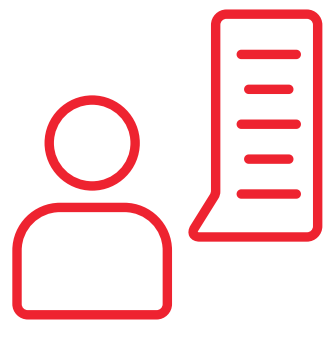


# Case Study of Good Practice

## Title: Valuing Academic Freedom and the University

Presenters: Dr Angela Flynn (School of Nursing & Midwifery), Prof. Kieran Keohane (Department of Sociology & Criminology), Mr Paul O'Donovan (Academic Affairs & Governance) \*The module team wishes to thank CIRTl for hosting the module within their structures



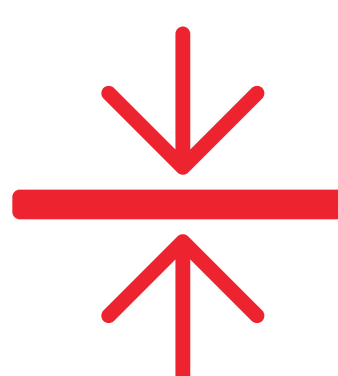
### Case Study Synopsis

In 2021, during a speech made by the President of Ireland, at a conference regarding academic freedom, an Uachtarán Michael D. Higgins effectively put a call out to all Irish universities asking us to teach a module on the “importance of such freedom and the critical, now precarious, position of the university in contemporary society”. UCC stepped up and responded to this call. This case study describes this response which took the form of developing a new university-wide module on *Academic Freedom and the Value of the University*.



### Key Impacts

- We believe that this module succeeded in bringing what is often a nebulous and misunderstood concept and made it a relevant actuality for everyone associated with “the university”. We also demonstrated flexibility by responding to massive world events that emerged during our module, such as the invasion of Ukraine, which happened during the early part of the module, attacks on tenure in some US universities, the emerging HEA Bill which was being debated in the houses of the Oireachtas, and attacks on academic freedom of educators and researchers around the world.
- We hope to source funding that will allow the curation of the recordings of the lessons delivered as part of this module so as to create a reusable resource for future students, staff and participants.
- Finally, a distinctive feature of this initiative was its use of genuine interdisciplinary and cross-university best practice. Students’ Union involvement, Heads of College, Administrative Staff, Academic Staff, Vice Presidents, Trade Union reps, and external expertise all were combined in this module to create a truly unique offering that was responsive to a call from our President.



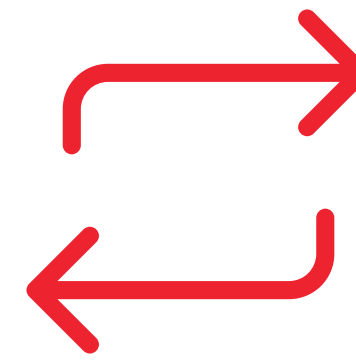
### Area of Alignment

Learning & Teaching

 Paul O'Donovan  @dunscombeparker · Feb 2

Lesson 2 - Dr Vittorio Bufacchi @BufacchiV from the Department of Philosophy, UCC on EXPERTS, DISAGREEMENT AND TRUTH

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### Intended Changes

Aligned to education and interdisciplinarity, our objective was to create a module that could be taken by anybody (students, staff, members of the public) exploring the importance of protecting and valuing the university and academic freedom. We were keen to ensure the module would be truly interdisciplinary in nature and pitched at an accessible level.



### Additional Information

A call for expressions of interest was put out to all academic departments inviting the involvement of colleagues and there was a very enthusiastic response. A module descriptor was drafted and approved with the support of the Academic Programmes and Regulations, and the module found a welcoming home in the Centre for the Integration of Research, Teaching, and Learning (CIRTl)! Contributions to the module lessons came from across the four colleges with fascinating lessons delivered on Wednesday evenings from 6pm to 8pm on main campus from January to March. As we were still living with COVID-19, some participants chose to attend remotely so we utilised a hybrid approach with MS Teams and recorded the lectures for use on Canvas. One exception to this was a very special walking tour of UCC campus delivered by JP Quinn, Head of UCC Visitors’ Centre for Lesson 9. The module culminated in oral presentations from the students completing the module for credits. Students also submitted a short assignment reflecting on their learning from the module. A closing event saw a guest lecture from Professor Paul van der Heijden from Leiden University who spoke on ‘Academic Freedom: Concept, Framework, Dilemmas’ with a response offered by Professor Sarah Culloty, Head of the College of SEFS.



### Video Links | Graphics



JP Quinn  
@jpquinn78

I’m nearly 20 years working at .@ucc. Today marks a new chapter for me as I deliver my first ever academic lecture on the University Wide Module on Academic Freedom. I love my work , I love my community. I love UCC.