

A leas-rúnaí, a chomhglacaithe, a dhaoine uaisle, fáilte roimh an Acadamh anocht chun straitéis CONUL a lánsáil.

Deputy Secretary General, guests, colleagues, we welcome you to the Academy for the launch of our CONUL Strategy. I regret to inform you that Minister Bruton is unable to be with us this evening due to Dáil business. However, the Minister generously made time earlier to meet with and to take a photocall with the CONUL board at the National Library of Ireland. We also have a statement from the Minister in response to the Strategy and we are honoured to welcome Deputy Secretary General, Dr Mary Doyle, who will deliver this statement presently.

Our running order this evening will be as follows: As CONUL chair I shall briefly contextualise our work; our colleague, DCU Librarian, Dr Christopher Pressler will introduce the Strategy; Helen Shenton, TCD Librarian & Archivist will speak about some international collaborations and Deputy Sec. General, Dr Mary Doyle, will formally launch the Strategy for us on behalf of the Minister.

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The *Oxford English dictionary*, that respected, authoritative arbiter of the English language, its use and meaning, has declared the adjective ‘post-truth’ international word of 2016. The term conveys the sense that ‘objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than are emotional appeals’. The existence of empirical evidence, proven facts and the historical record may be disregarded to promote an agenda. Concerned commentators are beginning to worry about ‘the end of history’.

Now, more than ever, at a time when objectivity, evidence and truth can be portrayed as irrelevant, we value our educational system, underpinned by robust third-level institutions where teaching and learning can be freely engaged in, where the young, and the not so young, are encouraged to think and reason, to scientifically test theories and statements, where on a daily basis our researchers work to deliver advances in medicine, science, engineering. Our CONUL libraries, representing all of the island’s universities, the National Library of Ireland, Dublin Institute of Technology, the Royal

College of Surgeons in Ireland and the Academy, understand the responsibility of supporting our students, our historians, our scientists. We provide the resources required to enable first-class teaching and learning, research and development for the advancement of healthcare, our ecosystems, the built environment, the economy, as well as enabling individual empowerment and growth.

We are mindful of the need for evidence-based data, quality information and content and of the increasing demand for the open-sharing of complex data-sets, particularly in the fields of medicine, technology and the sciences, but also in the humanities. Our libraries serve the full gamut of users from readers of manuscripts and printed works to users of the most sophisticated electronic and digital resources. Our libraries strive to go above and beyond our institutional remits, to capitalise on our synergies, to share access to unique resources, such as Trinity College's legal deposit facility, and to our unique and distinctive collections.

- We engage in productive partnerships, for example, a team from DCU, Maynooth University and UCD libraries developed a free online Research Impact Measuring tool, Myri;

the National Library of Ireland is holding an Innovation Training Day in December which is free to all CONUL members; many more could be cited.

- As a group we are members of the Consortium of European Research Libraries (CERL) and of LIBER, the Association of European Research Libraries and we are represented on HEAnet and on Sconul (the UK's Society of College, National and University Libraries);

- **As a matter of course, we collaborate**

- to deliver best practice in the curation of our vast holdings in every imaginable format;
- to deliver excellent and timely training to enable our teams to respond to ever- changing research needs;
- to review and propose joint storage initiatives;

- to engage in digital projects and exhibition initiatives;
- to ensure that we are compliant with regulations at national and EU level;
- to engage in teaching and learning initiatives with academic colleagues and much more.

We believe that together we can deliver more for our constituencies and for the country — ní neart go chur le chéile. Our Strategy is our roadmap as we navigate the end of the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

S. Fitzpatrick

22 Nov. 2016