

Dr. P.J. White

James M Flaherty Research Scholarship Report

12/12/2018



James M Flaherty Research Scholarship Report:

Home Institution: Institute of Technology Carlow/ designCORE

Institution visited: McMaster/ McMaster Institute for Research on Aging (MIRA)

Title of Research: Developing Interdisciplinary Research Outcomes through Design between designCORE, Institute of Technology Carlow, and McMaster Institute for Research on Aging (MIRA)

Field of Study: Design

Research period: Monday the 4th of November to Friday the 8th of December 2018

Aims and Objectives of Research

The aim of this Flaherty Scholarship was to assist in developing a research relationship between designCORE I.T. Carlow and McMaster Institute for Research on Aging (MIRA). It sought to mutually benefit both institutes in developing interdisciplinary research outcomes through Design.

The 3 main objectives were:

1. To assess the Design capabilities at MIRA one year on from research conducted in November 2017, to assist MIRA to develop its strategy for moving to the next stage of this process, and work with them to develop resources and approaches to broaden and facilitate uptake by MIRA's researchers in the longer term.
2. To assist designCORE in developing a unique PhD degree research programme. This scholarship will allow designCORE to understand research culture at a research intensive university.
3. Strategize for further research and collaboration between the two institutions with a particular focus on the impact of design-led approaches to interdisciplinary research in ageing.

Research Overview

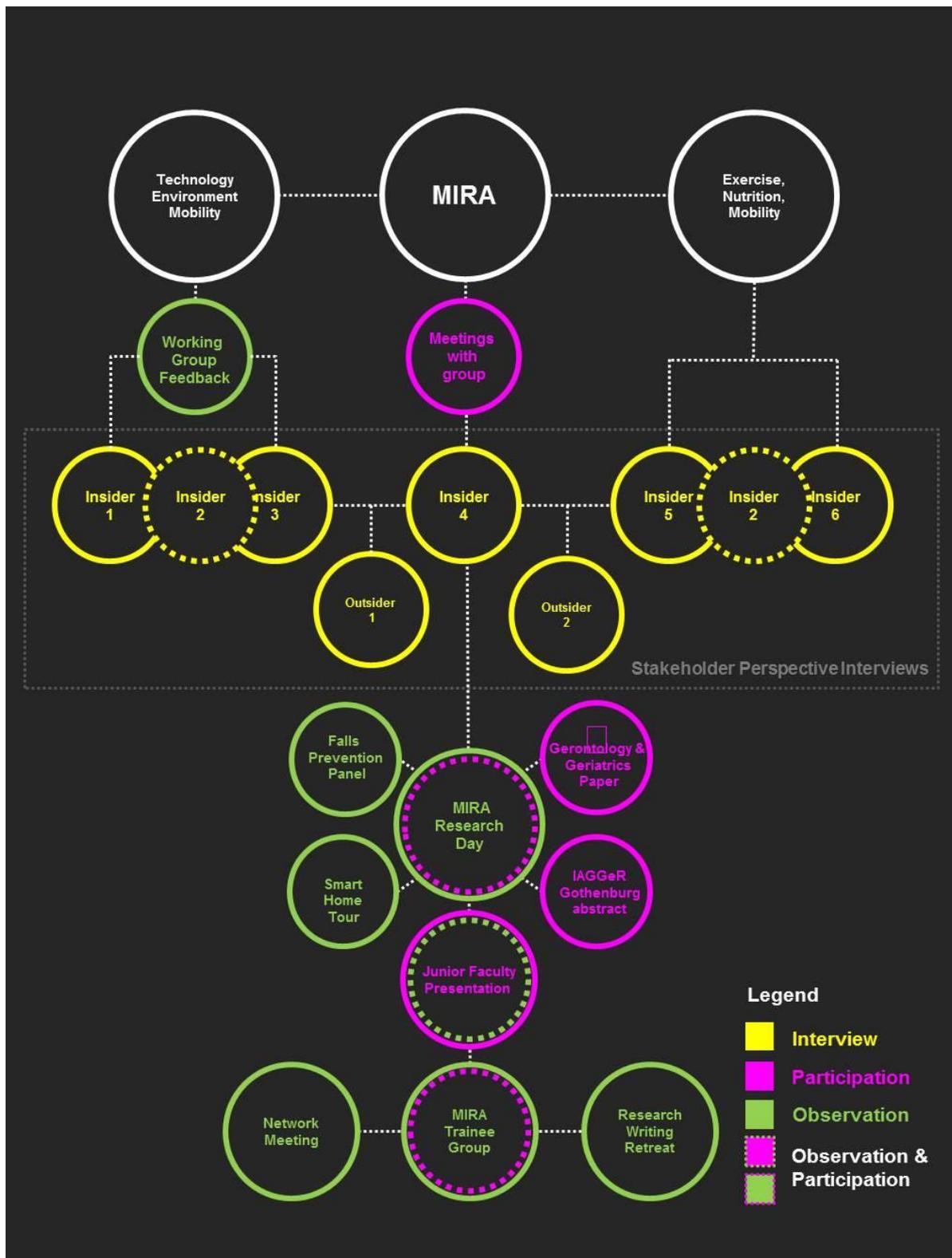


Fig. 1. Research Methodology Map to meet objective 1.

Objective 1

To meet this objective, ethnographic research was conducted within MIRA. Research methodologies conducted were: informal open ended interviews, observation, and participation. For the interviews, participants were selected purposefully to elicit holistic and deep insight of both 'insider' and 'outsider' perspectives. Insider perspectives were from participants within interdisciplinary research groups and those managing groups. Outsider perspectives were from participants with experience and knowledge using Design approaches and Design Thinking methods within McMaster. Field notes were taken during interview and fully transcribed post interview. Memos were written, and then fully open coded to understand emerging themes. *(Please see fig1. Research Methodology Map for more details).* Participation and observation occurred within MIRAs trainee and junior faculty network meetings, together with other initiatives and events at MIRA e.g. McMaster Smart Home for aging, (Fig. 2) preparation for the annual Labarge research day, and group feedback sessions. The MIRA trainee network held two events, a research writing retreat and a networking day. The purpose of the writing retreat was to understand the culture of trainees at MIRA and how they were creating an emerging culture of writing amongst peers. The network day was an opportunity to discuss the development of interdisciplinary research at trainee level (Fig.3). A 20 minute seminar titled: *'Designing Interdisciplinary Research Cultures'* was presented outlining the purpose of interdisciplinary research mapping. The mapping exercise developed at both Carlow and MIRA was discussed, and it was agreed that trainees would conduct this exercise at the Labarge research day (Fig.4.). For junior faculty, a 30 minute seminar on experiences of creating interdisciplinary research cultures was presented. This was followed by a question and answer session and informal talks with individual researchers (Fig.5).

A 20 page Design Assessment Report was written based on findings and this was presented to MIRA on final week.



Fig. 2. Outside and Inside the McMaster Smart home for aging



Fig. 3. Trainee network day

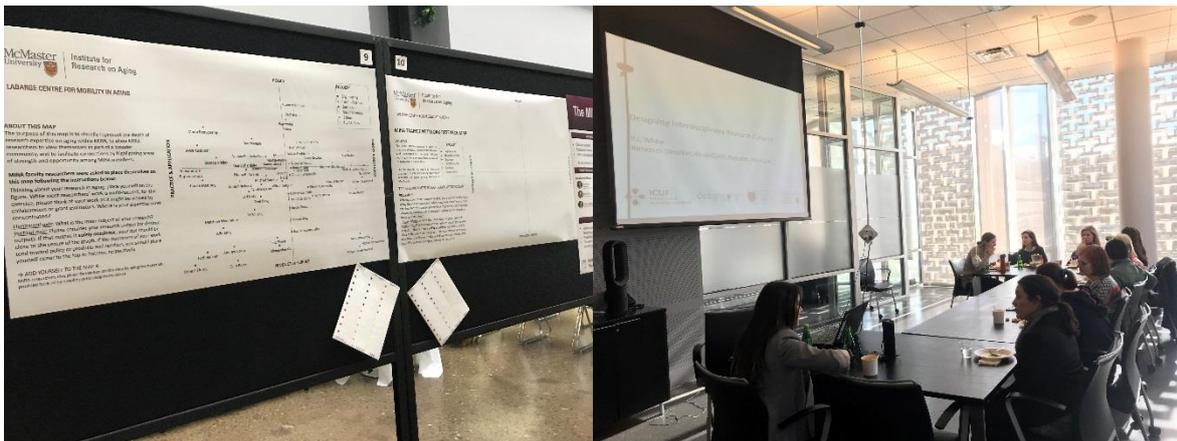


Fig. 4. Trainee Mapping Exercise

Fig. 5. Junior Faculty Seminar

Objective 2

A new Memorandum of Understanding with detailed actions was agreed and signed by both institutes during this visit. Weekly meetings occurred with Managing Director Dr. Laura Harrington and Scientific Director Prof. Parminder Raina to strategize how MIRA could assist in developing designCOREs PhD programme. A meeting was held with Dr. Peter Mascher, Vice-Provost of International Affairs, to discuss how possibilities could be progressed. A conference call will be held with IT Carlow's Vice Presidents of Academic Affairs and Development and Research to discuss next steps.

It was agreed that both institutes would seek joint projects to assist the PhD program, and to align with our new MOU. This links to Objective 3.

Objective 3.

Objective 3 was to strategize for further research and collaboration between the two institutions with a particular focus on the impact of design-led approaches to interdisciplinary research in ageing. Figure 6 outlined an agreed map of potential research collaboration.

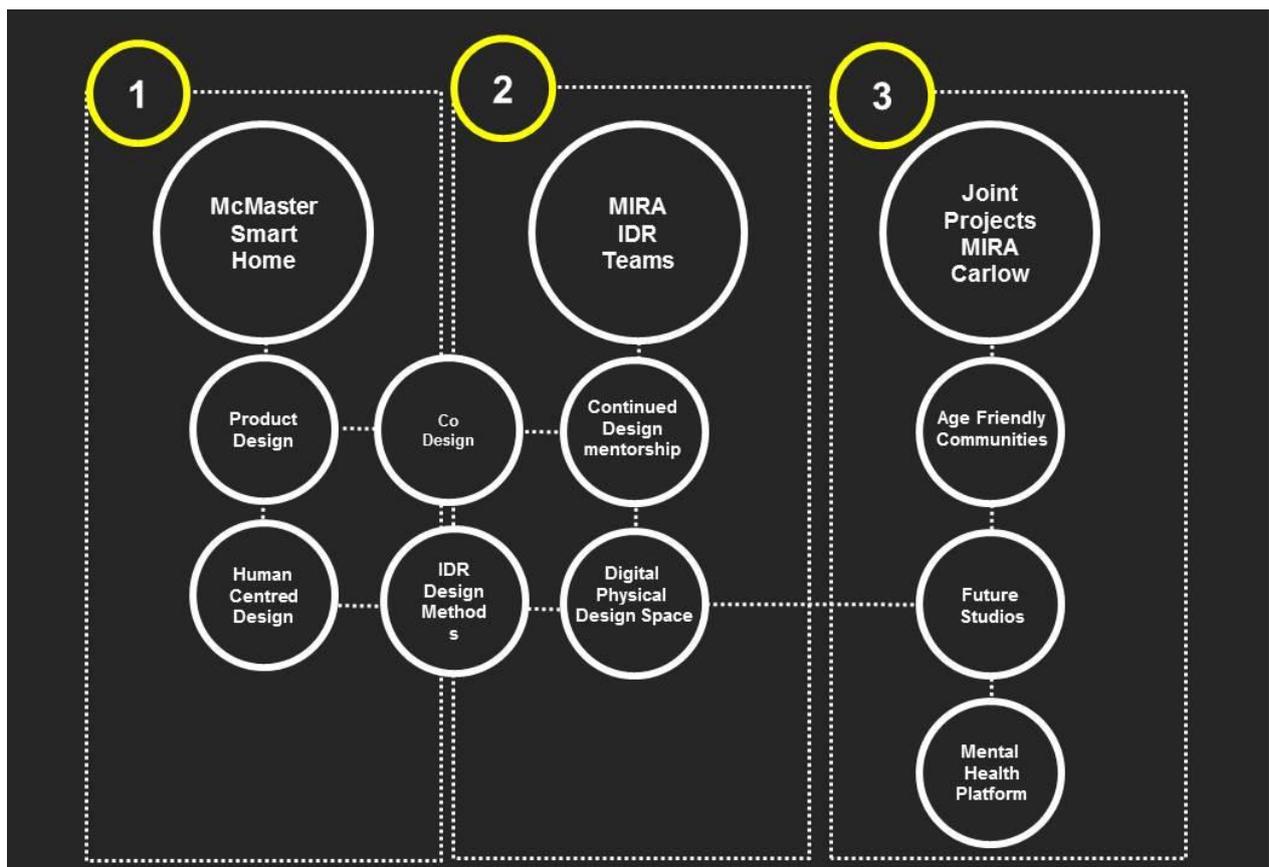


Fig. 6. Map of potential research collaboration

Details and strategy for potential research collaboration

1. McMaster Smart Home (January –June 2019)

- Exploring joint research projects
- Discussing potential projects with consortia members in Ireland
- Mapping potential starter research projects between Ireland and Canada
- Looking at potential Co Design and IDR research methods for Smart Home research

2. MIRA Interdisciplinary Research Teams (January-December 2019)

- Continued Design Mentorship. Working through ideas outlined in design assessment report
- Exploring physical Design spaces: Future Studios Carlow and MIRA
- Continuing to develop IDR methods in Design, exploring funding options and disseminating findings
- Exploring use of Co-Design within IDR Teams

3. Possible Joint Projects MIRA/ Carlow (January 2019- December 2020)

- Exploring Age Friendly Communities Project (Carlow/South East Ireland/ Hamilton)
- Exploring Community Mental Health Platform Project (Carlow/South East Ireland/ Hamilton)

Other

- Investigating Visiting Professorship possibility (Approx. 3 month Duration: 2019-2020)

Research Outputs of Visit

- Abstract submitted to IAGGeR Gothenburg 2019 Title of abstract: *“Using Design to Create Interdisciplinary Research in Ageing”*
- Contribution to Gerontology & Geriatrics Education Paper on Age friendly Universities with Prof. Brenda Vrkljan. Paper will be published in 2019.
- A joint paper will be drafted on the research conducted. This will be submitted to a high impact peer review journal in 2019.

Other Contacts Made

Contacts were made with Mr. Sam Saad, Director of Strategic Initiatives Innovation Factory, and Dr. Saiedeh Razavi Director of the McMaster Institute for Transportation and Logistics (MITL). Discussions will be held to look at joint research possibilities within autonomous driving for older people in Canada and Ireland.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this has been an extremely productive and positive visit to McMaster University. The research conducted and networks created would not be made possible without the Flaherty Research Scholarship. designCORE and MIRA have been collaborating closely on joint research, and creating academic links since 2016. The scholarship afforded critical time within McMaster to develop our research relationship. The new detailed MOU signed by both institutes during the visit is testament to this work, will now begin to create a Memorandum of Agreement from this.

This research focused on building new research links between Canada and Ireland by creating new research programmes, exchanges, and research projects. In future research projects, it is hoped that this collaboration will inform social, political, and economic services for our ageing populations. As outlined in Fig 3. The potential for both institutes to create research that impacts Canada and Ireland countries is significant. We will now focus on a short, medium, and long term plan to develop these initiatives, and growing research consortia within Ireland and Europe to enable this to happen.