



Issue 43 | August 2022

CoMH eNEWS

College of Medicine and Health, UCC



University College Cork, Ireland
Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh

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CoMH eNews is intended for circulation among staff and students of the College of Medicine and Health, UCC. Extracts from CoMH eNews should not be published without the permission of the editor.



Launch of Research and Innovation Hub



Retirements



Honorary Doctorate



Quercus Scholarships



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Recognition





Dear Colleagues,

What a busy few months it has been. The return to in-person events has given many of us renewed energy and joy which we balanced with a sense of caution in this not-yet-post-pandemic world.

I had the pleasure of conferring almost 400 students from all our six schools. The buzz and excitement at each in-person ceremony was tangible. I am delighted for our students who excelled in their studies during a time of unprecedented challenge. Many of them were at the front line of our healthcare service before vaccinations were available and while uncertainty still hung in the air. While that uncertainty has not dissipated entirely as COVID still remains with us, our recent graduates were students at a time when an unprecedented level of resilience was required of them, and they deserved every minute of the celebrations in Devere Hall.

Included in our recent graduates was our first ever cohort of graduates from the **MSc in Health Professions' Education**. In this newsletter edition you can find an interesting feature on one of the graduates, **Dr Ciaran McDonald**, who details his experience while completing the MSc in Health Professions' Education.

An inspirational leader in the field of medicine, **Dr Vera Delaney**, was awarded an honorary doctorate on the day our **medical graduates** were conferred. I invite you to read more about Dr Delaney and her surprise guest on page 12.

The **UCC Research Awards** took place on 1st June. I was delighted to see the achievements of my long-time colleague **Professor Ivan Perry recognised with the prestigious Career Achievement Research Award**. Ivan is the most worthy of recipients. I was immensely proud of our College on the night, taking home 5 awards in total. In addition to Ivan's Career Achievement Award, other College of Medicine & Health winners were:

- Best Research Team 2021; Dr K. O'Donoghue - Pregnancy Loss Research Group.
- Research Award for Open Science 2021; Dr K. Matvienko-Sikar - PaPOR TraIL.
- Early Stage Researcher of the Year 2021; Dr Maria Rodriguez Aburto.

- Research Support Person of the Year 2021; Ms Saba Loftus.

With a full return to on-campus in-person teaching for the 2022/23 academic year, the next academic year looks very bright. When this Academic Year 21/22 ended, I found myself reflecting on the high quality of academic staff we continuously attract in our College. It gives me immense pride to welcome new staff. Some of the worlds most talented researchers and educators have chosen UCC as the home for their work; some coming to Ireland and Cork for the first time, others have been waiting for the opportunity to return home and have grabbed it with both hands. All our new staff are so welcome and will achieve so much here. Their research and their teaching will play a crucial role in the delivery of the highest quality of patient care. Joining our staff we have the key academic appointments of Professor/Consultant Radiation Oncologist Aisling Barry, Professor of General Practice Emma Wallace, Professor in Education for Enterprise Mark Tangney, Professor in Medical Education Deirdre Bennett, Professor in Clinical Nursing Older Person Healthcare Corina Naughton, Chair in Nursing Professor Josephine Hegarty, and Professor in Dental Public Health and Preventative Dentistry Mairead Harding.

The **CoMH Learning & Teaching Showcase** on June 17th wrapped up our Academic year with an impressive display of poster abstracts and presentations. We took the opportunity to invite all College of Medicine & Health staff to lunch after the Learning & Teaching Showcase. I was delighted to see tables full of staff, lots of us outdoors thanks to the beautiful weather. We have a great team of people here in the College, a team I am proud to lead.

In this Summer edition of our newsletter, as always, there is an abundance of diverse news and interesting articles from across the College, including exciting funding news, new programmes, fascinating research on **Gut Microbes** Neuroinflammation and Alzheimer's disease, and even the premiere of a film written and directed by one of our recent graduates. I hope you all enjoy reading the Summer edition of our newsletter.

Best wishes,

Professor Helen Whelton

Head of College of Medicine and Health
University College Cork

AIPEC 2022

The College of Medicine and Health was delighted to host this year's All Ireland Interprofessional Healthcare Challenge for students 2022 (AIPEC). AIPEC is an interprofessional, intervarsity competition which provides an opportunity for students from all health and social care disciplines to work collaboratively to present a patient management plan for a patient with complex health and social care needs.

Professor Helen Whelton, Head of the College of Medicine and Health delivered the opening address. The event was chaired by Dr Aoife Fleming, School of Pharmacy and was a resounding success with over 130 attendees from all over the island attending!

This year, we launched the first truly All Ireland event with representation from all over the island of Ireland. Teams from University College Cork, University of Limerick, NUI Galway, Trinity College Dublin, Queens University Belfast, Royal College of Surgeons Ireland and University College Dublin shared their presentation. The case study focused on a woman admitted to hospital from a nursing home, who had a number of health, social and psychological needs. The students upheld their plan to a panel of judges who decided which team have demonstrated the most expertise in teamwork and collaboration. It was a difficult decision with such a high standard this year, but the winners of AIPEC 2022 were Queens University Belfast, congratulations!

Our UCC College of Medicine and Health team at AIPEC 2022 were commended on their interprofessional communication and holistic patient management plan.

Congratulations to our team:
Rebecca O'Malley, Physiotherapy
Robert Callaghan, Pharmacy
Noreen Murphy Coakley, Nursing & Midwifery
Ciara Shannon, Speech and Language Therapy
Gavin O'Connor, Medicine.

Further photos and feedback from the event can be found [@AIPEC22](#) #aipec22

There were guest presentations from **Professor Rose Galvin**, School of Allied Health, University of Limerick presenting on her HRB funded research on aging, and **Ms Patricia Rickard-Clarke** Chair of Safeguarding Ireland, highlighting the importance of patient capacity and involvement in decision making.

This event was sponsored by **The National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education** and **IMS** Media Solutions.

Thank you to all the Schools and Departments in the College of Medicine and Health UCC for their support for this event.



Pictured left (l-r):
Gavin O'Connor (Medicine), Dr Aoife Fleming (School of Pharmacy), Ciara Shannon (Speech and Language Therapy), Robert Callaghan (Pharmacy) being presented with their Certificates of Participation.

MPharm Graduation

We are delighted to congratulate our MPharm graduates. This is only the second year that UCC has graduated a class of MPharm students, and this is the first face to face conferring ceremony for the MPharm graduates at UCC, given last year's inaugural graduation was virtual.

The MPharm is the culmination of the efforts of staff, students and the profession of pharmacy as a whole to develop and implement a fully integrated 5 year programme that will advance the practice of pharmacy, to the point where Ireland is now leading internationally in the Pharmacy education. 2021 was also a major milestone in the School's development where the School is running the final professional

registration exam (PRE exam) in advance of our students becoming eligible to proceed to register as a member of the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland (PSI). While last year was the inaugural MPharm year where the PRE exam was run as a nationally coordinated exam between Appel/RCSI/TCD/UCC, this year the PRE for our MPharm students was led by the School of Pharmacy, with the excellent support from the APPEL office. The successful organisation of the PRE examination was led by Dr Laura Sahm, Director of the MPharm, with the support of the PRE working group Dr Aoife Fleming, Dr Abina Crean, Ms Ruth McCarthy, Dr Kevin Murphy, Ms Joanne Kissane.

To mark the significance of this event at UCC, Dr Sahm, organised a pre-graduation ceremony for all MPharm graduates and their families/ friend at the School, followed by a graduant procession from the School of Pharmacy to UCC Quad. Speaking at the ceremony, Dr Sahm stated that 'Over the last 7 years, staff in the School have designed an innovative curriculum for this new Masters degree in Pharmacy, which has been pioneering in the design of integrated work placements within the 5 year programme, a curriculum designed with patient safety in mind, and where our students have honed their knowledge and skills from working in the real world practice. The students have also developed their attributes



as Independent and creative thinkers, and communicators of knowledge on the safe and effective use of medicines. They start with two weeks of experiential learning in 2nd year, followed by four months in 4th year and finally 8 months in fifth year. What this has meant for the School of Pharmacy is reaching out to our colleagues in all areas of pharmacy, industry, hospital, community and others and this has strengthened their allegiance and fostered new connections to UCC.'

Professor Brendan Griffin, Head of School also commended the MPharm graduates of

2021 on the resilience they have shown in completing their clinical placement during the Covid pandemic . He noted that 'We have learned during the pandemic the importance of the Pharmacy profession, and in particular the leading roles pharmacists have played, in providing public health services, including vaccination, and supporting the uptake of vaccinations. It would be remiss of me not to mention that the graduates of 2021 all went out on placement in the height of the Covid pandemic - in January 2021 to be precise - to support as front line healthcare practitioners. All of the graduates here before us today

demonstrated leadership and professional attributes that show they are future leaders of their profession.' Professor Griffin also thanked all on the PRE working group who organised the final PRE exams at UCC and to all the staff and external contributors for helping out on the day, and collectively ensuring the PRE ran so successful on the day.

It was heartening to see these students graduating on campus and waving goodbye to the staff who had been part of the journey for the last 5 years.



Interprofessional education (IPE) research project between HSE and UCC

Interprofessional education (IPE) is fundamental in preparing students to enter the healthcare workforce, where teamwork and collaboration are competencies that are considered essential for safe and effective patient care. With this in mind, a collaborative research project between the Office of Nursing and Midwifery Services Director (ONMSD), Health Service Executive (HSE) and College of Medicine and Health was initiated. This pilot project was designed to support the incorporation of IPE into the undergraduate healthcare curriculum modules by delivering IPE workshops to 3rd, 4th and 5th year students in Health Sciences.

A Steering group worked collaboratively since June 2021 to progress this initiative, consisting of representatives from:

- (a) all disciplines within the College of Medicine & Health, UCC, namely Medicine, Nursing & Midwifery, Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy, Speech and Language Therapy, Pharmacy, Radiography, Dentistry, Audiology, Public Health.
- (b) ONMSD, HSE.
- (c) Health care clinicians across acute and community services.
- (d) Service User representative.
- (e) Student representatives.

Interprofessional education workshops were advertised and healthcare students were invited to participate in one or more workshop(s) during February 2022. Three workshops were organised, with Paediatric, Young Adult and Older Adult case studies presented. The workshops were facilitated by both academic and clinical facilitators. As a result of the interest from all students, each workshop had between 30 - 40 attendees representing all healthcare disciplines, with 98 students attending in total. The inclusion of multiple service users at every workshop contributed hugely to the engagement and overall learning experience for the students.

For evaluation, mixed methods research was employed. Pre and post workshop student feedback was collated using the validated "Interprofessional Collaborative Competencies Attainment Survey" (ICCAS), with ethical approval from UCC SREC.



Statistically significant improvements were noted in all subscales of the ICCAS occurring after the workshops. In addition, a series of open-ended qualitative questions were explored via thematic analysis.

Some of the feedback from the students across all three workshops was:

“Involving the service users truly enhanced my engagement and over all experience, it was a great and unique opportunity to hear from the service users individual perspective. Working together as a team really allowed me to learn a lot more about the roles of my fellow MDT members which I had not always considered previously.”

“Listening to the service users own perspectives and how my discipline links with other members of the MDT. Working together to create a plan with other members of MDT. The case study for a real life scenario.”

“I think this gives much better insight to what our careers will look like beyond being a student.”

“Gained an extremely valuable insight into the interdisciplinary approach to care. Getting a patient perspective. Learned a lot about the role each professional plays.”

“Excellent division of groups, with almost all disciplines - excellent guiding questions/facilitating of discussion by workshop organisers - practical knowledge from meeting a real patient.”

The project was nominated in three separate categories at the Irish Healthcare Centre Awards 2022 which were held at the Royal Marine Hotel, Dun Laoghaire, Dublin on May 13th 2022.

This successful pilot project is being jointly evaluated and will inform the future expansion of IPE for all College of Medicine and Health students going forward.

Further details can be obtained from Carmel Buckley (Area Director, ONMSD) Carmel.Buckley@hse.ie



College of Medicine and Health UCC announce Quercus Scholarship recipients

Undergraduate Quercus College Scholarship April 25th 2022



Pictured top left: Gabrielle O'Donovan and Keavy Gillane. **Top right (l-r):** Professor Nicole Muller, Head of Clinical Therapies; Professor Helen Whelton, Head of the College of Medicine and Health; Niamh Cronin; Maryam Alabi; Dr Christina McCreary; Professor Josephine Hegarty, Head of School of Nursing and Midwifery. **Above (l-r):** Brendan Griffith, Head of School of Pharmacy; Nicole Muller; Helen Whelton; Nicolle Weaver, Dentistry, Year 5; Morgan Smith, Dentistry, Year 5; Yasmeen Mihawi, Dentistry, Year 4; Christine McCreary, Head Dental School and Hospital; Josephine Hegarty; Paula O'Leary, Dean of Medicine.

Pictured top: Dr Lorraine Bateman; Muireann Vaughan; Helen Whelton; Kate McGann; Brendan Griffin; JJ Keating; Diarmuid Carey. **Above left (l-r):** Aoibheann Kavanagh; Muireann Vaughan; Natalie Moore. **Above right (l-r):** Brendan Griffith; Helen Whelton; Nicole Muller; Christine McCreary; Josephine Hegarty; JJ Keating; Paula O'Leary; Dr Lorraine Bateman; Ivan Perry; Annie O'Callaghan.

(Pictures by Lafayette Photography)



Pictured top (l-r): Grace O'Sullivan; Nicolle Weaver; T.J. Palmer; Christine McCreary; Morgan Smith; Yasmeen Minawi. **Above left (l-r):** Professor Helen Whelton; Gabrielle O'Donovan; Keavy Gillane; Professor Nicole Muller. **Above right (l-r):** Sikandar Azam; Helen Whelton; Paula O'Leary; Orlaith O'Donovan.

(Pictures by Lafayette Photography)

Pictured top left (l-r): Ivan Perry; Aoibheann Kavanagh; Helen Whelton. **Top right (l-r):** Helen Whelton; Annie O'Callaghan, Year 3; Sean O'Murrchi, Year 4; Ellen Connolly, Year 2. **Above left:** Helen Whelton and Ellen Connolly. **Above right:** Front row (l-r): Niamh Cronin; Maryam Alabi; Josephine Hegarty; Helen Whelton; Ciara Hassett; Ciara Milner. Back row (l-r): Anna Stewart; Katlyn Egan; Caoimhe Collins; Marie O'Reilly.

NEW ONLINE POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMMES IN ALLERGY AND CLINICAL IMMUNOLOGY AND PAEDIATRICS AND CHILD HEALTH

In recent years, the Department of Paediatrics and Child Health at University College Cork's (UCC) College of Medicine and Health identified a growing trend of patients needing support in the areas of allergy, clinical immunology, paediatrics, and child health.

To meet this growing demand for expertise in these areas, the department is excited to announce that it is launching two new part-time and fully online postgraduate programmes in the fields of Paediatrics and Child Health and Allergy and Clinical Immunology this year.

Designed with busy healthcare professionals in mind, there is an option for postgraduate students enrolled in these programmes to study for one to three years in either Paediatrics and Child Health or Allergy and Clinical Immunology.

Students will earn the Postgraduate Certificate upon completion of their first year of study. After the first year, students will have the choice to go onto a second year where they will earn a Postgraduate Diploma. In the third year, there will then be an option to progress to the MSc where they will complete a dissertation in their area of study. Whether earning the PG Certificate, PG Diploma, or MSc, students enrolled in these programmes will gain invaluable knowledge and skills to put into immediate practice in support of their communities.

Both programmes will launch in September 2022. Applications are currently open to healthcare professionals who hold a primary honours degree in a relevant healthcare discipline and who (ideally) have at least one year's professional qualified experience. These programmes are a great opportunity for healthcare professionals from different backgrounds including medicine, nursing, pharmacy, dietetics, nutrition, midwifery, etc who are interested in gaining a special interest in either Allergy and Clinical Immunology or Paediatrics and Child Health or looking for courses as a part of their Continued Professional Development (CPD).

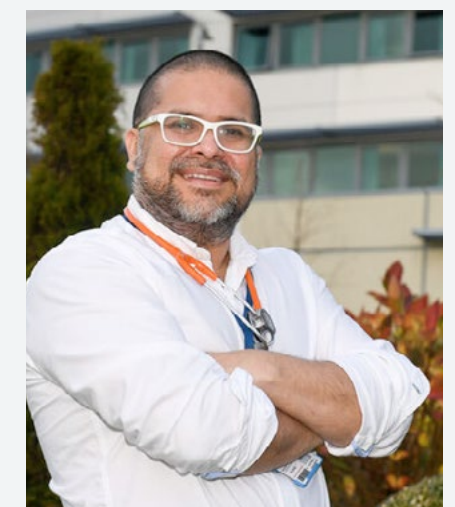
PAEDIATRICS & CHILD HEALTH

This suite of new postgraduate programmes is the *first University-accredited programme* in Paediatrics and Child Health in Ireland and is designed to provide healthcare professionals with the knowledge and skills to effectively manage children under their care. The courses cover the scientific basis of childhood disease, the principles of evidence-based paediatric medicine, and multidisciplinary assessment and treatment approaches within the field of paediatrics. To apply for and/or learn more about the Paediatrics and Child Health postgraduate programmes, visit this webpage: www.ucc.ie/en/pcpch/

Allergy is a major topic among the medical community and the general population. Asthma and eczema are the most common chronic conditions of childhood, and the spectrum of these conditions affects 40% of the population (HSE National Programme). Many allergy and immunological related issues can be managed in the community by GPs and allied health professionals, leading to a growing demand for learning in these fields. However, opportunities had not been available in Ireland, until now! These courses will provide access to essential training of Allergy and Clinical Immunology problems in society today. To apply for and/or learn more about the Allergy and Clinical Immunology postgraduate programmes, visit this webpage: www.ucc.ie/en/pcaci/



Above: Dr Darragh Finn, Senior Lecturer and Programme Director for Paediatrics & Child Health.



Above: Dr Juan Trujillo, Senior Lecturer and Programme Director for Allergy & Clinical Immunology.

Dr Olivia O’Leary awarded Science Foundation Ireland funding to identify the mechanisms through which microbiota in the gut influence brain function

Dr Olivia O’Leary, Senior Lecturer in Department of Anatomy and Neuroscience, and Funded Investigator at APC Microbiome Ireland Research Institute, has been awarded research funding from Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) Frontiers for the Future Programme. SFI Frontiers for the Future Programme funds highly innovative, collaborative research with the potential to deliver impact.

Dr O’Leary’s project will be conducted with collaborators, Professor John F. Cryan and Professor Yvonne Nolan who are both also in the Department of Anatomy & Neuroscience and APC Microbiome Ireland. The project will determine the mechanisms underlying gut microbial regulation of a brain process called adult hippocampal neurogenesis and whether these mechanisms could have therapeutic implications for cognitive and stress-related brain disorders. Accumulating evidence suggests that the microbes that live in the gut can influence brain function and behaviour.

Dr O’Leary and colleagues have previously demonstrated that gut microbes can alter neurogenesis, the production of new brain cells in the hippocampus

area of the adult brain. Hippocampal neurogenesis plays a critical role in stress response, antidepressant action, and learning and memory. This newly-funded project will determine precisely how the gut microbiota can induce effects on hippocampal neurogenesis so that gut microbiota-based strategies can then be developed for the prevention and treatment of brain disorders characterized by hippocampal dysfunction including the stress-related disorder depression, and learning and memory disorders.

Further information:

www.sfi.ie/research-news/news/harris-research-grants/

www.sfi.ie/research-news/news/harris-research-grants/Full-list-of-awards.pdf



CoMH Innovation

INFANT spinout Liltoda won the GatewayUCC Sprint Award for their CogniTOT application. This is Liltoda’s first product and offers touch-screen based cognitive assessment for children aged 18-30 months.

children with speech delay or for whom English is not their first language - Boylan, Geraldine G.Boylan@ucc.ie



Above: Professor Deirdre Murray & Professor Geraldine Boylan.

It was developed through six years of research in the INFANT Centre, funded by both the Health Research Board and Science Foundation Ireland. The CogniTOT app is non-verbal and so suitable to use in



Above: Dr Eithne Byrne (4th from left), recent recipient of the ‘Jansen CUH Intern of the Year 2021 2022’ Award.

RESEARCH AWARDS



The UCC Research Awards took place in June 2022. It was wonderful to see the achievements of Professor Ivan Perry recognised with the prestigious Career Achievement Research Award. Professor Perry delivered a few words of appreciation on the night.

“It has been a privilege to work in UCC for over 25 years and I am deeply honoured by this Research Career Achievement Award from the university. I am very grateful to the Office of the VP Research, to those who supported my nomination for this award and especially to my wonderful colleagues and students in the School of Public Health. Research, as we all appreciate, is a deeply collaborative enterprise and nothing is achieved in isolation. I feel extremely fortunate to work in UCC with outstanding colleagues who strive every single day for excellence in both research and teaching.”

The College of Medicine & Health took home 5 awards in total. In addition to Ivan’s Career Achievement Award, other College of Medicine & Health winners were:

Best Research Team 2021; Dr K. O’Donoghue - Pregnancy Loss Research Group.

Research Award for Open Science 2021; Dr K. Matvienko-Sikar - PaPOR TrIL.

Early Stage Researcher of the Year 2021; Dr Maria Rodriguez Aburto.

Research Support Person of the Year 2021; Ms Saba Loftus.



ScienceForUkraine

APC has created a two-year Post-doctoral fellowship to host a scientist from Ukraine. The position will facilitate a research focus on the development of new diagnostics or biomarkers of health or risk of disease based on analysis of the microbiome - Curran, Brendan bcurran@ucc.ie

Trip to Oslo for the EARMA conference on Research Support



Pictured above: Dr Ashleigh Byrne with Dr Seán McCarthy of Hyperion Ltd. at EARMA 2022.

Dr Ashleigh Byrne, Research and Innovation Coordinator, recently attended the European Association of Research Managers and Administrators (EARMA) conference in Oslo last month. The event welcomed over 1100 delegates from the European Research Support community for over 3 days of sessions on best practise in Research Support, the latest news on Horizon Europe, Impact, International, Open Science and Responsible Research and Innovation, Policy and Strategy, Professional Development and Recognition and more. Ashleigh presented a poster on ‘developing support for clinical and health researchers’.

INSPIRATIONAL LEADER IN THE FIELD OF MEDICINE AWARDED AN HONORARY DOCTORATE BY UCC

The College of Medicine and Health, University College Cork Medical Conferings 2022 took place at UCC on Friday, May 27th celebrating a very special milestone in the education of the new graduates' lives. It was a day full of celebration. Close to 200 medical students graduated from the university and a special second ceremony was held to honour an inspirational leader in the field of Medicine, Dr Veronica Delaney who was awarded an honorary doctorate by UCC.

Dr Delaney who grew up in Cork city graduated with a BSc Honours majoring in Biochemistry from UCC in 1964. She would go on to become a leader in her field. Dr Delaney (78) is currently Professor of Medicine and Nephrologist at Mount Sinai Hospital New York and was the first member of her family to enter University.

While in UCC Dr. Delaney also excelled in tennis, hockey and squash, captaining in both tennis and hockey and playing for Munster.

After graduating from UCC she proceeded to complete a Ph.D at University of London, St. Mary's Hospital, followed by medical studies at St. Mary's Hospital graduating in 1973 with Honours and First Place in Medicine. She was widowed around this time and returned to

Dublin for Internship and medical residency with two young children. Her career subsequently brought her to Kuwait, Atlanta where she completed nephrology training at Pittsburgh and finally to New York.

Speaking on the day Dr. Delaney who was surprised at the ceremony by her daughter, a diplomat, and former UN ambassador, Samantha Power said: "I had many wonderful years at University College Cork and I am honoured to receive this honorary doctorate today."

Samantha said her mother's love of learning was "sparked at UCC—a love she passed on to me. Watching her continue to treat patients with curiosity and compassion five decades into her medical career remains an inspiration, and I am so thankful that UCC has decided to recognise her impact in the world," she said.

Professor John O'Halloran, President of UCC said; "Veronica has been a tremendous ambassador for UCC for over 50 years. She continues to work as a Consultant Nephrologist, Teacher and role model in the Mount Sinai Hospital, New York. For years she worked as a widow and single mother, with great challenges which she faced head on. She will always remain a role model for current and future generations."

Professor Helen Whelton, Head of the College of Medicine and Health, UCC said; "Dr Delaney has been a tremendous representative for UCC over the years, still working as a Consultant Nephrologist and Teacher in the Mount Sinai Hospital New York, she has made extraordinary contributions to medicine. She will always remain an inspiration for coming generations and I am delighted UCC has selected her for an Honorary Degree. She is indeed a most worthy and outstanding recipient and we are truly honoured to have her here today."

Dr Veronica Delaney shared UCC Honorary Degree merit with her daughter, Samantha Power, who was herself conferred with an Honorary Degree of law by UCC in 2008.



Pictured above: Dr Veronica Delaney with her daughter Samantha Power.

Rena Young, Practice Education Coordinator, UCC MSc Diagnostic Radiography



Having graduated as a diagnostic radiographer from UCD, I worked clinically for 25 years in acute hospitals in both Dublin and Cork. I pursued postgraduate education and specialised in Computed Tomography (CT) imaging. My clinical experience included supervision of students and junior radiographers, later participating in mentoring and assessing in the clinical environment. Throughout my career, I have always been driven to integrate evidence-based practice in medical imaging and ensure that all members of the team provide the highest quality service to patients. I believe the quality of education across all health professions is key to improving patient experiences and outcomes.

My natural interest in education, along with a desire for a new challenge, led me to the UCC Health Professions' Education programme. Whilst continuing in my clinical role, I embarked on the first step by enrolling on the Postgraduate Certificate in Health Professions' Education. Delivered online in a manner allowing engagement in my own time, the programme allowed me to overcome the challenge of securing time off to attend lectures – something that can be an obstacle whilst working in a busy, often under-staffed clinical environment. The curriculum incorporates and encourages group discussion, and I was pleased to find a diverse range of health professionals on the programme. I thoroughly enjoyed the diverse mix, gaining different perspectives whilst ultimately discovering we are all facing many of the same challenges.

During this time, an opportunity arose to move to a role in academia in UCC, overseeing the clinical curriculum of the relatively new graduate entry MSc in

Diagnostic Radiography. I continued on to complete the Postgraduate Diploma, subsequently graduating with a 1st class honours MSc in Health Professions' Education (HPE). The MSc HPE has equipped me with a broad range of knowledge and skills in teaching, learning and assessment, in addition to an invaluable set of research skills. This has supported me in performing my role with confidence, not only in teaching our students, but also in imparting knowledge to clinical tutors and educators across our clinical partner sites.

I would strongly recommend the MSc HPE to healthcare professionals in clinical or academic roles who are involved in student education and/or clinical supervision. Under the expert guidance of the programme team, I was able to develop as an educator. I evolved from teaching mostly based on my own experiences of being taught to having confidence in knowing that I am teaching with a skillset that is built on solid evidence-based best practice foundations.



Dr Ciarán McDonald, Gastroenterology Specialist Registrar

I graduated from UCC in 2011 and completed both my internship and Basic Specialist Training in the Cork/ Kerry region over the ensuing years. I have worked in Melbourne, Australia and the UK as a general medical registrar before returning to Ireland to commence my specialist training as a gastroenterology specialist registrar. I am currently in my final year of higher specialist training in the Mercy University Hospital, Cork.

I first began the MSc in Health Professions Education in UCC while in my third year of specialist training. I have always had a keen interest in medical education having been a UCC clinical skills tutor while a final year undergraduate medical student for more junior years. I have also been a formal clinical tutor for the RCSI in Beaumont Hospital and am currently a clinical adjunct tutor for UCC in the Mercy Hospital.

Initially, what attracted me to the programme was its flexibility and the fact that the remote learning could be woven into a busy clinical and family life. As the course progressed, I found the peer learning from colleagues from various health professional fields very insightful. The layout of the course was excellent with a very thoughtful timeline that built pieces of knowledge on top of each other, towards forming the structure for the final assignment. The chosen interface for the programme (Canvas) and delivery of the course via different modalities (small group discussions, written assignments, multimedia assignments) was very interesting and ensured one was always engaged and stimulated. These various multimodality assignments resulted in me developing new skills hitherto not learned, for example, editing and recording lectures. The fundamentals of good teaching and learning now underpin the manner in which I deliver teaching in the clinical environment with more structure and clarity of communication

with junior colleagues, students and even patients. Throughout the course, my supervisors and instructors were attentive, responsive and incredibly supportive. In particular, my supervisor for my final assignment was a fantastic source of advice, feedback and encouragement all the way until completion. My advice to those looking to undertake the MSc in HPE is to consider early in the programme what they wish to focus and write their final thesis on. My chosen subject came naturally to me as I observed the learning environment I myself was operating in through the lens of supervised learning in endoscopy and the various tensions acting upon the trainer and trainee relationship. This made the MSc even more relevant to me as it was shaping my understanding of my own learning as I progressed in my own training career. I should lastly highlight the need to be kind to those closest to you as they are your greatest strength of support throughout the entire MSc which at times can be a busy but ultimately highly rewarding journey!

Visit by First Lady of New Jersey, Tammy Murphy, to CUMH



Pictured top: Professor Helen Whelton with First Lady, Tammy Murphy. **Pictured above and right:** First Lady, Tammy Murphy Visit to CUMH.

The INFANT Research Centre was delighted to host, together with CUMH, a visit with the First Lady of New Jersey Tammy Murphy at CUMH earlier today.

The First Lady and team met with members of the INFANT Research Centre and the clinical team at CUMH to discuss research and areas of potential collaboration.

In 2019, New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy and First Lady Tammy Murphy initiated “Nurture NJ”, an initiative across the state of New Jersey which is dedicated to ensuring unbiased care for women and children of all races and ethnicities and guaranteeing the reduction in maternal and infant mortality and morbidity.

The mission and research work of the INFANT Centre aligns with the planned work of Nurture NJ, which like INFANT is dedicated to advancing the health of mothers and children.

A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between New Jersey Economic Development Authority and University College Cork which will provide a general framework for future collaboration between the Nurture NJ and INFANT.

This collaboration will facilitate the sharing of research findings, clinical work, and best practices that will significantly support the work of both INFANT and Nurture NJ and lead to new and innovative scientific medical research in the area of maternal and child health.

The First Lady Murphy’s plans to launch a Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Centre in Trenton as part of the NJ Nurture initiative is excellent news for mothers and their babies in the state of New Jersey.

It is essential for strong teams in this area to work together so that we can deliver the best research informed healthcare to improve maternal and infant health outcomes worldwide.

INFANT’s success to date has been achieved through excellent research and innovation, a highly committed multidisciplinary team of researchers, strong national and international partnerships, and generous support from **University College Cork**, funding agencies and philanthropists.

INFANT looks forward to learning from, and with, the Trenton team as they embark on this exciting journey and in partnership, we aim to build a coalition of support for research and innovation in maternal and infant health on both sides of the Atlantic.

We are excited for the future of this INFANT and Nurture NJ collaboration.



Research and Innovation Hub at School of Nursing and Midwifery launched

A new state-of-the art **Research and Innovation Hub** was recently opened by world renowned Nurse Researcher, Professor Linda Aiken, at UCC's School of Nursing and Midwifery.

Staff gathered to celebrate the launch of the new Hub and to celebrate the recent QS World Ranking which places UCC's School of Nursing and Midwifery in the top 50 Schools of Nursing.

The School's new Research and Innovation Hub was designed to provide a supportive context to enable research staff and teams to collaborate and generate research that will inform healthcare workforce and the delivery of quality healthcare systems nationally and internationally.

The Hub encapsulates the school's six thematic research programmes;

- Ageing Integrated Research
- Enhancing Cancer Awareness & Survivorship Programmes
- Mental Health and Wellbeing for the 21st Century: People, Organisations, and Places
- JUSTICE in Healthcare Just, Universal, Sustainable, Trusted, Inclusive, Caring, & Ethical health care in life and death
- Maternity, Family, and Primary Care
- Centre for Safer Staffing and Healthcare Systems Research (The CATALYST Centre)

The hub will accommodate 17 researchers onsite at any one time with capacity to support many more through the use of an online booking

system. There is also a creative zone for all staff, supervision teams, and graduate students where they can collaborate with external experts through the new interactive white board and conferencing system. We also see it functioning as a space for service users and patients to co-design with researchers' solutions to real world healthcare problems.

It was officially opened by Professor Linda Aiken. Professor Aiken is the Director of the **Centre for Health Outcomes and Policy Research**, and Senior Fellow of the Leonard Davis Institute of Health Economics, University of Pennsylvania. Professor Aiken's world-leading and pioneering research has changed the way we understand the impact of nursing care.

Linda's work directly impacts on healthcare policy in Ireland and has led to substantial change on how we determine staffing levels in medical, surgical and emergency settings. Dr Aiken's work has been central in enhancing the clinical work environment of nurses, a key factor in the recruitment and retention of nurses. Dr Aiken's work in this area led to the development of the Magnet Recognition Program - a key element of the **Magnet4Europe** study, for which Professor Jonathan Drennan, UCC, is a leading partner.

It is envisaged that the Research and Innovation Hub will provide a stimulating work environment - a centre of excellence within the region - for research staff, graduate students, supervisors,

clinical colleagues, patients, and staff with research interests to collaborate, create and continue to foster a research intense ecosystem within the School of Nursing and Midwifery.

The school's annual research report was also launched at the event and this report outlines the achievements of the School's faculty in association with research and clinical partners and students. Staff of the School of Nursing and Midwifery hope you enjoy reading the exemplars of the excellent work which transcends education, research, and clinical practice conducted within the School over the past academic year.

To read the report for 2021, click [HERE](#)



Pictured above: Professor Linda Aiken officially opened the new Research & Innovation Hub.



Dr Harriët Schellekens' PROTECT project awarded BINC funding

Congratulations to Dr Harriët Schellekens who has been awarded BINC Foundation funding to explore the role of the gut microbiota in mediating the effects of early-life nutrition on neurodevelopment of appetite, food reward and food preference in adulthood.

Dr Harriët Schellekens, a funded investigator with APC Microbiome Ireland SFI Research Centre and lecturer in the Department of Anatomy & Neuroscience was awarded funding from the Geneva-based BIOSIME Institute Nutrition & Care (BINC) Foundation for her project "PROTECT: PRiming fOr healThy Eating via the diet-miCrobioTa-gut-brain axis". The project team includes collaborators Dr Siobhain O'Mahony, Department of Anatomy and Neuroscience UCC, Professor Suzanne Dickson, Department of Physiology, University of Gothenburg, and PhD student Cristina Cuesta Marti, who will work under the co-supervision of Dr Schellekens and her colleague Dr Ger Clarke.

Dr Schellekens explains how "early life exposure to high-fat and high-sugar diets can negatively impact metabolic health later in life." Early life

diet, she explains is "crucial in the development of appetite signalling in the brain and impacts energy metabolism and the brain pathways that determine how we process rewarding foods, especially those high in calories." This she says can have consequences later in life on the types of food we like to eat, driving the preference for fatty and sugary foods, which she says increases the risk for obesity and type 2 diabetes.

Dr Schellekens explains; "Early life exposure to unhealthy diets has also been shown to alter how the bacterial community in our gastrointestinal tract develops and changes in gut microbiota have been linked to alterations in food intake and host eating behaviour. However, it is currently not known if the gut microbiome in early life is critical for the establishment of healthy eating behaviour in adulthood."

This PROTECT project will specifically focus on the 'hunger-hormone', ghrelin, which uniquely stands out as the only gastrointestinal signal that stimulates food intake, regulates appetite and reward signalling in the brain, and modulates fat preference and food choice. Ghrelin levels are modulated by the gut microbiota and ghrelin plays a role in the development of brain feeding pathways in early life.

Dr Schellekens and her team will investigate the extent to which the gut microbiota in early life are involved in the establishment of healthy eating behaviour in adulthood, and if the effects

are mediated via ghrelin signalling, and whether microbiota-targeted interventions can protect against diet-induced negative effects on appetite, food preference and reward processing.

The PROTECT team will initially investigate the role of the intestinal microbiota following early life exposure to high-fat/high-sugar (HFHS) diet on food intake behaviour, food preference and central reward signalling in adulthood. The second part of the project will seek to validate the effectiveness of microbiota-targeted approaches, in preventing the detrimental neurobehavioral outcomes, lowering metabolic risk later in life. One strategy that will be explored, will be supplementation with a metabolically active *Bifidobacterium longum* strain (APC1472), which was recently identified in a study by Dr Schellekens and colleagues, Professor Catherine Stanton, Professor John Cryan and Professor Ted Dinan (Schellekens et al. EBioMedicine, 2021) to have anti-obesity effects in mice and in humans. This strain since has shown to modulate ghrelin signalling in the brain of mice (unpublished data).

PROTECT will be the first study investigating the impact of early life nutrition and microbiota priming on sustained dietary preference in adulthood. Findings from this study will be directly relevant for the research to BINC-Geneva and the development of comprehensive microbiota-targeted health solutions in the field of infant and maternal nutrition and care, providing the best possible start in life.



Above: Students and staff enjoy the recent conferring ceremonies.

RECENT GRADUATIONS

Our first group of graduates were recently conferred with their MSc in Health Professions' Education. Nine students graduated and we extend our congratulations to each of them. Profiles of two of the MSc graduates are included in this issue.

The highly successful fully online Health Professions' Education programme commenced in the 2018/19 academic year. Postgraduate Certificate, Postgraduate Diploma and MSc options are offered. Led by the Medical Education Unit, the programme is an interprofessional collaboration with the Department of General Practice and the Schools of Pharmacy and Nursing and Midwifery. In the 21/22 academic year there were 119 students registered across PG Certificate, PG Diploma and MSc levels. To date students from across the health professions including medicine, paramedical science, nursing, dentistry, pharmacy, physiotherapy, radiography, human nutrition and dietetics, laboratory science and phlebotomy have completed various levels of the programme. It been designed to offer flexibility and is suitable for those in full time employment. Further details and a link for application are available at www.ucc.ie/en/cku16/

UCC BSc Neuroscience Class 2022 have completed their degree



Above: UCC BSc Neuroscience Class 2022.

Congratulations to the UCC BSc Neuroscience Class 2022 who have completed their BSc Neuroscience degree and discussed their research projects with external examiner Dr Jo Neill at the BSc Neuroscience vivas which were held on Wednesday, May 25th 2022.

Following two years of online viva examinations Dr Siobhain

O'Mahony, Director of the UCC BSc Neuroscience degree, congratulated the BSc Neuroscience Class of 2022 on their tenacity and determination in completing their four-year programme during the COVID-19 pandemic, adding that she was delighted to host in person vivas for the BSc Neuroscience class.

Dr O'Mahony extended a warm welcome to Professor Jo Neill, Professor of Psychopharmacology in the Manchester Pharmacy School at the University of Manchester and thanked her for her work as external examiner for the Neuroscience programme over the past two years, all of which was held online. Professor Neill said that she was delighted to finally visit Cork and commented on how she had enjoyed her visit.

Professor Neill presented a very interesting talk 'A discussion on psychedelic assisted therapy: a paradigm shift in psychiatry' as part of the Anatomy and Neuroscience Seminar Series which was very well attended and enjoyed by the staff and students of the Department of Anatomy and Neuroscience.

Professor Cryan Publishes in Science - in Print and Podcast!



The current special issue of Science 'The Systemic Microbiome' features a commentary article by Professor John F. Cryan, VP for Research UCC, and Science Podcasts follows up with a fascinating interview.

In the Science 'PERSPECTIVE' article '**Microbiota-brain axis: Context and causality - Gut bacteria influence the brain and behavior, but causation in humans remains unclear**', Professor Cryan discusses how 'tightening the connections research has made between microbes and the brain—the steps needed to go from seeing connections to understanding how the microbiome might be tweaked to change what's happening in the brain.'

In the associated Science Podcast, Sarah Crespi host of the Science Magazine Podcast, and Senior Multimedia Producer at Science chats with Professor Cryan about his recent Science article; she begins by commenting on the 'intriguing links between our microbiomes and our brains' and asks Professor Cryan 'how important is the microbiome to the brain?' Listen [HERE](#) to the full interview. (from 12:00 mins).

Congratulations to Dr Gerry Moloney recently promoted to Chief Technical Officer in the Department of Anatomy and Neuroscience



Congratulations to Dr Gerry Moloney, one of the five Senior Technical Officers recently promoted to Chief Technical Officer in the most recent UCC Chief Technical Officer promotional round.

Dr Moloney joined UCC in early 2007 having left a position in St Vincent's Hospital, Dublin to join Dr Ken Nally's lab in APC Microbiome Ireland as a research assistant. While there he worked chiefly on an APC collaboration with GlaxoSmithKline. In 2012 Gerry was appointed laboratory manager of Professor John Cryan's lab and while working in this position commenced work on his PhD degree part time. Gerry joined the Department of Anatomy and Neuroscience in 2013 as a Technical

Officer and became involved in teaching in addition to his technical and research work. Completing his PhD in 2014 Gerry was then promoted to the position of Senior Technical Officer in 2016. Based mainly in the Biosciences Institute Gerry supported the research activities of the Department of Anatomy and Neuroscience and was involved in supporting the undergraduate Neuroscience programme research projects.

As Chief Technical Officer, in addition to his earlier responsibilities Gerry has taken over the Green Lab Initiative for the Department and looks forward to continuing to support the work of the staff, postdoctoral and postgraduate research and undergraduate students in the Department.

In his spare time Gerry is Chairman and Coach of UCC United, the UCC staff soccer team. Gerry is also Public Relations Officer of the Staff Sports and Social Club in UCC.

The staff of the Department of Anatomy and Neuroscience congratulate Gerry and wish him all the best in his new role.

MS TARA FOLEY RECEIVES 'OUTSTANDING COLLEAGUE AWARD' AT UCC UNIVERSITY STAFF RECOGNITION AWARDS CEREMONY

Congratulations to Ms Tara Foley, Senior Technical Officer in the Department of Anatomy and Neuroscience who was awarded an 'Outstanding Colleague Award' at the 2021 University Staff Recognition Awards Ceremony which took place on April 26th 2022.

The University Staff Recognition Awards reception which had been deferred from November 2021 due to COVID-19, was held in the Aula Maxima and also relayed live online. Professor John O'Halloran, President of UCC, welcomed the award winners, staff and guests and spoke of the exceptional service, work and dedication of the awardees, and he noted the particularly difficult year that had preceded this year's awards ceremony.

Award recipients were introduced by Dr Anne Gannon, Department of Human Resources.

Dr Gannon spoke of Tara's qualities, achievements and dedication to the Department and University;

"Tara has been working in the Department of Anatomy and Neuroscience for the past 16 years and has always shown a great spirit of collaboration. She knows the qualities and skills of everyone and is able to bring colleagues together to share their theoretical and technical knowledge. Tara acts as a bridge between the different departments and will not hesitate

to put equipment at the service of other researcher groups outside the department that are in need. Tara is involved in many practical courses, last year she had to work out the conversion of live courses into an online version, this was a complicated task to accomplish but Tara overcame the many difficulties. Feedback from the students on her courses has been very positive highlighting how clear and didactic that they have been. Her work will have positive and long-term impact on students and their future."

Professor Aideen Sullivan Head of Department of Anatomy and Neuroscience also congratulated Tara on her achievement.

Tara, she said is *"an amazing colleague, who can always be relied on to help all staff and students. She has an excellent breath of technical knowledge and experience, and plays a crucial role in supporting all of the research activities in our Department. She also contributes really important pastoral support to many postgraduate and postdoctoral researchers and is always available to them when they need a friendly boost. I was involved in recruiting Tara 16 years ago and I have been pleased and proud to see her progress in her career. Her input is really important in the research and teaching successes of our Department. She is a helpful, dedicated and supportive colleague who truly deserves the Staff Recognition Award."*

The University Staff Recognition Awards Programme was inaugurated in 2010, to provide a formal process for acknowledging outstanding achievements by UCC staff and for recognising and celebrating these achievements. The programme complements informal recognition and appreciation of colleagues' contribution to the University and the wider community on a day to day basis. The Awards Programme offers a number of award categories which may vary from one year to the next.

The awards ceremony can be viewed [HERE](#), Ms Tara Foley is introduced by Dr Anne Gannon at 1:10:30.



Pictured above: Professor Aideen Sullivan, Head of Department of Anatomy and Ms Tara Foley, Outstanding Colleague Award winner.



Pictured above: Life Sciences Careers Fair organisers, third year BSc Medical and Health Sciences students, Brian Curtin, Mark Leahy and Seán O'Flaherty.

Congratulations to the UCC Medical Research and Technology Society and the UCC Translational Medicine Society who together successfully hosted UCC's first Life Sciences Careers Fair.

The Life Sciences Careers Fair which was held in the Devere Hall UCC on Friday April 8th 2022, successfully fulfilled its aims to connect students from the College of Medicine and Health and College of Science Engineering and Food Science with leading pharmaceutical, medical technology companies, UCC's research institutions and UCC academic departments, to discuss graduate opportunities.

The organisers welcomed representatives from pharmaceutical, medical technology companies Pfizer, Eli Lilly, Janssen, Boston Scientific, Atlantia Clinical Trials and ThermoFisher Scientific. Research centres in attendance

STARS Award winning Student Societies organise UCC's first Life Sciences Careers Fair

included The Tyndall National Institute, The Irish Centre for Maternal and Child Health Research (INFANT), ASSERT Centre UCC, APC Microbiome Ireland, Health Information Systems Research Centre (HISRC). Academics from UCC departments offering postgraduate research opportunities were also in attendance including the Department of Anatomy and Neuroscience, and the Department of Pharmacology and Therapeutics.

There was a very positive response from both students and invited industry and research representatives. In excess of three hundred students from science and health-related disciplines visited the fair. Students embraced the opportunity to chat directly to industry and research personnel and to explore the options available to them in industry and academic career pathways.

Chatting about organising the Life Sciences Careers Fair; Mark, Seán and Brian described how 'their idea for the event was to bring their fellow students together with a range of organisations which would give exposure to students of both industry and academic career options.'

The organisers were confident that the Life Sciences Careers Fair had successfully facilitated networking opportunities between industry professionals, academics, and students.

They also commented 'how the event had showcased the endless and exciting career opportunities that the dynamic disciplines of medicine, digital health and medical technology have to offer, especially to the Medical and Health Sciences graduates'. The organisers also commented on the BSc Medical and Health Sciences degree programme staff whose 'enthusiasm and support of the event was indicative of their commitment to this innovative degree programme.'

Professor Aideen Sullivan, Academic Director of the BSc in Medical and Health Sciences, said; *"I am very proud and constantly impressed by the motivation and enthusiasm of our students in the Society of Translational Medicine and the Medical Research and Technology Society. The theme of translational medicine is core to the Medical and Health Sciences degree and it is very rewarding to see our students work so hard to promote awareness and knowledge of biomedical research, and to organise dynamic events such as this important Careers Fair. I am confident that, upon graduation, they will progress to exciting careers in many areas of the Life Sciences, and I look forward to hearing about their future successes."*

The UCC BSc Medical and Health Sciences programme which had its first intake of students in 2018 has a strong focus on research and is taught by research-active academics in a wide

range of disciplines spanning the biological and medical sciences. Since its inception it has succeeded in delivering up-to-date current knowledge in the field of biomedical, clinical, and public health sciences and encourages students to foster their analytical study skills and critical thinking, enabling them to research, develop and implement the innovative healthcare of the future. The first class of BSc Medical and Health Sciences graduated in June 2022.

The Life Sciences Careers Fair organising societies have previously been recognised at UCC's annual STARS Awards, where the Translational Medicine Society and the Medical Research and Technology Society were awarded 'Best New Society' for the academic years 2020/21 and 2021/22 respectively. The two active student societies were delighted to collaborate on the Life Sciences Careers Fair to showcase graduate opportunities to students.

The UCC Society of Translational Medicine focuses on encouraging students to create change in the world of human health through translational medicine, with a principal objective of sparking interest and supporting the next generation of students in bridging the gap between medical science

and clinical needs. To achieve this objective, the Society of Translational Medicine operates various initiatives including Reading Research Workshops, Translational Medicine (TM) Talks on topics ranging from meditation to the gut microbiome, and their annual flagship **Translational Medicine Conference**. There is also a weekly **'Narrowing the Void'** podcast which was recently shortlisted in the National Student Media Awards in the 'Best Podcast' category.

UCC's Medical Research and Technology Society was created in 2019 with the aim of cultivating a network of students passionate about involving themselves with the research and technological opportunities available in the medical field.

The Medical Research and Technology Society is the bridge between medicine and technology, and the gateway to research, advancing healthcare and AI.

To date, the society has upwards of 300 active members and has worked to introduce UCC's first student medical journal, conferences including 'The Student Research Conference' and the 'Science of Happiness Conference' along with regular



Pictured above: The Life Sciences Careers Fair organising committee comprised of the Medical Research and Technology Society Chairperson Mark Leahy, the Translational Medicine Society Chairperson Seán O'Flaherty and Education Officer Brian Curtain, all third-year students of the BSc Medical and Health Science degree programme.

talks from industry experts in AI, Telemedicine, MedTech devices, and Business Idea Development. The Life Sciences Careers Fair organisers would like to thank the attending companies and research institutions, and academic departments for their cooperation and support through the development of the event. The organisers would also like to thank Dr Cian McCafferty, Department of Anatomy and

Neuroscience, and Dr Róisín Kelly-Laubscher and Dr Cathal McCarthy, UCC Department of Pharmacology and Therapeutics for their support organising the event.

UCC's first Life Sciences Careers Fair would not have been possible without the continued and generous support of the British Pharmacological Society.

Spring Conferrings 2022

Congratulations Dr Mutahira Lone, MA in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education



Congratulations to Dr Mutahira Lone, who was conferred with an MA in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education at the UCC College of Medicine and Health, Spring Conferring Ceremony on Wednesday, April 13th 2022.

Dr Lone is delighted to have completed the MA in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (for third level education teachers) run by CIRTLL (Centre for the Integration of Research, Teaching and Learning), and said that she found the Masters programme a very rewarding experience, which added a

new dimension to her already extensive third level teaching experience.

Dr Lone is an Anatomy Lecturer in the Department of Anatomy and Neuroscience lecturing to MSc Human Anatomy and dental students and is Programme Coordinator of the MSc Human Anatomy degree.

Dr Lone is a passionate teacher and her research interests involve the study of innovative ways to teach anatomy and dental anatomy, combining traditional teaching method with innovative ways to introduce blended learning approaches, introducing the concepts of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) and Universal Design for Learning (UDL) in the teaching environment.

Pictured above left: Dr Mutahira Lone. **Top right:** Dr Mutahira Lone with her sons Umer, Abdullah and Muhammed and her husband Asim. **Bottom right:** Professor Aideen O'Sullivan, Head of Department of Anatomy & Neuroscience, Graduate Dr Martina Mazzocchi, Dr Mutahira Lone and Professor Gerard O'Keeffe.



New research shows gut health plays a role in development of Alzheimer's Disease

New research, not yet peer reviewed but presented at the Alzheimer's Research UK Conference 2022 at the Brighton Centre and profiled in the New York Post highlights newly identified links between gut bacteria, inflammation and brain changes associated with Alzheimer's disease.

During this research conducted by Dr Stefanie Grabrucker, a postdoctoral researcher at APC Microbiome Ireland, University College Cork and led by Professor Yvonne Nolan, stool samples from people with and without Alzheimer's disease (recruited through collaboration with Dr Annamaria Cattaneo, IRCCS, Italy) were transplanted into rats.

Professor Yvonne Nolan, who is leading this collaborative Centres of Excellence in Neurodegeneration (CoEN) project with partners in King's College London and IRCCS, Italy and who presented the work said: "We found that rats with gut bacteria from people with Alzheimer's performed worse in memory tests, didn't grow as many new nerve cells in areas of the brain associated with memory and had higher levels of inflammation in the brain."

"Our findings suggest that symptoms of Alzheimer's may, in part, be caused by

abnormalities in the gastrointestinal tract. While it is currently proving difficult to directly tackle Alzheimer's processes in the brain, the gut potentially represents an alternative target that may be easier to influence with drugs or diet changes."

Alzheimer's is the leading cause of dementia. With one in three people born today likely to develop dementia in their lifetime, scientists are exploring potential links that could help uncover approaches for new treatments. This includes work to better understand the health of our gut and our brain.

The gut is host to a community of bacteria called the intestinal microbiome. The precise make-up of the microbiome differs between individuals, in both the types and quantities of bacteria present. This microbial composition can have far-reaching effects on other parts of our body and emerging evidence has suggested a relationship with brain health and the risk of diseases like Alzheimer's.

The work is profiled in the New York Post: **The secret to stopping Alzheimer's is in your gut, not brain, experts say.**

The research described here was funded as part of the Network of Centres

of Excellence in Neurodegeneration (COEN) www.coen.org/ coordinated by Professor Yvonne Nolan on "Gut microbes, Neuroinflammation and Alzheimer's disease: determining the immunoregulatory role of gut microbiota on brain and behaviour." Principal Investigators are Yvonne Nolan and Cora O'Neill (Republic of Ireland, funded by Science Foundation Ireland (SFI)), Annamaria Cattaneo (Italy, funded by Ministero della Salute (MDS)), Sandrine Thuret (UK, funded by the Medical Research Council (MRC)).



Pictured above: Professor Cora O'Neill, Professor Yvonne Nolan and Dr Stefanie Grabrucker.

'Water Under the Bridge'

BSc Neuroscience Graduate Rehan Ali's 'Water Under the Bridge' short film had its World TV Premier on Virgin Media One

Having premiered to a full house and received an 'amazing reaction' at the Lighthouse Cinema as part of the International Dublin Film Festival on February 26th 2022, Rehan Ali's 'Water Under the Bridge' short film had its World TV premier on Virgin Media One at 11pm on Friday, March 4th 2022.

Rehan Ali's powerful film 'Water Under The Bridge' captures the unique journey of Bilal who has just arrived in a small Irish town. Protesting his father's warnings, he leaves the confines of Direct Provision to venture into this new world for the first time. Here he meets three local teens and their interaction is the catalyst to a self-realisation that could change everything. After surviving so much, can Bilal overcome this new struggle?

Having left Pakistan with his own family when only six years of age and spending a large portion of his life as a Direct Provision resident in Carrick-on-Suir, residing at the Bridgewater House hostel, Rehan's film though fictional is hugely authentic.

Rehan Ali completed his BSc Neuroscience degree exams in May 2021 shortly after he won the 2021 Virgin Media Discovers & Screen Ireland Short Film Competition. The prize of a production budget of €30,000 to bring his script to life on screen as a 10-minute short film was announced live on Virgin TV by award-winning director and screenwriter Lenny Abrahamson. It was a dream come true for Rehan who said that 'he has always wanted to be a writer and filmmaker.'



The completed film 'Water Under The Bridge' was initially to be filmed in the summer of 2021. But due to COVID-19 restrictions, the making of the film was postponed until late September 2021, coinciding with Rehan beginning a MSc Bioinformatics degree in UCC. September was a busy month for Rehan, juggling studies with directing his film. The film was shot completely in Carrick-on-Suir, the town Rehan



Pictured above left: 'Water Under The Bridge' writer and director Rehan Ali at the premiere of 'Water Under The Bridge' at the Lighthouse Cinema as part of the International Dublin Film Festival with his mentor, director Frank Berry.

Above right: Rhys Mannion, Peter Obidiran and Holly Sturton. (Pictures by Brian McEvoy).

Pictured far left: Oran Treacy playing Scott.
Left: Peter Obidiran (Bilal), Holly Sturton (Niamh), Rhys Mannion (Ryan). (Pictures by Luke Brabazon).



considers to be his home and so is incredibly special to him. Covid guidelines including social distancing and mask wearing for all crew, except for cast, as well a strict testing regime, made filming challenging, but Rehan said of this time that he was 'just delighted to finally be on location with a fantastic cast and crew'.

Rehan was 'determined to cast as the protagonist someone who would understand and reflect the story of the film', so when Peter Obidiran, a childhood friend, from Carrick-on-Suir with his own relationship with Direct Provision and Bridgewater House, auditioned for the lead role, Rehan was astonished by his perfect fit to portray the character of Bilal. Rehan suggests that a positive to the postponing of shoot was that novice actor Peter Obidiran used the time to work with actor coach Maria Clancy developing his acting skills to deliver an incredible performance in the film.

Actor and fellow UCC graduate Oran Treacy plays the role of Scott in the film. Rehan came across Oran during the search for cast for the Puttnam



Scholarship short film project which he completed last year and reached out to him to audition for the role of Scott, a lead character in the film. After watching Oran's audition it became clear that the perfect Scott had been discovered.

Actor Holly Sturton plays the part of local teen Niamh, and Rys Mannion plays her friend, Ryan. Holly most recently filmed the role of Beatrix in the Netflix adaptation of Soman Chainani's 'The School For Good And Evil' which is due to come out sometime this year. Rhys can next be seen in 'It Is In Us All' which will have its world premiere at the South by Southwest (SXSW) film festival in Austin, Texas later this month. Other actors in 'Water Under The Bridge' include Derek Ugochukwu who has recently finished directing his own film 'You're Not Home' and Ian Lloyd Anderson known for his role as Dean in Love/Hate. Holly Sturton and Rhys Mannion portray young locals, Niamh and Ryan, in the film. Derek Ugochukwu portrays Bilal's father. Ian Lloyd Anderson portrays the role of a security guard at the Direct Provision Hostel.



WORLD TELEVISION PREMIERE

Professor Aideen Sullivan Head of Department of Anatomy and Neuroscience and Dr Siobhain O'Mahony BSc Neuroscience Director, congratulated Rehan on his fantastic achievement, and along with the staff and students of the Department of Anatomy and Neuroscience tuned in to Virgin Media One on the 4th of March 2022 to see Rehan Ali's prize winning film 'Water Under The Bridge' have its World TV Premier.

Congratulations Rehan!

Promotional video from Virgin Media: World Television Premier on Virgin Media One

Rehan Ali, final year UCC BSc Neuroscience student wins 2021 Virgin Media Discovers & Screen Ireland Short Film Competition

Above far left: Rhys Mannion playing Ryan and Holly Sturton playing Niamh.

Above centre: Peter Obidiran playing Bilal.

COMH RESEARCHERS RECEIVED TWO OF THE EIGHT ERC STARTING GRANTS AWARDED TO IRELAND THIS YEAR

Congratulations to **Dr Piotr Kowalski** of the APC Microbiome Ireland and the School of Pharmacy who was awarded a European Research Council (ERC) Starting Grant of €1.5m for his study CIRCLE. Dr Kowalski is involved in developing a cutting-edge circular RNA technology and new delivery methods to tackle unmet medical challenges such as sepsis, which kills 11 million every year and is the cause of 1 in 5 deaths worldwide. Dr Kowalski's research has the potential to advance a whole new class of circular RNA therapeutics.

“As evidenced by the recent success of the mRNA-based vaccines against SARS-CoV-2. RNA-based drugs are a new class of biologics on the path to becoming a major platform in drug development. My ambition with this project is to help reshape the future of RNA therapies which I believe could be circular,” commented Dr Kowalski.

Congratulations to **Dr María Rodríguez Aburto**, Department of Anatomy and Neuroscience who was recently awarded a European Research Council (ERC) Starting Grant of €1.75m to support her research project RADIOGUT: Radial Glia as Neurodevelopmental Mediators of Gut Microbiota Signals.

From a competitive field of over 4,000 applicants Europe-wide, Dr Rodríguez Aburto was one of eight researchers

based in Ireland to have secured a European Research Council (ERC) Starting Grant, this being the most competitive call in the past 15 years. The Starting Grants, administered by Europe's leading research funding body, are awarded to emerging research leaders across Europe who are at the stage of growing their own independent research teams, so that pioneering research can be conducted.

In her project RADIOGUT Dr Rodríguez Aburto will investigate how the gut microbiome communicates with the developing brain. Understanding this communication could have ground-breaking implications for neurodevelopmental disorders such as autism, as well as precision medicine.

Speaking about her work María explains “Currently there is limited understanding of how our gut microbiome communicates with the brain. We have more microbes than human cells in and on our bodies, most of them inhabiting our gut. I believe that understanding how gut microbes communicate with the developing brain will provide a new lens to view neurodevelopment.”

María is confident that understanding how gut microbes communicate with the developing brain “will provide a new lens to view neurodevelopment.”

María received a PhD from the Neurobiology of Hearing Laboratory at the Biomedical Research Institute, in her home city of Madrid in 2011. She followed this with a post-doctoral position in the Neuro and Vascular Guidance Group at The Buchmann Institute for Molecular Life Sciences in Frankfurt, Germany and in 2020 María was awarded a Marie Curie Individual Fellowship to join Professor John Cryan's group in the APC Microbiome Ireland, UCC. María's RADIOGUT project builds on her research at APC Microbiome Ireland and the Department of Anatomy and Neuroscience UCC.

Professor John F. Cryan, UCC Vice President for Research & Innovation congratulating María on her grant success noted “María is one of the most impressive scientists I've had the pleasure of working with and she has consistently impressed me with her passion for her innovative science. This project combines her strong background in brain development with the microbiome capabilities here in UCC and will be very impactful for the field.”

The Irish Research Council has joint responsibility with Science Foundation Ireland for promoting and supporting engagement by Irish researchers with the European Research Council. Welcoming the outcome of the call for Ireland, Dr Gráinne Walshe, assistant

director of the Irish Research Council said: “European Research Council grants are among the most prestigious of any funding body worldwide.”

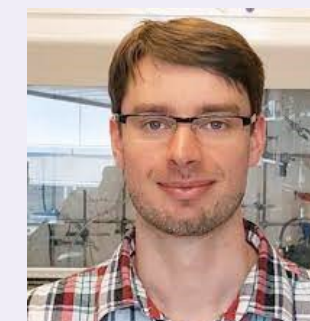
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Dr Piotr Kowalski.



Dr María Rodríguez Aburto.



Above: Dr Yensi Flores.

FUNDING NEWS – MSCA

Congratulations to Dr Yensi Flores who secured a highly-competitive Marie Curie postdoctoral Fellowship for her project BacStar – Design, Build and Test of novel bacteria-delivered proteins for cancer therapy.

Yensi, who works in Professor Mark Tangney's lab, will undertake a Global Fellowship. Yensi will spend the first half of the fellowship in the leading centre for protein design - the Institute for Protein Design in Washington - before returning to complete the fellowship with Mark.

The 2022 MSCA call is now open. Interested applicants and supervisors may contact Dr Ashleigh Byrne on ashleigh.byrne@ucc.ie for information, advice and help with writing a proposal. PoC: yensi.floresbueso@ucc.ie

UCC International Medical Pre-Graduation Dinner, May 2022

Congratulations to the Medicine Class of 2022 on your graduation as medical doctors. Well wishes from the College of Medicine & Health, M&H and from the School of Medicine. A celebratory reception was held to mark the occasion for our International medicine students, which took place on Thursday, May 26th 2022. Professor John O'Halloran, President of UCC, Professor Helen Whelton, Head of College of Medicine and Health, UCC, and Professor Paula O'Leary, Dean of the School of Medicine and Faculty were in attendance. It was a wonderful evening for students, their families and friends, to mingle after being apart for so long. Every best wish for your future careers.



Pictured above and left:
UCC International Medical
Pre-Graduation Dinner.



Professor Colin Bradley, Dept of General Practice, School of Medicine

The Department of General Practice was established in June 1997 with the appointment of Colin Bradley to the Chair. Prior to his appointment UCC had an involvement with postgraduate training in general practice as a participant (along with the Southern Health Board) in the management of the Cork Vocational Training Programme for General Practice. Responsibility for undergraduate teaching in general practice had, until 1997, been vested in the former Department of Social Medicine. Professor Bradley's appointment allowed it to expand. During his tenure, his contribution to his Department, School and College was remarkable. Underpinning his research has been a desire to contribute to the understanding of how the quality of clinical care delivered by general practitioners to their patients can be improved.

Retirements of Colin Bradley, Birgit Greiner and Fiona McLeod

Our most heartfelt thank you from the College of Medicine & Health to three of our colleagues who are retiring - Professor Colin Bradley, Dept of General Practice, School of Medicine, Dr Birgit Greiner, Dept of Occupational Therapy, School of Public Health, and Dr Fiona McLeod, Department of Epidemiology and Public Health, School of Public Health.

Dr Birgit Greiner, Dept of Occupational Therapy, School of Public Health

Dr Birgit Greiner is the Director of the MSc Occupational Health at the School of Public Health. She is a passionate occupational health and safety advocate with local engagement in Psyched and international engagement as a member of IOSH and an Executive Member of the European Academy of Occupational Health Psychology. Dr Greiner's research interest is in occupational stress and the management of psychosocial work risks. She published extensively on the measurement of occupational stress factors, the prevention of work-related musculoskeletal disorders, and the promotion of cardiovascular health, mental health and wellbeing in workplaces. Her international research includes studies in health care, aviation, bus driving, production and office work. Dr Greiner received a PhD and of Master of Public Health (MPH), from the University of California Berkeley, School of Public Health and a Graduate degree in Psychology from the Technical University Berlin, Germany. Through her research, Dr Greiner has published numerous peer-reviewed articles and book chapters whilst also regularly presenting at professional and scientific international conferences.

Dr Fiona McLeod

Fiona qualified in medicine at Saint George's Hospital Medical School, London, and completed postgraduate training in clinical hospital medicine and general practice in the United Kingdom. In 1995 she obtained a Masters degree, with distinction, in Health Services Management at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. Fiona has been employed in both hospital and general practice posts in the United Kingdom, and now works in sessional General Practice in Ireland. She has worked in developing and transitional countries including Peru, Angola and the Republic of Macedonia, in her clinical capacity as well as in the fields of health service development and research.



Above: Professor Whelton, Dr Greiner, Dr McLeod and Professor Ivan Perry.

The Recent appointment of Professor John Cooke as Group Clinical Director of Education & Training

The Forum of Irish Postgraduate Medical Training Bodies has published a **strategic framework for postgraduate medical training 2021-2030**. This document describes a set of objectives that will ensure that medical training in the immediate future will align to the needs of our trainees, our patients and our changing health service. The success of this framework will depend on the professionalisation of postgraduate medical training across our hospitals and community healthcare settings. The National Doctors Training & Planning (NDTP) unit have committed to effecting this priority and have announced a pilot project for Education & Training at South/South West Hospital Group (S/SWHG) and Children's Health Ireland (CHI).

The South/South West pilot will commence in September 2022 with the appointment of Professor John Cooke as Group Clinical Director for Postgraduate Medical Education & Training. John was previously NDTP lead with Dr Órla Crosbie and therefore brings considerable experience in the area of postgraduate medical and interprofessional training.

The project will continue with the recruitment of a lead for postgraduate medical education at each of the hospital sites of S/SWHG. The Clinical Director and site leads will be supported by a team of administrative staff to develop a postgraduate faculty for S/SWHG and at each of the hospital sites.

The pilot promises an exciting transformation of postgraduate medical training for our region. It will facilitate the implementation of the Forum's postgraduate strategy but will also allow improved synergy between undergraduate and postgraduate training activity. Furthermore, it will ensure that postgraduate training is aligned to the UCC/SSWHG Academic Health Sciences System led by Chief Academic Officer Professor Helen Whelton. The pilot will see greater collaboration with stakeholders such as the postgraduate training colleges, UCC research community & HRB CRF-C, Community Healthcare Organisations, SSWHG simulation director Dr Rory O'Brien and the ASSERT centre.

Professors Yvonne Nolan and John Cryan commence €1.2 million Irish UK research study to examine middle age health

There has been increasing emphasis on the role of lifestyle factors in healthy aging. Now APC Microbiome Ireland together with King's College London have been awarded research funding to investigate how exercise impacts gut microbiota and brain health in middle age.

The Reta Lila Weston Trust as part of their Brain Health and Microbiome programme awarded a €1.2 million collaboration project studying the role of gut-microbiota in exercise-induced changes in cognitive function in middle age to Professor Yvonne Nolan and Professor John Cryan at UCC in collaboration with Prof. Sandrine Thuret and Dr Brendon Stubbs at King's College London. This project seeks to provide new knowledge about the relationship between the brain, the gut microbiota and exercise by identifying a gut-to-brain pathway, which may offer individualised therapy for changes in memory and mood as we age.

Middle-age is an understudied time window across the lifecourse. Yet it is a critical time for changes in memory performance and precedes the very early stage of Alzheimer's disease and is also associated with weight gain, a decline in metabolism and physical fitness. The gut microbiota, or the trillions of microorganisms that live in the gut, are very responsive to changes in lifestyle influences such as exercise. Moreover, recent exciting evidence from APC Microbiome Ireland shows that the microbiome may be a suitable target to promote healthy ageing.

Commenting on the collaboration Profs Yvonne Nolan & John Cryan at APC Microbiome Ireland in UCC emphasised that 'middle age is a transitioning time, thus it is sensitive to lifestyle habits such as exercise, which can determine how we "brain age" in later life.

Professor Nolan commented that "the gut microbiota is particularly responsive to lifestyle influences and so our research will delve into how it regulates the interaction between exercise and the brain to control the ageing process."

"Recent provocative work from APC Microbiome Ireland has emphasised the role of the gut microbiome in driving ageing processes in the brain and the current funding will dig deeper into the exact mechanisms and how exercise may attenuate them" Professor Cryan said.

"We have known in rodent models that exercise increases the production of new neurons and demonstrated in humans that exercise slows down cognitive ageing, while the gut microbiota can also be affected. With this project we want to put the puzzle together at the cellular and molecular level" stated King's College London's Professor Sandrine Thuret, the Project Lead of the study.





Professor Martin Corbally.

Helping future generations of Ainsworth Scholars

Professor Martin Corbally was the recipient of an Ainsworth Scholarship in 1985 which supported his three-year fellowship at the Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Centre in New York. It was through this Fellowship that he gained significant training and experience in Paediatric Surgical Oncology.

Almost 40 years later, Professor Corbally is giving back to the same scholarship programme that heavily impacted and influenced his life and career as a medic. His generous gift of €10,000 in support of the Ainsworth Scholarship Programme will impact future generations of Ainsworth Scholars as they pursue further education and a career in medicine.

Speaking on the impact of the scholarship and his reason for giving back, Professor Corbally said; *“I was a grateful recipient of the Ainsworth Scholarship in 1986 when I was an impoverished Research Fellow at Memorial Sloan Kettering, NYC. It was a life-saving award that made it possible to continue in Research. It is now an honor to give something back to the scholarship in the hope of helping others.”*

Professor Corbally was a Senior Registrar in Paediatric Surgery at Our Lady’s Hospital and the Hospital for Sick Children, Great Ormond St. London, respectively. He held consultant positions at Bristol Children’s Hospital and Kings College Hospital London. In 1994, Professor Corbally returned to Dublin as a Consultant Paediatric Surgeon and in the years that followed, he was responsible for the delivery of National Paediatric Hepatobiliary and Surgical Oncology services. He is also the founder and program director of Operation Childlife, a registered Irish charity that aims to improve the standard of paediatric care and quality of life for disadvantaged children in both Vietnam and Tanzania. Professor Corbally currently resides in Bahrain where he is the Chief of Staff and Consultant Paediatric Surgeon at King Hamad University Hospital, and Professor of Surgery RCSI, Medical University of Bahrain.

ABOUT THE AINSWORTH SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMME:

The Ainsworth Scholarship Programme was founded by Miss Edith K. Eyre of Newport, Rhode Island in memory of her grandfather, Dr James Ainsworth, who secured his medical qualifications in Dublin and subsequently practised in Peru. Open to medical doctors who intend to practice their profession in Ireland, and primarily those who are medical graduates of University College Cork, the programme supports recipients in pursuing postgraduate medical education and training in the United States of America, or any other country which may offer the best facilities for such education and training.

MAKE AN IMPACT

For further information, please contact:

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Pictured above: Recipients of UCC's School of Nursing and Midwifery Annual Achievement Awards.

NURSES RESPONDING AND WORKING THROUGH COVID PRAISED

UCC's School of Nursing and Midwifery Annual Achievement Awards Ceremony took place in person on the afternoon of Thursday, June 16th. After two years of hosting this event online, it was a pleasure to celebrate the achievements of students and staff with family, faculty and friends in person in Brookfield.

The School of Nursing and Midwifery Annual Achievement Awards 2022 was a celebratory occasion marking the great achievements of students who have exhibited excellence in many aspects of university life and acknowledged students and healthcare workers who have made broader societal contributions. Winners were selected based on their exemplary performance in the 2021/2022 academic year.

Professor Josephine Hegarty, Head of the School of Nursing and Midwifery commented on the awards; *"The annual achievement awards are a great opportunity to acknowledge the contribution of nursing and midwifery students to both the health services and wider society, and to acknowledge the extraordinary clinical educators that support student learning within clinical environments."*

The Undergraduate Student of the Year 2022 award was presented to **James Morrison**, a 2nd year BSc General Nursing Student. James was reported by his nominator to have shown excellent compassionate nursing leadership throughout his clinical placements to date. Preceptors have praised James for his exceptional bedside manner, compassion, and his zeal to learn and improve on his practice. Despite the busy nature of the clinical areas during Covid outbreaks, James without hesitation worked well with staff and MDT to make a positive difference in the care of his patients. Preceptors have highlighted that James is highly dependable, has a good work ethic and is diligent in provision of nursing care to patients. The CPC who nominated him found James hard working, diligent and resourceful. James's dedication and commitment to the nursing profession made him a forerunner for this undergraduate student of the year award.

The Postgraduate Student of the Year award 2022 was presented to **Yanqing Yang** a student on the MSc Nursing (International). Her nominators said that, as an international nursing student, Yanqing works very hard. She balanced her part-time job and academic study very well. She had high

academic grades in the first semester, which was 74% on average, and encouraged other fellow students to be better all the time. She sets a very good example to other international nursing students and helps them to be better, particularly the Chinese nursing students and she makes a great contribution to UCC.

The award for Student Leader of the Year 2022 was presented to **Mercy Adeniran** who was nominated by one of her lecturers as she took on the role of first year student rep with enthusiasm and commitment. From the very beginning she made herself known to students and staff, intuitively understanding her role, and willing to become involved within the classroom and beyond to support the early transition into university life. Throughout this year she provided support for her classmates, communicating regularly with them, in addition to organising nights out, ensuring strong social bonds within the class. She is self-motivated, organised, and empathetic. Mercy says: *“To my fellow student nurses and midwives who have begun paving the path to our vocation in this field, stay strong, you’re not alone, and if you need a listening ear I’ve got you.”*

The award for Outstanding Contribution to Student Life 2022 was presented to **Loveth Chidimma Ani** who, as an international student, recognised the challenge with blending in and adequate utilization of provided resources and offered supports to students. A close second in this category was Ms Laura Duffy who has on many occasions advocated for students.

The Award for Recognition in Sport 2022 was presented to **Aoife Murphy** who was described as “wonderful, dedicated, hardworking and talented” Aoife is a 3rd year general nursing student and

was nominated for this award in recognition of her her talents, time and sporting efforts with UCC’s Women’s Soccer team. While balancing a demanding and crucial academic work load alongside 16 weeks of clinical placement, Aoife worked tirelessly for her club both as a committee member and as a player (as a defender and as goal keeper) all the way through to the cup final which came back to back with her final exams in early May. Aoife epitomizes team work, commitment, motivation, and achieving a goal that is dreamed about.

A very close runner-up in this category was **David Adebayo** who was nominated in recognition of his many achievements with UCC Soccer in the last few years and more recently UCC Boxing. “David is so humble in words, but the big smile that crosses his face speaks volumes. While balancing his heavy academic load as a 3rd year student nurse, 16 weeks of clinical placement, his training schedule, his matches and checking in on family, friends and class mates, David epitomizes what it means to be committed to a team (through the easy times and the hard times), inspiring, and true to his natural talents both on a soccer pitch and in a boxing ring” his nominator stated.

The Community Engagement Award 2022 was presented to **Frances Lehane** a CNM and preceptor to students in the Social Inclusion addiction services in conjunction with the Cork Mental Health Services. This is a specialist placement for Mental Health Student Nurses. All students who attend this placement area always speak so highly of Frances; as a person, her positivity, the care she delivers to each service user and the learning they have gained from their time with her. Frances is an outstanding nurse in her field and is clearly committed to social inclusion.

The Award for Recognition in the Arts and Entertainment 2022 was presented to **Emily Murphy** a preceptor in Intellectual Disability Nursing. She was reported by students as having offered great guidance and sought multiple learning opportunities. As we know, nursing is both an art and a science and this has been evident in Emily’s delivery of care. Emily has had to be creative in adapting care delivery in the context of Covid-19. Emily has positively impacted her environment, her colleagues and students and most of all her clients during this past year.

The Promoting Equality and Diversity Award 2022 was presented to **Emily Osborne**, a 3rd year mental health nursing student. In addition to focusing on her academic work and clinical placements, she is devoted to trying to make an active difference on campus. As vice-chair of UCC’s Feminist Society she aims to educate students on political matters and raise awareness of and funds for important causes such as the Sexual Violence Centre Cork and Women’s Aid. She also holds the position of editor for the Sexpress section with the UCC Express team, where she writes about sexual health, body image, and gender identity. Alongside these, she is also the outgoing Mental Health Rep for UCCSU, where she assisted in organising mental health awareness events and raised awareness about the various mental health facilities available for students on Campus. Preceptors and CPCs speak very highly of Emily, and her enthusiasm for mental health nursing is obvious. She is passionate about her role as a mental health nursing student, as well as the extra-curricular work she does on campus.

The Best Clinical & Quality Learning Environment of the Year 2022 is presented to the area/unit that

has demonstrated an ongoing commitment to prioritising excellence and leadership as a learning environment. There were eight clinical areas nominated, but this year it is awarded to **Ward 1B in Cork University Hospital**. Sheila Lordan CNM2 and Marie Cotter CNM1 were praised by students and staff alike.

One nominator explained; *“During the COVID-19 surge nearly 75% of 1B staff were redeployed to the core designated covid ward in CUH. Over the last three years adaptation nurses and new staff were transitioning into their roles on 1B. With huge challenges and demand for student placements there was a requirement for setting up 1B as a placement site again. Under the excellent Leadership of Sheila Lordan CNM2 and Marie Cotter CNM1 student placements were planned with considerable level of thought and careful monitoring. Their efforts have resulted in huge student satisfaction during placements and positive student feedback on their learning experience on 1B. Students appreciated the huge support they received from both CNMs and the staff on 1B.”*

The Preceptor of the Year award 2022 was a challenging category this year as over 30 individual preceptors were nominated for this award. This year it is presented to **Helena McCallum**, a staff nurse in St Joseph’s Ward in the Bon Secours Hospital. Helena was nominated by numerous students. One nominating student stated; *“I wish to nominate Helena as she was a fantastic preceptor during my first rotation of my 4th year internship. [...] she was a fantastic support to myself and many other students. She is approachable, supportive, knowledgeable and has an infectious positive attitude. She is a fantastic manager and preceptor. She approaches*

everything with a solution focused mind set which made me feel like I could come to her with any problem whether small or big. She is someone that creates a lovely atmosphere as soon as she walks onto the ward and any student who has her as a preceptor is very lucky in my opinion!”

Some very strong runner up mentions for Katie Mulcahy in the ED CUH, and for Cliona McSweeney a staff nurse on GC ward in CUH who were also very highly commended.

The very special Keady Clifford Award for Excellence in Children’s Nursing 2022 is presented to **Roisin Russell**. This award seeks to honour Keady Clifford’s memory and to recognize an exemplary student in the context of children’s nursing. Her nominators stated; *“Roisin was a wonderful student and a very competent nurse intern. She has excellent knowledge and always delivered beautiful nursing care with great compassion. She received very positive feedback in all clinical placements, seeking out learning at every opportunity. Roisin particularly excelled in children’s nursing. This was clearly evident in her lovely ability to relate with infants and children of all ages, and her kindness and sensitivity for parents and family. Roisin was nominated for this award by a number of CNMs and was described by one ward CNM as having competence, intuition and ability beyond her years of nursing. Her excellent organisational skills, work ethic, critical thinking, analytical and problem solving ability were outstanding and her exemplary knowledge, real dedication, high quality performance, kindness, sensitivity and beautiful nursing care merit an award. She is a great ambassador for children’s nursing and a deserving candidate for the Keady Clifford Award 2022.”*

Finally, the Patricia J. Power Excellence in Clinical Practice Award is presented by the Power family to honour the late Patricia Power. There were six very strong nominations for this award, but this year it is awarded to **Ms Ciara Stack**. Her nominator described Ciara as an outstanding nursing intern, and stated that *“her knowledge, clinical understanding and ability to work as part of a team is second to none. Ciara actively seeks out every opportunity to improve her patients care and demonstrates this in the care she provides. One incident of this is when Ciara identified a patient in cardiac arrest and immediately called for the arrest team and began CPR, as a result the man was saved by Ciara. The CNM2 and nursing team on GBR ward contacted me, as the CPC, to commend the outstanding care and work that Ciara had demonstrated that particular day and during her clinical placement. I could not recommend anyone more deserving for this award than Ciara Stack (General Intern CUH).”*

This year more than 90 nominations were received across these awards, providing evidence for the enthusiasm and passion that nurses and midwives in this region have for education and excellence. UCC’s School of Nursing and Midwifery would like to thank all those who have supported the education of nursing and midwifery students over the past year.



Above: Professor Dominic Hegarty.

Professor Dominic Hegarty

The medical Independent featured an interview with Consultant in Pain Medicine Professor Dominic Hegarty where he spoke with Pat Kelly about innovations in the field, the problems with pain control in Ireland and his first-of-a-kind academic appointment in Cork.

The full article can be read here:

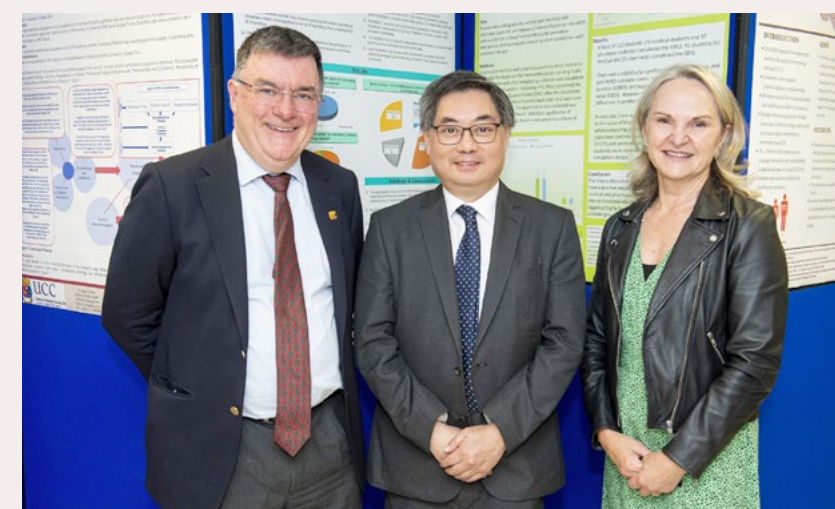
Delivering care in a world of pain - Medical Independent.

LEARNING AND TEACHING SHOWCASE 2022

The College of Medicine and Health Learning and Teaching Showcase 2022 was held in Brookfield Health Sciences Complex on Friday, June 17th. It was the first time the event had been held since 2019 and staff across the College of Medicine and Health enjoyed the opportunity to meet in person and exchange views and opinions. Professor Albert Leung from University College London delivered an excellent keynote address on the design and successful delivery of Continuing Professional Development. Each school presented a bitesize lecture as well as colleagues representing Interprofessional Education, ASSERT, Microcredentials, iEd Hub and Graduate Attributes. Forty posters were displayed which indicates the enthusiasm with which staff engaged with this year's event and the broad scope of talent and imagination across the College of Medicine and Health.

The organising committee were Margaret Bermingham (School of Pharmacy), Anne Burke (College of Medicine and Health), Serena Fitzgerald (School of Nursing and Midwifery), Christie Godsmark (School of Public Health), Collette Hand (School of Medicine), Martina Hayes (School of Dentistry), Jane Hurley (College of Medicine and Health) and Declan O'Sullivan (School of Clinical Therapies).

Pictured top right: Attendees at Learning & Teaching Showcase. **Pictured centre:** Collette Hand, Declan O'Sullivan, Margaret Bermingham, Frank Burke, Martina Hayes, Jane Hurley and Christie Godsmark. **Pictured right:** Frank Burke (Vice-Dean for Teaching, Learning and Assessment), Professor Albert Leung, the guest speaker from University College London Eastman Dental Institute and Helen Whelton (Head of College).



CLINICAL RESEARCH IN IRELAND

The **HRB NCTO International Clinical Trials Day** event was hosted on May 12th, 2022, on-line via Zoom. The theme for this year's event was "Clinical Research in Ireland 2022", supported by the HRB with contributions from Bayer, GSK, IQVIA and Sanofi.

The event consisted of a speaker session in the morning followed by a panel discussion in the afternoon. The event also launched a Calendar of Events from around the country which showcased the activities that were ongoing around the country to celebrate International Clinical Trials Day 2022.

(HRB NCTO ICTD Calendar of Events 2022).

Approximately 230 people attended the on-line conference with feedback questionnaires extremely positive - 91% rating the conference as excellent or very good!

Professor Joe Eustace, Director of NCTO chaired the event with Dr Mairead O'Driscoll, Chief Executive, Health Research Board and Garrett Murray, Head of Life Sciences, Enterprise Ireland delivering the opening addresses of the day. Mairead focused her presentation on the significant investments made by the HRB in Ireland's clinical trial capacity - over €100 million invested since 2010. Gareth focused on the opportunities for success that exist at the intersection between Irish Industry and the Irish Clinical Research System.

Dr Fionnuala Keane, Manager, HRB NCTO provided an update on HRB NCTO and ECRIN activities, with the HRB Clinical Trial Networks and PPI Ignite showcased in the mid-morning session.

There was also a panel session in the afternoon titled, "Opportunities to improve the Irish Research Ecosystem" with representatives from the Health Research Board (HRB), Health Service Executive (HSE), National Research Ethics Committee (NREC), Health Products Regulatory Authority (HPRA), Health Research Data Protection Network (HRDPN), National Clinical Trials Office Clinical Industry Liaison Officer, industry, patients and investigators. This session included discussions on how we can increase patient involvement across the whole process of clinical research, the impacts of the varying requirement for Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIA's) and their institutional review and the challenges facing Clinical Investigation for medical devices in Ireland at present among other topics.

Of significant interest on the day was the Keynote addresses by Dr Eoghan De Barra, Beaumont hospital/RCSI, Consultant in Infectious Diseases and Senior Lecturer at Beaumont Hospital / RCSI, who spoke about COVID 19 Clinical Research and Ireland's experience and by Dr Ruben Keane, NCTO Quality and Regulatory Affairs Manager who discussed the changing landscape of Clinical Research in Ireland.

The purpose and importance of the event was to promote Ireland as a potential leader in clinical research internationally and to showcase ongoing trials led by Irish Investigators and Researchers, in many cases, funded by the HRB with national and international collaborations.

The event was recorded live, all of the recordings from the event are available through this link:

HRB NCTO International Clinical Trials Day Event 12th May 2022 Playlist.



Spotlight on International Activities in The School of Nursing and Midwifery

The School of Nursing & Midwifery had a number of very successful engagements with international activities during the academic year 2021/22. We were delighted to meet outside of the School environment and we have highlighted two of these engagements here.

International Networking Week

In March 2022 there was a great turnout at the 3rd International Networking Week with attendees from France, Spain, Germany and Malta. The week was an opportune time for networking and exchange of ideas. New Erasmus partnerships are currently being developed. BSc students are planning their Erasmus exchange visits, the first of such visits will commence in September to Malta as well as with established partners in Finland, Sweden and The Netherlands.



International Social Trip

Social engagement and cultural immersion is an importance element for international students, while studying in The School of Nursing and Midwifery. During Covid this was difficult to achieve, but in May 2022 we had a very enjoyable tour with students from the BSc Nursing Studies and the MSc Nursing (Non-EU) as well as staff. It was a beautiful sunny morning as we headed to Kinsale for a guided tour of Charles Fort. This was followed by free time in the town with the added bonus of the Farmers Market to the delight of the students. Next stop on the tour was Courtmacsherry via the Wild Atlantic Way, where we walked the Fuschia Walkway to the Beacon. The day was enjoyed by all and summed up in this quote from one of the students.



“This great day out has added to our overall experience in UCC and it was nice to spend time with peers and staff outside of the college environment.”

Carol Condon
Director of International Education
The School of Nursing and Midwifery



Pictured above and centre: Group photo at Charles Fort and at Courtmacsherry. **Top and far right:** Group outdoors photo and Neville Schembri, Malta.