

A Uachtarán Higgins agus Sabina, a Chathaoirligh, a chomh-mhúinteoirí agus a dhaoine uaisle go léir,

Thar ceann na Comhairle Múinteoireachta, agus thar bhur gceann ar fad, ba mhaith liom buíochas ó chroí a ghabháil leis an Uachtarán as an óráid chroíúil sin a thabhairt le FÉILTE 2018 a oscailt go hoifigiúil.

Somehow President, long before you received our invitation, deep down we knew that you would be here this evening.

It was not out of a sense of hubris or arrogance.

It was the prophetic properties of none other than the national icon that is Marty Morrissey.

As the ticker tape streamed down on to Croke Park after an epic hurling final, and Limerick players began to ascend the steps to take possession of Liam, he stated:

“Forget about Las Vegas, Paris or indeed Ibiza - the place to be from now until Christmas is Limerick!”

And if Marty Morrissey said that this was the place to be, we figured that you would find it hard to resist our invitation to open the first FÉILTE to take place outside of Dublin!

At the recent opening of the DCU Student Centre, you said that any society that neglected the mental health of its citizens loses a “rich resource” and that the quality of our citizenship was “tested by the extent and depth for the care of others.”

Here at FÉILTE, President, you see and hear how much teachers care for their students and pupils, how much they care for each other, and how much they learn from each other.

Care is one of the 4 core values of the Teaching Council’s Code of Professional Conduct for teachers - the others being respect, integrity and trust.

Education is about people helping people - to learn. Relationships and connections are at heart of teaching and learning.

It was a scientist, George Washington Carver, who said that “all learning is about understanding relationships.”

*Labhair tú linn anocht faoi na pobail is sláintiúla, agus go bhfuil siad le haithint ón gcaoi a mbíonn siad de shíor ag athrú, ag athnuachain; go gcuireann siad fáilte roimh modhanna, smaointe agus daoine nua.*

*Cuireann sé bród nach beag orm a rá leat gurb shin an cineál pobail múinteoirí, daltaí agus tuismitheoirí atá bailithe anseo cois Sionainne ag FÉILTE!*

You have spoken of the importance of everyone’s voices not only being heard, but being really listened to. And you have reminded us of the ongoing need to place learners and

learning at the heart of what we do in education. As Fr. Paul O'Connell of the JMB has said before, of course, we teachers are learners too.

But as you have rightly pointed out in the past, a Uachtaráin, the fundamental concepts and tenets of learning and progress must acknowledge the places in which they occur:

“Idealism, based on best instincts, drawing on received wisdom, building an emancipatory imagination does matter. The utopian instinct cannot be dismissed as idle speculation. We do need to envisage how to get to a better place.”

From instinct to wisdom to imagination - you deftly and beautifully described the lily pads of learning between which we must all hop in different ways at different stages in our lives.

You have honoured the most important profession in society by your attendance here this evening. You have done so in a proud and well-established seat of teaching and learning in the southwest - Mary Immaculate College.

*Thar mo cheann féin, thar ceann Chathaoirleach an Comhairle, thar ceann na Comhairle is mhúinteoirí na tíre seo, gabhaim buíochas ó chroí leat agus guím gach rath ort féin is ar do chúram ar fad.*

**Tomás Ó Ruairc**  
**Director**

**FÉILTE**  
**5 October 2018**