



Towards a Generous University

Embodiment of environmental sustainability in institutional governance

Mary Gallagher-Cooke (she/her)

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Supervisor: Dr. Orla Kelly, University College Dublin

Any feedback or questions? Happy to chat.

M.Gallagher@ucd.ie

Landscape for UCD's Governance

Supranational and National – EU and Government legislation, directives, Statutory Instruments, Circulars, etc.

Universities Act, HEA Act*, QQA Act
* under review at time of study

procurement, pay, employment, tax, financial reporting and management

FOI, AIE, H&S, GDPR, Charities, Protected Disclosures, Languages, etc.

Climate laws and regulations, Circular Economy, environmental regulations, etc.

Sectoral – Department and Agencies – Code of Governance, Performance Compacts, Programmes, Rolling Reviews, National Policies and Strategies, Programme for Government

DFHERIS

HEA

QQI

UCD's Institutional Autonomy

GA: Governance, Statutes, Policies, Risk, Reporting, Strategy, Senior Appointments, Quality, Research Ethics, Subsidiary Cos.

Academic Council: Regulations, Policies, Role Holders, Committees, Terms of Reference

UMT: Management Policies and Reporting, Plans and Systems as delegated

International agreements, colleges, etc.



Sector lobbying and organising (IUA)



Research, innovation, teaching, capital + other funding



Legal, Economic, Social and Cultural Schemes

Landscape for UCD's Autonomous Governance

UCD's Institutional Autonomy

Governing Authority:

Governance,
Statutes, Policies,
Risk, Reporting,
Strategy, Senior
Appointments,
Quality, Research
Ethics, Subsidiary
Companies

Academic Council:

Regulations, Policies,
Role Holders,
Committees, Terms
of Reference

University Management Team:

Management
Policies and
Reporting, Plans and
Systems as
delegated

Review:

Governance/Action: Statutes, Regulations, Codes, Policies, Formal Procedures, Terms of Reference, Annual Financial Report. (N=190)

Strategies/ Ambition: 10 current major plans of UCD

Why review Documented Governance & Policies for environmental sustainability at institutional level?

- **Autonomy and Scale**
generate insights into micro public policy
- **Transparency**
usually public documents; date and ownership clear; subject to FoI/AIE
- **Measurement**
often required in benchmarks, rankings, ISO accreditation, Universities Code of Governance, the Annual Governance Statement, Statement of Internal Control
- **Reliability and Longevity**
bottom-up programmes can be lost with staff turnover if not codified
- **Comprehensiveness**
employees and students of the HEI: subject to statutes, policies, regulations
- **Objectivity of Insights**
Surveys can be limited by the awareness and expertise of respondents.

Summary of Content & Thematic Analysis

- **Disparity between stated Strategy and Governance**
environmental sustainability in 90% of strategy (n=10) vs 5% of governance (n=190)
- **'Generous' ambition not yet realised**
not codified, quantified or articulated in documented governance instruments
- **Lack of use of most impactful governance instruments**
Statutes, codes, risk management, regulations: not referencing env sustainability
- **Academic Policies lacking explicit references**
no student or academic policies have a reference to environmental sustainability
- **Lack of Specificity**
Lack of dedicated / specific policies/ regulations and policy specifics in existing suite
- **Academic expertise in environmental sustainability not harnessed**
not integrated and internalised into organisation's governance



'Above and Beyond' in Governance

Available in non-sustainability governance, e.g. high performing athletes, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion policies, etc.

Benefits

Integrating environmental sustainability to existing governance

- ✓ *Practice what you Teach*
- ✓ Integrate academic excellence to governance
- ✓ Develop case studies; publish about action taken
- ✓ Empower with 'whole of university' approach
- ✓ Increased emphasis on governance: use it for the emergency
- ✓ demonstrate in real terms: real and urgent action is required
- ✓ exemplify authentic transitions to environmental sustainability
- ✓ demonstrate the benefit of using governance to shift culture
- ✓ Reliability, transparency, accountability of actions
- ✓ Replicability = *mini public policy*
- ✓ Understand opportunities
(for collaboration, major shifts, etc.)



Job Done?

- Enough findings for a report
- Great ambition in UCD's strategy
- 'Above and Beyond' in its governance
- Great potential once realised

...

...

- Find a framework....

Or

- Build a bespoke framework...

Building a Framework for Action

Theoretical Framework:

Raworth's Corporate Responses and

McCowan's University Pathways for Mitigation and Adaptation (2020)

1. Governing Board

2. Executive Management

3. Academic Governance

- Based on publications, relevant exemplars
- Organisation-specific, based on strengths
- Autonomous Governance only
- Fully internalize the emergency
- Empower community
- Codify 'Hope In Action'



Five Corporate Responses in Doughnut Economics, Raworth

Governing Authority /Board / Trustees

Key Aim – ensure environmental sustainability is at the highest levels of governance through:

Integration of Env. Sustainability,
Strategy,

Transparent Reporting,

Accountability,

Senior Officers,

Roles and Structures to Support Ambition,

Subsidiaries

Statutes, Regulations

Risk Management

Senior Roles, Academic Advisory

Codes of Conduct, Policy Management Framework

Board Strategy Setting

Sources of Income, Investments, Funding

University (Executive) Management Team

Key Aim –
ensure
environmental
sustainability is
integrated in
all
management
governance,
prioritise real
action and
empower
community

Financial Statement and Management Reporting: Integrate environmental sustainability

Human Resource Policies – promotion, training, induction, volunteering, mental health, sabbaticals, etc.

Campus Operations – ISO Standard Regs, Food, Procurement, Energy, Water, Biodiversity, Waste, etc. roadmaps

Corporate Policies: Travel, Commuting, Record Management

IT and Computing

Academic Governance

Key Aims – ensure core academic programmes reflect 21st Century realities,

Empower students and learners

Academic governance structures to deliver

Upholds academic freedom

Review **Academic Regulations**; subject-specific ESD review; Quality Review; roles and committee ToR.

Student Code of Conduct, Mental Health Policy, Extenuating Circumstances.

Empowering Students: Placements / Internships; Living Lab; Community Engaged Learning; Student Leadership Programmes

Research: labs, research integrity, research ethics, research income, public engagement, misconduct.

Adult and Professional Education – dedicated strategy for current decision-makers

Questions for you:

- Does your regular reporting reflect that we are in an emergency?
- What aspects of your environmental sustainability are you proud of?
Have you codified these with your governance?
- Where do you go above and beyond in your governance?
Is there a climate / sustainability version of this that can be created?
- How did your governance reflect the public health emergency?
Are there lessons for this bigger emergency?
- What is the best thing you do for learners/employees?
If it advances ESD, have you codified it?
If it doesn't, can it? Or can you do a version of it for ESD?

“Ambition is no substitute for Action”

Viktor *et al.*, 2017

