institutions.

GMIT and NUI Galway Strategic Alliance: This agreement opens up collaborative opportunities in teaching and learning, research, entrepreneurship, regional development, commercialisation, innovation, distance education, and work based learning.

GMIT and the Marine Institute: The two organisations are working together to further develop marine research capabilities, undergraduate and postgraduate marine science programmes and staff training & development initiatives in the two institutes. The agreement allows for reciprocal adjunct appoint-



An Taoiseach Enda Kenny in GMIT Castlebar for the formal signing of the Connacht-Ulster Alliance between GMIT, Letterkenny IT and IT, Sligo. Front row, L to R: Paul Hannigan, LYIT President, Prof Terri Scott, IT, Sligo President, Michael Carmody, GMIT President. Back row, L to R: Henry McGarvey, Governing Body Chairman, LYIT, Ray MacSharry, Governing Body Chairman, IT, Sligo and Des Mahon, Governing Body Chairman, GMIT.

ments between the two organisations.

Lionra network: GMIT is a partner of this network, working to develop a collaborative response by the third-level sector to the development needs of the Border, Midlands and Western (BMW) region. This collaboration has facilitated access to third-level education, links with local communities and social partners, and a synergy in the approach to improving the region's capacity for sustained de-

velopment and innovation. The seven Lionra institutions are GMIT, IT Sligo, Athlone IT, Letterkenny IT, NUI Galway, Dundalk IT, and St Angela's College, Sligo.

EU project FutureSME: GMIT works with companies in the West of Ireland in collaboration with a wide range of EU partners to develop the potential of the SME sector. Work of this nature is key to the sustainability of the region.

International social care e-project

In the first such initiative of its kind, a group of ten final year Applied Social Studies students from GMIT Castlebar and eight final year Social Work students from NHL, Leeuwarden in The Netherlands, have teamed up to collaborate on a series of projects researching specific social challenges in each country, comparing them and making recommendations.

Working together in four cross-national teams, the students studied childcare provision, attitudes towards homosexuality among second-level students, early teenage perspectives on alcohol and poli-

cies regarding asylum seekers. They utilised internet technology including skype, facebook and youtube, culminating in a joint presentation using video-conferencing in May (2012).

The presentations were the culmination of five months of work involving GMIT students participating by video conference at an International Conference on Social Work in Leeuwarden. Two GMIT students also spent six weeks in Leeuwarden and a number of lecturer exchanges further facilitated the collaborative work.

"The project is regarded in the wider

Dutch education sector as very innovative and is one that is being closely watched." says Dr Mark Garavan, Applied Social Studies lecturer and programme chair.

"It has been a very interesting project for us and offers a unique inter-cultural experience supported by ICT. The engagement by the students has been excellent and has profoundly contributed to their personal and professional development. We see this e-project forming an integral part of the Applied Social Studies programme in GMIT, with additional learning partner institutions."

€6m student building for Galway campus

Several new buildings and a number of extensions and refurbishments have been carried out on GMIT campuses in recent years, most notably the new award-winning IT Learning Resource Centre in Galway, two Innovation in Business Centres (iBCs), a new Nursing & Health Sciences Department at Castlebar, and extensions and refurbishments to the Dublin Road, Castlebar and Letterfrack campuses.

Plans are underway for a new 2,600sqm multi-functional student building to support sporting activities at the Dublin Road (Galway) campus. The proposed €6m building includes a modern sports hall and gym and is expected to be completed in 2014. GMIT Estates Manager David Lee says the Institute is actively examining the options of gaining rights of access and

use to the various community playing fields and pitches surrounding the campuses.

“These include soccer, rugby, and GAA facilities run by clubs, some owned-freehold, and some leasehold from Galway City Council. Discussions have been underway for a number of

months with the various clubs in the area with the objective of securing usage rights for GMIT groups. Plans are also being considered for an all-weather pitch facility at the Dublin Road campus and an extension and refurbishment to the existing student services areas of the campus.”



The stylish architecture at GMIT is reflected both internally and externally in these images. Below, the award-winning IT Learning Resource Centre, Galway campus, designed by Murray O’Laoire Architects.



A green first for Castlebar



DkIT Green-Campus Committee on a visit to GMIT Castlebar: L-R: Sonya Rice, DkIT, Olive Greaney, GMIT, Lynda Huxley, GMIT, Fiona Rooney, DkIT, Ann Cleary, DkIT, Moireen Taggart, Yvonne McDermott, GMIT, Michael Gill, GMIT.

The Castlebar campus of GMIT marked a milestone in its history last year by becoming the first Institute of Technology campus in Ireland to be awarded the prestigious international FEE Green-Campus Award, facilitated by environmental body, An Taisce.

Within two years of signing up to the Green-Campus programme, campus students and staff had diverted twelve tonnes of waste from landfill through recycling, cut annual paper consumption by 2.5 million sheets, recycled 60kg of printer cartridges, and saved 956 litres of water per day by installing flushing systems on urinals.

Other initiatives saw PC remote shutdown in all computer labs, energy shutdowns during holiday periods, changeover to renewable energy supplier ESBIE, thermostatic radiator valves installed throughout campus and a range of collaborative initiatives involving local community organisations.

Lynda Huxley, Chairperson of the GMIT Green-Campus Committee, says they have been busy helping to spread the Green ethos in other colleges: “We have been working closely with the GMIT Letterfrack

campus, Dundalk IT and Sligo IT to help them progress towards applying for a Green Flag and at the same time working on new projects under the themes of Biodiversity and Transport.

“We have been developing the curriculum link to GMIT programmes with student projects feeding into Green-Campus and organised talks tied in with modules. The Students Union President has been a great supporter of Green-Campus to the extent that the position of Green Campus Officer was also created.”

“We are delighted to have been given an A rating in the recent IBAL league as we’ve been holding regular clean ups. We also have close links with Castlebar Tidy Towns and have been included in their application

for the Tidy Towns Awards.”

Commenting at the Green Flag presentation ceremony, Patricia Oliver, Director of An Taisce’s Environmental Education Unit, paid tribute to GMIT Castlebar: “The successful implementation of the seven steps of the programme and the partnership which has been formed by the GMIT Castlebar Green-Campus Committee is unique in many respects and will, I am sure, be an example and inspiration to many more third-level institutions not only in Ireland but throughout the entire network of countries.”

Follow the committee’ activities on: <http://www.facebook.com/greencampus.gmitcastlebar>

‘Save our swifts’ project

The swift is a bird of conservation concern in Ireland due to loss of breeding sites. They nest mainly in tall buildings, usually under the eaves. It is known that swifts nest in Castlebar and in particular at the GMIT campus.

With the aim of raising awareness of the nesting requirements of the birds the Green-Campus Committee

has erected nest boxes to provide nest sites for swifts.

The project is linked with environmental modules on the Heritage and Outdoor Education degree programmes and demonstrates to students on the Construction programme how wildlife can be affected by building renovation work.



GAA clubs are setting the standard

GMIT's GAA Development Officer Damian Curley outlines the various GAA activities and events in the Galway campuses since he first joined GMIT in 1997.

GMIT has a vibrant GAA scene with numerous teams and clubs currently comprising some 350 students.

All teams compete in the third-level colleges' leagues and championships every year, while the senior teams in hurling and football also compete in the Leinster Kehoe Cup Hurling League and FBD Football League with the Connacht inter-county teams.

Nowadays, GMIT play something in the region of 60 competitive games across all sports over a given academic year, and would also participate in a number of challenge games and blitzes.

The Gaelic Football Club was founded by former GMIT Registrar, Bernard O'Hara in 1973 and participated in the HE Division 2 Championship. While success was hard to come by in the early years, the club prospered and helped develop many fine footballers who went on to represent their respective counties during the 70s and 80s. It was in the late 80s that the club came into its own when GMIT won the Trench Cup in 1989 and 1996 under the guidance of Sean O'Dea, GMIT Computer Services Dept. Victory in the Division 2 League in 1996 meant that the club moved up to Division 1 and Sigerson football, a position GMIT has enjoyed ever since. The GMIT GAA Club also made history in 2006 when it became the first college club to win the Connacht FBD League.

The Hurling Club was formed in 1973 by former Maths lecturer Donncha O hÉallaithe and participated in the intermediate division of the HE competitions. In 1980, John Sherry took over and made an outstanding contribution to the promotion of hurling in the college and along with Liam Noonan, Computer Services Department, ensured that the club went from strength to strength. GMIT won the Division 2 League on four occasions and the Ryan Cup in 1990. The club has played in Division 1 and Fitzgibbon Cup since 1997. The winning of the All-Ireland Division 1 Fresher Championship in 1999 was a major highlight of the past few decades, and the capture of the Leinster Kehoe Cup in

2012, under the guidance of Michael Geoghegan, is the latest GMIT victory.

Camogie and Ladies Football have been an integral part of sporting life in GMIT since 1997 when a major effort was made to promote the games. Since that time much success has come the way of both codes, but in particular Camogie. The club has won the Fr Maher Shield and the Purcell Shield and has established itself as a Purcell Cup contender in a few short years.

The Ladies Footballers captured the Donaghy Cup in 2006 and won the Lynch Shield in 2007 after being promoted to Division 2. They have also been successful in winning Connacht Division 2 and 3 titles over the last couple of years. It still remains one of the fastest growing sports in the college.

For many years the college colours reflected the Galway inter county colours of maroon and white but over the years a sky blue has been introduced to reflect the changing GMIT crest.

The introduction of Annual Special Achievement Awards for individuals and teams vastly improved participation in sport. Ruth Merrigan, General Manager of the GMIT Students Union, organises the Annual Awards Ceremony and Banquet.

The awards have been presented by sports greats such as Joe McDonagh, former GAA President, Packie Bonner, soccer goalkeeper legend and Paul McGrath. Sports bursaries were also another incentive to improve performance and raise the profile of sport in the Institute.



GMIT Gaelic Football team, FBD Connacht League winners 2006: Back row, L to R: Damian Healy, Aidan Kilcoyne, Alan Rastery, Ronan McNamara, Brian O'Donoghue, Richie Feeney, Ja Egan, Darren Mullahy. Front row, L to R: Nicky Joyce, Matt Flannery, Alan Burke (Kilmaine), Paul Geraghty (Capt), Barry Prior, Brian Darby, Alan Burke (Corofin).



GMIT Fresher Hurling team, All-Ireland winners 1999: Back row, L to R: Mark Finnerty, Niall Caffrey, David Fahy, Diarmuid Cloonan, John O'Donoghue, Micheal Greaney, Eugene Gorman, Niall O'Connor, Fintan McNamara, Mark Ryan, Richie Gilligan, Brian Costello, Colm Pierce, Liam Noonan. Front row, L to R: Johnny Keane, Tony Monaghan, Shane Hynes, Eamon Donoghue, Bryon Duff, Conor Gath, Jamie Cannon, Paul Carroll, Ray Treacy.



No shortage of sports options on campus

Frank Ryan, Sports Officer at GMIT, Galway from 1979 to 2010 casts an eye back over the years.

Sport in GMIT for the past 40 years has been a process of continuing development. For me, it covered a span of 31 years from March 1979 to December 2010. For the first few years sport was co-ordinated by Peadar O'Dowd, who cajoled and coerced other members of staff into taking charge of football, soccer and rugby, the three main sports that were practised at that time.

A new sportshall was built and opened in 1978 with Jennifer Foley holding the reins until I arrived in 1979. With little activity taking place there, the emphasis up to then being on outdoor field games, I embarked on a plan to start a number of new activities in the evening.

During the day CERT and ANCO students attended Physical Education Classes conducted by myself and Ray McBride, well known actor and Irish dancer who worked in the college on a part time basis. A number of Adult Night Classes were organised and offered to the general public including Badminton, Basketball and Tennis.

Coaches were engaged for these classes and for the student clubs, which also ran in the sportshall over the years.

A major improvement in the Sports Facilities was the converting of the Café on the balcony of the Sportshall into a

fitness Centre in 2002. This was equipped with state of the art cardiovascular and weight training equipment and gave students the opportunity to get fit, the facility being open from early morning to late at night.

Diane Middleton managed this facility until Eimear Glennon took over, assisted by Ray O'Neill. The purchase of the grounds across the road for the Institute was another great boost to facilities, providing both a Gaelic pitch and a soccer pitch.

While GAA has been the major club attracting students over the years, several other sports made their mark at GMIT. The late Nicky Hardiman played a big role in teaching martial arts and self defence, as did John Tunney, John Creaven, John Allen and Dave Ryan. John Eaton and Joel Francoise were instrumental in introducing Aikido and Tae-Kwon-Do.

Table Tennis, Tennis and Badminton were all popular, as were Basketball and Volleyball. Among the coaches who gave of their time were Mary Kelly, Tony Flannery, Johnny Murray, Ted Parslow, Eamon Bradshaw, Mary Barrett, Michael McAuliffe, Joe King and James Burke. Soccer was always strong in GMIT and Michael O'Flaherty, Ray Connolly, Don O'Riordan, John Morris Burke, John O'Dowd and David Hand all

played their part in preparing teams for competition. Sean Gleeson and Mhaoiliosa Collins did their bit for women's soccer teams.

Pat O'Connell generated much interest in Athletics and Cross Country running. Former student, Fiona McMurrugh won three All Ireland titles in a row.

Eamon Molloy was one of the first Connacht Branch Rugby coaches to give time to coaching the GMIT squad. Gerry O'Neill from the Hotel School also enthusiastically gave of his coaching expertise. In the late 90s the Lions and former Irish coach Warren Gatland also helped coach the GMIT team.

Other popular sports over the years were archery thanks to the efforts of Robert and Clare Dagger and Paul Burke. Joseph Ryan and Shane Flaherty both represented the college and Ireland in Kayaking.

The Equestrian Club was a very active club for a number of years. Student Aoife Murray was a winner of the show jumping at the Intersivity on one occasion. Paintball was another activity popular with students, as were aerobics, yoga and kickboxing in more recent times. Mixed indoor hockey was an active club activity for a period and some Galway girls were selected on Irish College teams for trips abroad.



Ladies football team 1989.



Hurling team 1989.



Small campus big ambitions

Nigel Jennings, Sports Officer, GMIT Castlebar, reflects here on years of outstanding sporting achievements by students at the Mayo campus.

Support has always played an integral role in campus life in GMIT Castlebar. In the early years when there was a small intake Fr Mike Murphy, Chaplain, quickly fashioned representative teams who rapidly established themselves on the college scene.

Alongside coach Michael McNicholas, Fr Mike took men's and women's soccer teams to an invitational tournament in Paris; the Men's team surprised many by winning their qualifying group and returning to Paris for the closing stages of the tournament. This set the tone for what was to become a recurring theme – the small college with big aspirations.

In the years that followed, GMIT Castlebar has continued to punch above its weight. Establishing a hurling team in Mayo, which is no hurling stronghold, to quickly gaining national honours was one of the most significant early achievements. Under the guidance of lecturer Seamus Dowling they won division 2 of the HE hurling league in 2000. Championship honours were to follow when in 2004, under the stewardship of Kevin O'Connor, the hurlers tasted All-Ireland success when they won The Fergal Maher Cup, defeating near neighbours GMIT Letterfrack in the final in Athlone as part of the Fitzgibbon weekend

‘*Exceptional players, inspirational leaders*’

The hurlers set the tone and whether it was blackbelt Warren Rooney dominating the colleges kendo scene during his time here, or the inspirational group of Kayakers such as Mike Jones and Graham Clarke, who pioneered adventurous expeditions to Norway, the Alps and The Himalayas, victories kept coming.

Most notable is the victory over University of Limerick ladies soccer team. The GMIT ladies team started by shocking the “A” team with a 2-1 defeat in the intervarsities in Castlebar in March 2005 followed by league and cup wins over the UL “B” team and culminating in the victory over the “A” team on their home patch in the WSCAI indoor intervarsity Plate Final in February 2006 – another national title and more headlines. Even more was to come when combined with GMIT Galway, the ladies repeated the feat the following year, 2007, to success-

fully defend their national title and fittingly mark the contribution of an exceptionally talented group of ladies such as Louise Mulready and Lorraine Coen.

The surfers weren't going to be left out if national medals were being handed out and Sandra Blong's fine showing in the Women's section was a major factor in the team claiming bronze at the 2007 intervarsities.

The women's Gaelic football team down through the years have seen exceptional players, inspirational leaders, unforgettable teams, entertaining football, brilliant coaches (Billy McNicholas and Cora Staunton), impressive achievements and many vintage performances but ultimately time and again, heartbreak.

In 2002, 2003 and 2004 the team contested and lost three All-Ireland championship finals and one league final. After a few lean years they resurrected in 2008 and 2009, but near misses were again the order of the day. All the pain and misery was forgotten in 2010 when fate and injury ruled Sonya Condon out of the team and with former student Diarmud McCaughey she took the reins and led, arguably, the most talented group of ladies ever assembled under the GMIT banner to All-Ireland glory, winning The Lagan Cup in emphatic style in 2010. While the following year failed to live up to the big billing, it's a mark of the strength and depth of talent that in 2012 the girls were again involved in the final – ultimately they came up short but with a very young team they are looking forward to next year's challenge.

The men's soccer team have for three years running emerged from their group in the CUFL league and delighted in knocking colleagues and neighbours GMIT Galway out the Umbro cup in 2009, but it was in The CFAI Umbro Plate that they came closest to being rewarded for their progress. Having successfully bid to



All-Ireland hurling champions, Fergal Maher Cup 2004.



WSCAI Intersarsity plate winners 2007.

host the finals in 2011 they put together a great run of games to ensure they would be in the final in front of a home crowd. A horrendous night didn't deter a huge crowd coming to the game under lights in Celtic Park and creating an incredible atmosphere. But it did make a lottery of the game, the wind in particular playing havoc and the lads eventually were runners up.

If there is one area where our small numbers truly take bigger colleges by surprise it's in the arena of adventure sports; Mick Byrne and Dan Kealy claimed gold and silver in the 2008 windsurfing intersvarsities; Jacek Tomiak, Dan Keegan and Laura Griffin all claimed medals this year leading to us hosting the prestigious event the following year; Mary Maloney and Deirdre Cormican claimed similar medals in the rock climbing intersvarsities; and Gareth Gargan claimed silver

in the Longboard event at the surfing intersvarsities in the same year. No matter how big the college, they know they will have stiff competition when GMIT Castlebar enter the fray.

Nowhere is this more evident than in Kayaking. In 2011 GMIT Castlebar defeated the best all the other colleges had to offer to be crowned National Kayak Polo champions at the intersvarsities in Cork and came third overall. This year we hosted the event—the biggest participation event in the college sporting calendar—and retained the Kayak Polo title.

Adding to these achievements the "fit4work" programme means staff & students alike have access to affordable accessible exercise classes daily. The thriving clubs and societies scene ensures that all tastes and levels of ability and interest are catered for in all of the clubs above, as well as yoga, dance, judo and golf.



Mike Rogerson, GMIT completing a loop Kayak, during the Kayaking Intersvarsities 2012, hosted by the Mayo campus.



All Ireland champions, womens GAA Lagan cup 2010.



An invaluable contribution to Irish education

Former GMIT Registrar and accomplished author, Bernard O'Hara traces the milestones over the last 40 years.

The opening of the Regional Technical Colleges from the 1970s initiated one of the most exciting developments in Irish education during the twentieth century. They brought a strong vocational orientation, increased participation and an important regional dimension to higher education in Ireland.

In the 1960s, Ireland had a small elite system of higher education, catering almost exclusively to the professions and some employment outlets in the public sector.

When the process of the industrialisation accelerated during the 1960s, it became apparent that there was a scarcity of technical, technological, scientific and management expertise.

On 20 May 1963, the Minister for Education, Dr Patrick Hillery, announced the establishment of a number of Regional Technical Colleges. The role of the colleges was specified in the Report of the Steering Committee of Higher Education (1967):

We believe that the long-term function of the colleges will be to educate for trade and industry over a broad spectrum of occupations ranging from craft to professional, notably in engineering and science but also in commercial, linguistic and other specialties. They will, however, be more immediately concerned with providing courses aimed at filling gaps in the industrial manpower structure, particularly in the technician area.

Organisational structure

The RTCs were established under section 21 (2) of the Vocational Education Act 1930. Each college was managed by a Board of Management operating as a sub-committee of the parent Vocational Education Committee (the one in whose functional area it was situated). Each college had an Advisory Council, broadly representative of educational, agricultural and industrial interests in the region. Funding came from the Department of Education through the parent Vocational Education Committee. Educational awards were made by the National Council for Educational Awards (NCEA) which was established on an ad hoc basis in April 1972 and on a statutory basis from 16 July 1980.



Opening day, 12 April 1973.

RTC Galway

Galway, with a population of 27,726 in 1971, was one of the locations selected for an RTC as it became a growth centre for economic development. The pioneering work was undertaken by The City of Galway Vocational Education Committee. After inspection, it was agreed that the most suitable site was one of nine hectares on the then Dublin Road owned by Galway Corporation. The contract to purchase this site for £25,000 was signed on 25 September 1967.

John Sisk and Son (Ireland) Ltd was selected as the main contractor. The floor area of the original building, designed to accommodate 1,100 students, was 11,410 square metres. All the construction work was not completed until early 1973, and cost £950,000, with a separate allocation for equipment and furniture. The building had a rather austere functional appearance with little aesthetic appeal.

First RTC employees

Forty-five candidates applied for the post of Principal in November 1971. Sixteen were short-listed for interview. Gabriel (Gay) Corr, a first class honours science graduate from UCG and

a member of the Royal Society of Chemistry, was appointed as Principal. Gay Corr took up his new role on 1 April 1972 in a room in the County Buildings in Prospect Hill and did Trojan work to have staff and students in the new college in September that year. Philomena Lydon became the second employee when she started as a clerical officer on 1 May. During the summer, four senior staff were appointed; Michael Corrigan, a Trinity College Dublin graduate, was appointed Head of Business Studies; Brendan S. O'Foighil, a civil engineer, was Head of Engineering; Gerald B Hughes, a graduate of Cathal Brugha Street College of Catering, as Head of Hotel and Catering Studies; and Dr Brian Place, a science graduate from Birmingham University, was appointed Head of Science. Other academic technical and administrative staff were appointed from September 1972.

Opening

The first students entered the Regional Technical College, Galway, on Monday 18 September 1972 and a new era in the educational history of the city and region began. During the academic year 1972/73, the college had 1,213 registered students (319 full-



Opening day ceremony, 12 April 1973.

time third-level; 76 full-time craft; 42 on day and block release courses; 212 apprentices and 564 on adult and continuing education programmes). A total of 750 applied for the full-time third-level places and selection was based on Leaving Certificate performances and interview scores. Galway became the main centre outside Dublin for both craft and management education and training for the hotel industry, which generated considerable publicity.

The Regional Technical College Galway was officially opened on Thursday 12 April 1973 by Richard Burke TD, Minister for Education. Educational curriculae had to be prepared and submitted to the NCEA seeking recognition. It took time to get all programmes approved. Over a few years, a ladder structure of educational qualifications emerged: A National Certificate took two years, plus one year to a National Diploma, plus one year to a degree, or three-year ab-initio Diploma, or four-year ab-initio degree. The first graduation ceremony took place in November 1974.

Binary or comprehensive system?

On 16 December 1974, Richard Burke, Minister for Education in the Fine Gael/Labour Government, caused consternation when he made a major announcement in relation to higher education, including a decision to establish a comprehensive system of

higher education rather than a binary one. The decision had not been preceded by a White Paper or any discussions and, consequently, the issues were never properly considered or evaluated.

There were also major changes for the universities. The announcement of a comprehensive system meant the removal of degree awarding powers from the NCEA. The first degree submission from a Regional Technical College came from Galway in respect of a Hotel and Catering Management programme and it had been evaluated but not approved before the 16 December 1974 decision. A period of great uncertainty followed and in March 1975, the College was informed that the NCEA would be allowed to approve the award as ‘a temporary arrangement’ if all the specified conditions were satisfied. In July 1975, this arrangement was approved by the Council of the NCEA for all students graduating up to 1979.

When the NCEA was re-constituted in February 1976, its powers to grant and confer awards applied to certificates and diplomas only. Because the NCEA had already granted degree recognition to the Galway course and, as no university was then in a position to validate it, the Council continued to assess student performance in accordance with the conditions of approval. Students on the first cycle of the course had followed the curriculum and assessment procedures approved by the NCEA for degree

recognition and four passed the final examinations in May / June 1976. About September of that year, it was rumoured that the successful students were to receive ‘advanced diplomas in hotel and catering management’ rather than degrees, as the NCEA was not being allowed to honour its commitment. This rumour was later confirmed by the NCEA following a Council decision to that effect on 14 October 1976. A rubric was to be inserted on each parchment stating that it was ‘of degree standard’. There were protests from students, parents, staff and the Board of Management, but the decision was not altered.

The annual conferring ceremony took place on Monday 15 November amid protests by students and great tension. Students from the hotel management course were left until last. The first student from the class to be called to the podium was presented with his parchment by Dr Tom Walsh, chairperson of the NCEA. The student read it and saw that it was called an ‘Advanced Diploma in Hotel and Catering Management’. He told the chairperson that he was not accepting it, and handed the document back.



Opening ceremony event, 12 April 1973.

There was consternation on the platform and rapturous applause from the audience. The same procedure was followed by the other three students. This was followed by three speeches, the first from Dr Tom Walsh, who criticised the students for what they did, the second by the Principal, Gay Corr, and the final one by Michael O’Sullivan, chairperson of the Board of Management, who said that the students were ‘perfectly correct in their actions’. Gay Corr in a firm and courageous address said:

“Under normal circumstances I would, on an occasion such as this, spend some time outlining for you the progress of our in-

stitution over the past twelve months and the hopes and aspirations we have for the year ahead. This, however, ladies and gentlemen, is not a normal occasion; it is the first time at a graduation ceremony I have seen students conferred with a qualification other than that for which they were assessed in their final examinations. It is also the first occasion on which I have seen the award being conferred described as 'equal to', 'equivalent to', or 'the same as' an award of another designation. Finally, and sadly, it is my first experience of seeing naked injustice being done to students who successfully completed their examinations simply because they were unlucky enough to fall outside the structure of some pre-determined administrative framework over which they had no control. I am, of course, referring to the graduates of our four year course in hotel and catering management. It is indeed ironic that the new Government proposals, whose declared aims were to upgrade the status of the technological sector of education, should have as its first casualties students in a Regional Technical College who must have their qualifications downgraded in order to meet Government policy. I would humbly submit, ladies and gentlemen, that if we are to build a better educational system in this country for our young people, then the structures we construct and the means we employ should be humane, based on justice and capable of treating all our children equally."

The situation was well publicised locally and nationally with the Students' Union playing a big role. Many local and national organisations made representations to the Department of Education. Richard Burke was appointed as European Economic Community Commissioner in November 1976 and he was very happy to leave Irish politics.

Within a few days of becoming Minister for Education on 2 December 1976, Peter Barry, to his eternal credit, informed the NCEA that it could award degrees to the 1976 class in accordance with the decision taken in July 1975. At its meeting on 25 January



Conferring, 28 November 1977.



Admiring a new computer, (29 November 1974), donated by Digital Corporation. L to R: Michael O'Sullivan, Chairman of the Board of Management, RTC, Dr Finbar O'Callaghan, Department of Education, Fintan Coogan, Mayor of Galway, Gay Corr, Principal of RTC Galway and Mike Mulqueen, HR Manager, Digital Corporation.

1977, the Council of the NCEA decided to grant a BA degree to the students who successfully completed the four-year course in hotel and catering management at RTC Galway in 1976.

A special conferring ceremony for the four students concerned was held in the College on 9 May 1977, at which the degrees were duly conferred by Dr Tom Walsh. They were the first degrees conferred in an RTC.

In June 1977, a Fianna Fáil Government came into office and on 29 July that year, the Minister for Education, John Wilson, announced that the degree awarding powers of the NCEA were to be restored. Discussion had commenced with University College Galway (UCG) in 1976 to have the hotel and catering management degree approved. However, both sides understood that any recognition was to apply for the future and not retroactively. In September 1979, RTC Galway was informed by UCG that the Senate of the NUI had approved the proposal. This development was considered at length at a Board of Management meeting, and eventually it decided that the course should stay with the NCEA in accordance with the Minister's announcement of July 1977.

Student admission

In the early years of the RTCs, all applicants for third-level certificate or diploma courses who met the minimum entry requirements (Leaving Certificate in five subjects, including English and Mathematics, or equivalent) were called for interview. The

minimum entry for an ab initio degree was Leaving Certificate in six subjects, including English and Mathematics, two of which had to be passed in higher papers at grade C3 or higher. Admission was based on Leaving Certificate and interview performance. Special consideration was given to mature applicants, those aged 23 on or before 1 January in the year of admission. The Central Admissions Office (CAO) was established by the universities in 1976 to process undergraduate admission, but the RTCs did not join the system at that stage. A points system and interviews were continued in the RTCs.

By the end of the 1980s, each of the then nine RTCs had its own separate application procedure and in some cases a different points system. Arising from the initiatives of the Minister for Education Mary O'Rourke, the admission procedure was simplified and standardised in 1991 with the establishment of the Central Admissions Services (CAS), operated by the CAO office in Galway. A new procedure was adopted, under which a single application form and one fee (£18) covered all Universities, RTCs, CoACT and DIT.

Extension

An extension of 5,835 square metres to the original building was completed in April 1977 by PJ Walls Ltd, at a cost of £1m. It was similar to and parallel with the original structure and connected by a bridge. A sports hall was erected in 1977/78. All the early graduates of the college secured employment quickly as new multi-national corporations were established in Gal-



RTC Galway Board of Management 1979: Back row, L to R: John O'Donnell, John Mitchell, Dennis Murphy, Seán O'Regan and James Lyons. Front row, L to R: Seamus MacDomhnaill, CEO of the City of Galway VEC, Micheál Ó hUiginn, and Gay Corr, Principal of RTC Galway.

way and the region and local services expanded.

ESF Grants

On the initiative of Gemma Hussey, Minister for Education from December 1982 to February 1986, all students on a two year Certificate course became eligible for European Social Funding (ESF) grants with effect from the start of the academic year 1974/85. Diploma courses qualified from 1989/90. These grants were not subject to means tests.

Regional linkages

RTC Galway established links and partnerships with various organisations around the west of Ireland, including Mountbellew Agricultural College in 1987, Letterfrack in partnership with Connemara West Ltd in 1987. As a result of a local campaign led by Paddy McGuinness, a campus of RTC Galway was established in Castlebar in 1994. Another campus was established at Cluain Mhuire in Galway city in 1994.

RTC legislation

With the enactment of the Regional Technical Colleges Act 1992 on 1 January 1993, RTC Galway became an autonomous institution of higher education with a legal framework to engage in various non-teaching activities such as research and consultancy. As a result, the college severed its links with Galway VEC. The title of Principal became Director (later President) and new posts such as Registrar and Secretary/Financial Controller were established. Under this legislation, the name

of the college was changed to Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology (GMIT) in January 1998.

Delegated Authority

Following the re-designation of RTCs as Institutes of Technology in 1997 and 1998, the Minister for Education, Niamh Bhreathneach, appointed an international review team, chaired by Professor Dervila Donnely of UCD, to evaluate applications for institutions to make their own awards under delegated authority from the national validation body. GMIT was given delegated authority to make its own awards at National Certificate and National Diploma level in 2001.

Arising from the implementation of the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act 1999, a new national framework of qualifications was established, with a structure of ten levels incorporating standards of knowledge, skills and competence for each. There are five levels applicable to higher education as shown in the table:

National Framework of Qualifications:

Level:	Qualification
10	Doctoral Degree
9	Master's Degree/ Postgraduate Diploma
8	Honours Bachelor Degree/ Higher Diploma
7	Ordinary Bachelor Degree
6	Higher Certificate

All programme in GMIT had to be revised to comply with the learning outcomes specified for each level in the framework as well as implementing policies and procedures for access,

transfer and progression. By then, there were honours degrees available in all specialisms, either ab-initio or add-on, as well as an increasing involvement at postgraduate level.

Following various international reviews, by 2004 GMIT had delegated authority under section 29 of the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act 1999 to confer its own awards at levels 6, 7,8 and 9 in respect of all taught programmes, and in respect of levels 9 and 10 in two research disciplines – Aquatic Science and Mechanical Engineering. All quality assurance policies and procedures were approved in separate reviews.

GMIT won the Sunday Times Institute of Technology of the Year in 2004 and 2006.

New facilities

A new Learning Resource Centre of 10,250 square metres, a landmark building with a design incorporating striking green sails reflecting the maritime history of Galway, was opened in 2003. The building comprises a library and information technology centre accommodating some 900 learners, a high specification auditorium, classrooms and some administration space. Two Innovation in Business Centres (IIBC) were opened in GMIT; in the Dublin Road (Galway) campus during 2005 and in the Castlebar campus the following year.

Presidents and chairpersons

Gay Corr, who had directed the affairs of the college for thirty years, retired in 2002, and was succeeded on 4 October that year by Marion Coy, an arts graduate from UCG who was the Acting Head of the School of Business and Humanities. She led the college for eight years and retired at the end of November 2010. Jim Fennell, the Secretary/Financial Controller was Acting President until 19 April 2011, when Michael Carnmody, a UCG Engineering graduate and former President of Institute of Technology, Tralee, took over as President of GMIT.

The first Chairperson of the Board of Management of RTC Galway was Michael O'Sullivan, a member of Galway VEC. He was succeeded in July 1979 (to 31 December 1992) by Michael O'hUiginn, Managing Director of T. O'hUiginn Teo in Galway and Chair of the City of Galway VEC. He was the appointed Chairperson of the Governing Body from 1 January 1993 and served in that capacity until February 2005. Rory O'Connor, CEO of



RTC Galway student protest, Shop Street, Galway, 1986.

Hewlett-Packard in Galway, served as Chairperson in March 2005 and he was succeeded in 2012 by Des Mahon, a former Mayo County Manager.

Institutes of Technology Act 2006

The Institutes of Technology Act 2006, which came into effect on 1 February 2007, amended the Regional Technical Colleges Acts 1992 to 2001. It inter alia brought the Institutes under the aegis of the HEA, specified reserved functions for Governing Bodies and obliged each Institute to adopt a Strategic Development Plan, an Equality Policy and a Disputes and Resolution Procedures Policy.

Numbers of students

In 1972/73 RTC Galway had 1,213 registered students. By 2008/9, the college had a student population of 8,999 registered students (5,213 full-time). Work placements had been incorporated into 43 programmes involving 1,270 full-time students.

Contribution to Galway and the region

Over the years from 1972, GMIT made a big contribution to economic development by providing suitable graduates in a wide range of specialisms for the expanding labour force, as well as facilitating participation, fostering social cohesion and becoming a driver of regional development. Alumni found ready employment and the high demand for places, even during a period



Pictured at the launch of Bernard O'Hara's book "RTC Galway: The First 21 Years" in September 1993, L to R: Micheál Ó hUiginn, Geraldine Quinn, Henry O'Connor, Mayor of Galway, Bernard O'Hara and Gay Corr.

of a big drop in the number taking the Leaving Certificate, is a reflection of the reputation it earned. The college made a big contribution to the attractiveness of Galway and the west region for foreign direct investment and the promotion of indigenous enterprises. It also increased access and participation including from groups hitherto under-represented in higher education.

It developed the ladder system of progression, which facilitated the integration of further and higher education as well as the development of lifelong opportunities. It was responsive to providing new programmes to satisfy new needs, working closely with regional and community groups. In 2011, GMIT signed a strategic partnership

agreement with the NUI, Galway. In July, 2012 GMIT entered into a strategic partnership with IT Sligo and Letterkenny IT. As GMIT celebrates its 40th anniversary, there are new challenges and opportunities on the horizon.

Bernard O'Hara is a former Registrar of GMIT, Galway. He was a member of the staff of GMIT from 1972 to 2010, serving as a lecturer in Business Studies, Head of the School of Business and Humanities. He is the author of Regional Technical College, Galway: the First 21 Years, published in 1993, and a number of other books including Entrepreneurship in Ireland and Killasser: Heritage of a Mayo Parish, both published in 2010.

About that chair...

Furniture designer and maker John Lee graduated from GMIT Letterfrack in 1993. Here, he reflects on a career that has shot him to international attention, not least for THAT chair.



“**M**y grandfather and father were both cabinetmakers so the decision to pursue one of the 15 places available at the time on the Furniture Design and Manufacture programme was a simple one for me.

I was in GMIT Letterfrack from 1991 to 1993 and graduated with a distinction. I was delighted to be awarded the ‘Student of the Year’ award and the following year I won the Irish National Apprentice Cabinet-Making Competition. A GMIT scholarship for a six month work placement with renowned furniture designer, Andrew Varah then brought me to the UK where I stayed for almost five years.

Since I established my business in 2004 I get regular enquiries from people who have seen my work and want to learn to do the same. I automatically refer them to GMIT Letterfrack.

Over the last few years I have exhibited in a number of prestigious international shows and galleries and the recurring question is where I studied. I’m continually surprised by how many people have heard of the college and its great reputation.

Upon reflection of my time spent studying in GMIT Letterfrack the privilege of having world class visiting lecturers such as the late Alan Peters was certainly one of the highlights of a very memorable two years. In addition, the staff and facilities at the college are second to none.



Pictured at the State reception, John Lee with President Michael D Higgins and his wife Sabina.

One of the most satisfying aspects of my job is the process of seeing an initial design concept develop into a unique piece of furniture and the feeling of pride when delivering it to the client or gallery.

The highlight of my career to date was winning the commission to design and make the new Presidential Inauguration Chair used in the inauguration ceremony for President Michael D Higgins in 2011. The chair will be used in all future Presidential Inaugurations so in a small way it will play a part in the history of our country.”

Graduates making their mark across the world



Gary Shore

GMIT Film & TV graduate

Since graduating from GMIT ten years ago Gary Shore is now a successful Hollywood film director. Gary completed a three-year diploma in Film and Television in 2002. He was nominated for the Jameson Student Film of the Year Award for his short film '180'. This was quickly followed by a win for his second film 'Stella and Cowboy' at the Oxygen Student Film Awards. The latter was selected for RTE's 'Debut' season. He established Shore Images later that year and work included conceptual designs for the Point Depot Theatre.

Gary worked for some years as a director of music videos and advertisements. His work has been seen around the world on major TV and music channels, exhibitions and festivals. Clients included Adidas, EMI, Vogue, Nokia, the Irish Government and the Montenegro Ministry of Tourism.

Gary has worked for Warner Brothers, and he was invited recently by Hollywood's Universal Studios to direct a revival of 'Dracula Year Zero' and to write and direct a science fiction film titled 'Our House'.



Jennifer Cunningham

GMIT Art & Design graduate

A successful artist who exhibits in the premier international group exhibitions in Ireland – EVA (Limerick), RHA (Dublin), Tulca (Galway) and Galway Arts Festival, Jennifer exhibited work at Shanghai Expo 2010 and in Reykjavik, Iceland, in 2008. She has held numerous solo shows throughout Ireland. Her work is in many collections including the OPW, ESB, Siemens and Galway City Council.

Jennifer graduated from GMIT in 2002 with a first class honours degree, having specialised in Printmaking. She

won the Taylor Art Award, the Henry Higgins Travel scholarship, Murray O'Laoire Award for Printmaking, Norman Ackroyd Award for Etching 2002, Arts Council Travel and Training Award and the Thomas Damann Travel Award to New York in 2008.

In 2005, Jennifer completed an art therapy course at the Crawford College of Art & Design, Cork, followed by VTOS study in Film, TV and video production. In 2008, Jennifer was awarded a Masters degree in Fine Art at NCAD.



Castlebar



Cluain Mhuire



Letterfrack



Mountbellew



GMIT

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