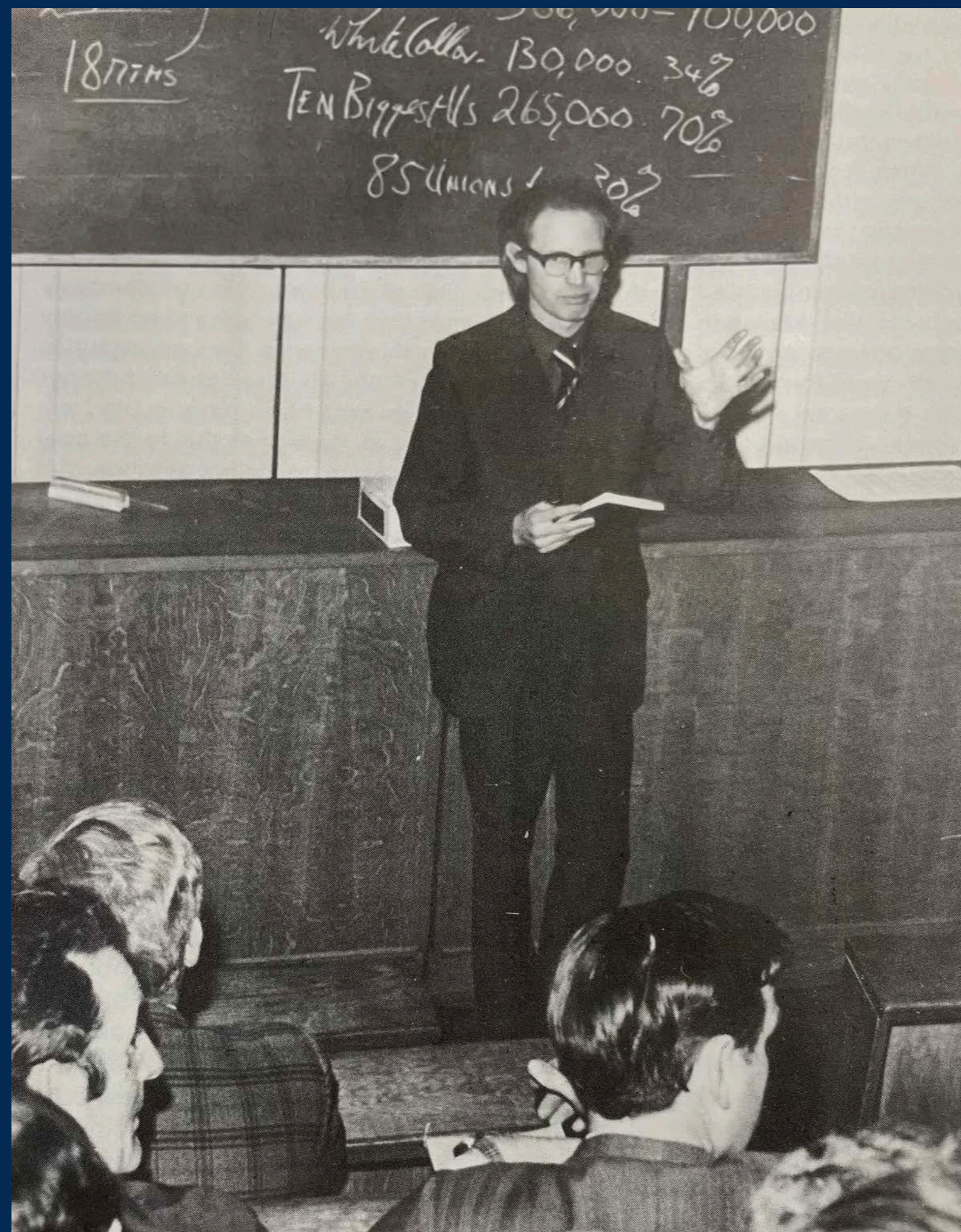


Into the 1980s

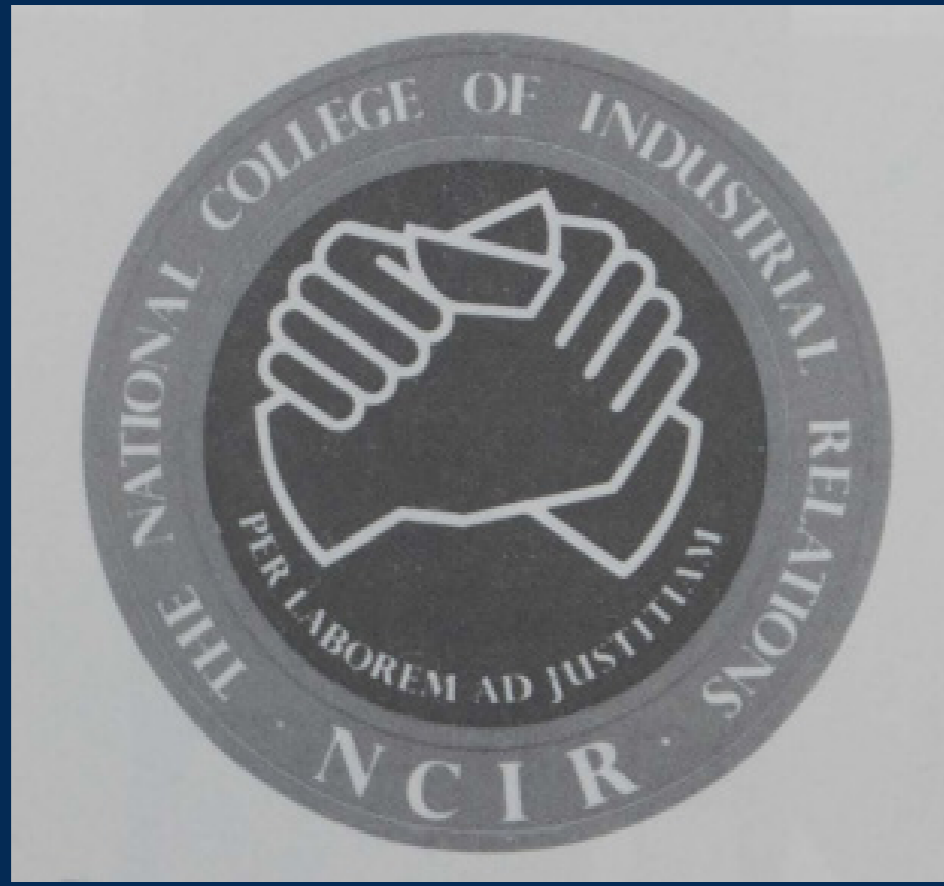


In 1981, Fr Bill Toner succeeded Fr Brady on an interim basis to prepare for the College's next major change. He served on a special working party set up by the Jesuit Provincial, Fr Joseph Dargan. It was composed of members drawn from unions and management and was under the chairmanship of Fr Michael McGreil. It advised on how the College might best respond to current and future needs and challenges.

There were several significant developments under Fr Toner's leadership, including the appointment of a full-time librarian and assistant, the consolidation of internal staff relations and the improvement of office and staff facilities. He also acquired audio-visual hardware for the purpose of preparing students for the effective use of television and camera skills and commenced the process of applying for degree status in industrial relations studies.

In 1983, the working party report was issued, and the director designate, Fr Thomas J. Morrissey, former headmaster of Crescent College Comprehensive, Limerick, returned from Preparatory programmes in the United States to take up to the position of Director.

Continuing Developments



The working party's report recommended the establishment of a board of management, and that the College pursue degree programmes and generally aim to raise its image and profile. With the intention to expand outside of Dublin and as the only educational establishment offering a degree in industrial relations, it was decided to rename the College the National College of Industrial Relations.

With this change, a new crest was devised, which presented the strong hands of the worker and manager clasped, and a new motto conveyed the College's central commitment, to work and justice, with the words 'Per Laborem ad Justitiam'.

Further impetus to the College's rising profile was provided by the inauguration of Honorary Fellowships in recognition of contributions to industrial relations from the trade unions and management. Other important events included being named in an Oireachtas Bill as an institution to which contributions could be made with tax benefits to the contributors; its choice as the location for key discussions between ESB management and union representatives when the country was on the verge of being plunged into darkness; and its director being asked by the Minister of Labour to chair a Ministerial Committee on worker participation.

To meet rising demand, a second storey was built onto the 1962 wing to provide extra lecture halls, expand the library, increase office space, and provide a computer training centre.

In 1990, Fr Morrissey resigned. This heralded the start of a dramatic shift for the College. The board of management chose Professor Joyce O'Connor, of Limerick University, as the new Director. For the first time the College would be run by someone other than a Jesuit. Under her dynamic leadership, the College entered its fourth period of expansion.

A New Dawn



Pictured NCIR Library (1990s)

The first years of the new administration heralded significant progress. A Policy Research Centre was established in 1990, which made the College an important hub of research, and in the following year, students became eligible for grants under the higher education grants scheme. In 1993, the Board of Management of the College was replaced by a Governing Body, which embraced a three-way partnership with trade unions, employers, and the Jesuits.

There were several important developments in the 1990s. This included:

- A significant increase in student and staff numbers.
- The securing of government funding, and of private funding for new courses.
- The establishment of a Centre for Educational Opportunity.
- The expansion of Library services.
- The opening of many off-campus programmes in different parts of the country.

In 1995, to facilitate the continued development of the College into the new millennium, the Jesuit community at Sandford Lodge agreed to officially transfer the land and premises to the Board of Management of the College. A new mission statement was also created, which laid out the vision of the College and focused on its main core values: partnership, empowerment, excellence, and service.

The College chairman, Paddy Moriarty, stated:

That the new National College of Industrial Relations has such a bright future is due to the vision and sound foundations laid by the founding fathers of the Jesuit Order. This is an occasion for me to announce that publicly, 'Ní neart go cur le chéile'.

Into The New Century

In response to its evolving significance in Irish society the College made another pivotal change. In 1998, there were 4,442 students attending its wide variety of courses and it had more than 40 off-campus centres around Ireland. To reflect this growing national importance, the College launched a new



name and logo. It was to be renamed the National College of Ireland. This new identity was launched in June 1998, by the President of Ireland, Mary McAleese.

She stated: "This College has played a major part in facilitating change in Irish society over many years and, in launching 'NCI – the College for a learning society' as the first step of developing a 'College of the 21st Century' working in partnership with industry, business, and the community, we are recognising the link between education and progress."

Having outgrown the physical space in Ranelagh, a new campus was required and in 2002, the College made the exciting move to the Docklands in Dublin's North East Inner City. This provided a crucial opportunity for the College to play a leadership role in the creation of the new community identity in what was then and still is one of the country's most socio-economically deprived areas. In 2006 the Early Learning Initiative (ELI) was established to tackle educational underachievement in marginalized communities by providing evidence-based, high-quality parent and child learning support programmes. It also strengthened the national presence of the College and enabled it to engage more effectively at an international level and facilitate stronger international participation in NCI programmes.

In 2007 Professor O'Connor ended her distinguished period as president of the College, during which she was instrumental in the growth and development of the institution. That same year Dr Paul Mooney was appointed president. Dr Mooney was a proud alum of the college who credited his time as a student with starting him on a successful trajectory for both his academic journey and his professional career in HR, Organisational Development and Change Management.

Into The Future



Dr Phillip Matthews took over the helm from Dr Mooney in February 2010. Dr Matthews joined NCI from the UCD Michael Smurfit School of Business, where he was Director of Executive Education.

The first half of the 2010s was an uncertain period for people in Ireland due to a banking crisis that was followed by a deep recession and mass unemployment. These issues affected educational institutions just as much, and NCI was not spared the uncertainty. To counteract this, a Psychology department was established, and computing and applied technology courses were designed for the realities of careers in the new digital economy.

In 2016, Professor Gina Quin took over as President. Previously, Professor Quin worked as Chief Executive of the Dublin Chamber of Commerce, and as CEO of Gandon Enterprises.

This period in the college's life has witnessed the introduction of many new courses, a significant expansion in the College's international student cohort, and the expansion of the campus to include a second building at Spencer Dock, which came into use in 2023. These changes helped to further widen participation in third-level education.