

Maynooth University, St Patrick’s College Maynooth and
Trócaire (Maynooth Green Campus) for Green Campus
Accreditation Date: 18th April 2018¹



Following the assessment, the panel recommends that the Green Flag
for Maynooth Green Campus be awarded

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¹ Updated 17 May 2018 to include feedback from Dr Michael John O’Mahony

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Assessment Panel:

Facilitator:

Ms. Deirdre O'Carroll, Green-Campus Programme, An Taisce Education Unit.

Panel:

- Dr. Patricia Oliver, Former Director, An Taisce Education Unit
- Ms. Ruth Van Ry, Environmental Education Manager, Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful (FEE representative)
- Ms. Jane Hackett, National Manager, Green Schools Travel, An Taisce Education Unit
- Mr. Terry Dunne, Principal Officer, Department of Communications, Climate Action & Environment
- Dr. Michael John O'Mahony, Director, An Taisce Education Unit

Following the assessment, the panel recommends that the Green Flag for Maynooth Green Campus be awarded

General Comments

The panel were most impressed with the content of the application and the clear demonstration of work achieved on campus. An Taisce and the panel members wish to congratulate Maynooth Green Campus on their achievements thus far and look forward to working further with the campus long into the future.

Panel feedback

Patricia Oliver

Following the Green Campus Assessment visit to Maynooth University on the 18th April 2018, I would fully support the awarding of the Green Campus Flag to this university. The university also welcomed four representatives of the Danish Green Campus programme who had travelled to Ireland as observers.

The written presentation received in advance of the visit was detailed and informative and gave a comprehensive overview of the work which has been undertaken by the university since it embarked on the Green Campus programme in 2012. The presentations given at the assessment fully backed this up and, indeed, expanded on initiatives and achievements.

While the Maynooth Green Campus Committee acknowledged that it had taken longer than intended to reach the application stage, it was evident that this was time well spent and it has been used to embed the programme within the university in a meaningful way. This was demonstrated throughout the day by the obvious buy-in right from the opening remarks of the President of the university and throughout all the presentations that followed.

A unique feature of this campus is the campus partnership between Maynooth University, St. Patrick's College and Trócaire and this was reflected in the presentations by each which focused on their particular areas of interest and expert knowledge while at the same time embracing the overall thrust of the Green Campus programme.

Of particular note:

- Separate working groups for each of the six themes – Energy, Water etc. (This was of particular interest to the attendees from Denmark who stated it was something they would copy.)
- Maynooth initiated the theme of Climate Justice which reflects the particular expertise within the group and this is now an official sub-theme of the Green Campus programme; major international conference on Climate Justice in 2015 and Hosting of conference of worldwide Catholic universities in planning for July 2018
- Strong focus on Biodiversity which is particularly appropriate for a campus which is so well-endowed in its surrounding landscape; strong involvement in the intervarsity BioBlitz and data gathering
- Green Campus representation on the Academic Council
- Green Campus Society – a new initiative within Green Campus and one which could be recommended to other GC student bodies; strong presentation by student representatives
- Divestment from fossil fuels – first university to take this step and now followed by others
- Submission to the Strategic Plan for the college for 2018 – 2022. It was of particular note that sustainability is inherent in the planning for new buildings on campus.
- Involvement with the wider community via Tidy Towns etc., free access to open areas within campus grounds for local walkers, families etc.
- Significant success in reducing carbon footprint despite growth of university campus and student body.

Recommendations:

1. Continued support for student participation. This is a particularly difficult area for all campuses because of the transient nature of the student population but a critical one for the future development of environmentally aware adults.
2. Enhanced interaction with local community where possible. The university has a very special location which gives it greater possibilities to enhance and enrich the lives of the local population and disseminate its climate goals.

Continue to innovate within the Green Campus Programme which is already notable in this university and a lead to other campuses here and abroad.

Ruth Van Ry

Based on Maynooth Green Campus' written application and supported by the information presented to the assessment panel on 18th April 2018, I fully support the awarding of the first Green Flag award for Maynooth Green Campus.

Maynooth Green Campus presented an ambitious range of topics for their first flag and made significant progress in all. They also present a unique triumvirate of organisations which has worked very well for them including Maynooth University, St Patrick's College and Trócaire.

Progress has been most notable in the area of energy saving, which has dropped despite an increase in the size of the campus and the achievement of ISO5001 accreditation is to be congratulated. It is clear that careful consideration is being made here in the future planning of development of the facilities on site with a policy adopted by MU divesting from fossil fuel investments.

Impressive gains have also been made in the areas of transport, and waste. Biodiversity is thriving in the fantastic grounds of the older parts of the campus, with careful thought going into the newer areas of MU on how to encourage biodiversity there too. Water has been an ongoing challenge but is being constantly worked on with eagerness. The initiation of the Climate Justice topic in Green Campus is to be commended and the work with Trócaire should be considered as best practice for other campuses in the programme.

The strength of the Maynooth Green Campus Committee is remarkable and a great example of how different departments, campuses, students and organisations can work together to better their community. The use of different working groups and the creation of the Student Green Campus Society have also worked fantastically well.

There are strong links to learning across all departments. It will be interesting to explore the possibilities of linking Green Campus with Green Schools in the teacher training process.

Congratulations to all involved in this journey to assessment success. The future looks bright at Maynooth and I look forward to seeing the results of your ongoing efforts.

Actions:

There is little further advice I can offer as the MGC team seem to have all the bases covered in most areas to reduce their environmental impact further in the future. Keep up the good work.

Here are few small thoughts I had -

Continue to grow your student and community awareness of what MGC are doing – it is such a good story it needs to be spread far and wide. Every student on your campus should be massively proud of what you are doing so there is still some room to grow this awareness and hopefully achieving Green Flag will help promote this.

Your student team are excellent and deserve more support, both practical and financial, to achieve more growth in student involvement – more involvement would hopefully spread the workload. It would be good to see students exploring the outdoor areas of the campus more to benefit health, physical and mental. The suggested wildlife trails will be an asset to students and community if they are used – therefore considered promotion of them is advised.

Jane Hackett

After reviewing the Green Campus application form and undertaking the site visit to Maynooth University and St Patrick's College Maynooth I would recommend that the Green Flag Award be awarded. The committee has worked hard over the last few years to embed the programme throughout the campus community and as a result some of the challenges faced in previous years have been overcome. Some observations/comments in relation to the assessment are as follows:

General Comments:

- The partnership approach between Maynooth University, St. Patricks College and Trocaire is a unique way in which to reach a wider audience as well as ensuring ownership of the programme at a strategic level.
- It is evident that the Green Campus programme is supported from the top down and across all sectors of the university. This level of support is critical if the programme is to continue to grow and develop over the next three years.
- The support from the President is encouraging especially in light of the submission to the Strategic Plan for the college for 2018 – 2022.
- The use of different working groups and the creation of the Student Green Campus Society have also worked well and the levels of communication between the Green Campus committee and the wider campus community has benefited as a result.
- There have been many events and action days which have taken place over the last few years which demonstrated the growing awareness of sustainability issues on campus. Of note was the Climate Justice event held in 2015 which was a major international event.
- The University has grown significantly over the last five years; however, it is heartening to see that the rate of resource use has been maintained at pre growth rates.
- It is encouraging to see that data relating to key resource use continues to be measured to assess if savings have been maintained or improved upon. There is a need to continue this level of monitoring especially in newly developed parts of the campus.
- The team have worked hard to promote active travel to the campus; this is evident in the number of events and actions which have taken place.
- The support from Smarter Travel Campus has been noted and the real time resources which were provided are a useful tool to promote mode change.

- The carpool initiative is an excellent example of what can work in a large campus especially one so reliant on the private car.
- The availability of green space on campus to support biodiversity is fantastic and the work of the grounds staff should be commended.
- The work of the energy working group is particularly exciting considering the development of new buildings on campus. This group has the opportunity to ensure that sustainability is at the heart of every new build.

Recommendations:

- There may also be an opportunity to set targets or indicators to assess attitudes and awareness on campus. This information can then be used to support future campaigns, actions or projects. Without this type of qualitative data the true performance of the programme and its potential, may not be fully measured.
- There are strong links to learning across all departments. It will be interesting to explore the possibilities of linking Green Campus with Green Schools in the teacher training process.
- There is also an opportunity to develop closed loops on campus which would fit in with the circular economy model. One suggestion would be to work with caterers to grow food on campus which could be sold onsite. This would also benefit the health and well being of staff and students and link with food sovereignty

Overall the programme is working really well in Maynooth Green Campus and should continue to grow over the coming years. The foundation to this success is the Green Campus methodology which gives both a structure for the committee to work with as well as allowing for flexibility and innovation.

Terry Dunne

The Maynooth Green Campus Committee, which involves stakeholders from St Patrick's College Maynooth (SPCM), Maynooth University, and Trócaire, has been in existence for over 5 years with the objective of achieving the Green Campus Flag. The professional and strategic approach taken by the MGC was clearly evident from their written application. The site visit on 18th April 2018 served only to reinforce the strong, personal commitment and enthusiasm of all of those involved in the project under each of the 6 thematic headings; Biodiversity, Energy Management, Water Conservation, Waste Management, Sustainable Travel and Transport, and Climate Justice. The fact that a major development agency is amongst the three partners in this project helps to give the MGC possibly a unique perspective on the real importance of climate justice and the "cause and effect" of unsustainable practices, and thus why those of us lucky enough to live in economically advanced nations need take real steps to try to minimise the impacts of our "success" on the day-to-day lives on those much less fortunate.

I noted that the challenges facing the MGC on its establishment in 2012 were broad ranging, given that the location incorporates the original South Campus (St. Patrick's College) and the much newer North Campus. However, the strong, focussed partnership that has developed between SPCM, Maynooth University, and Trócaire, and the careful and conscious integration by the MGC of the

ethos of environmental sustainability and climate justice into the core management and decision-making structures of the three entities since 2012, has proven to be very successful, and has achieved some remarkable turnarounds under each of the thematic headings, particularly, though far from exclusively, in the areas of waste and energy efficiency. The Campus itself, particularly from the perspective of the promotion of biodiversity friendly concepts, is a fine example of what can be achieved with some intelligent thought, planning, not to mention sheer hard work, particularly by the grounds team.

As regards the future, despite significant progress having been made since 2012 in shifting dependency from private to public transport for staff and students, it is evident that challenges remain to be faced particularly in that area, particularly given the planned extension of the campus, though the provision of significant additional on-site student accommodation, and the successful integration of environmental sustainability principles into the key decision making structures, will only help to meet these.

I would like to thank everyone, staff and students, who ensured that the maximum benefit was derived from the visit to enable the panel to make an informed judgement. Taking into Account both the written application and the knowledge garnered from the presentations and campus tour on 18th April 2018, I would have no hesitation in recommending the Green Flag award to Maynooth Green Campus. Well done to everyone involved!

Michael John O'Mahony

Overall

Clear evidence of an excellent and sustainable Green Campus Programme operating in NUIM. It is obvious that the programme is operated on the principle of "measure twice, cut once". Well done to all involved.

Some observations

- 1) Use of Working Group for thematic areas an excellent idea
- 2) Unique setup with in essence three separate sites. However, working very well together and supporting each other.
- 3) Programme is well integrated with the Local Maynooth Tidy Towns
- 4) Programme is using the existing site operation structure to develop and grow
- 5) Site is very front & centre on the thematic area of Climate
- 6) Evidence of a very dynamic and growing site; however, the programme and site are adapting in a very people-focused way
- 7) Interested to see the development of Food Security as a thematic area

- 8) Good evidence of adapting to and adopting site strengths and context, e.g. the site having good transport infrastructure, and expertise in the area of climate justice
- 9) Great Idea to setup the Green Campus Society to develop the programme for students
- 10) Some great work ongoing as regards energy management and site planning; also in the areas of the area of biodiversity.
- 11) New Areas to develop and investigate include 1) The area of ICT. New challenges also new opportunities 2) Using the Circular Economy Framework for the site