

## ***Eimear Tynan (BSc Government IV) sets up Cancer Awareness Organisation***



See full story on pages 8 and 9.

**ANNOUNCEMENT: COLM O’GORMAN OF AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL IRELAND TO DELIVER 17<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL PHILIP MONAHAN LECTURE ON 5 NOVEMBER. SEE PAGE 7.**

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## Welcome from the new editorial team for 15/16



A big welcome to **Government Times** for the 2015/2016 academic year from the new editorial team which comprises five members – Aodh Quinlivan (Department of Government staff), Jessica Ni Mhaoláin (MSc Government student) and Noelle Nally, Richard Creedon and Emily Burns (all BSc Government students). We hope to bring you loads of interesting stories over the next six months from the student and staff perspectives. We start the year with a jam-packed issue which includes a great cover story about one of our fourth year students, Eimear Tynan, who has established her own cancer awareness organisation. We announce the 14<sup>th</sup> annual Patrick O’Sullivan Essay Competition with the title ‘Love & Politics’ and the 17<sup>th</sup> annual Philip Monahan Memorial Lecture which will be delivered by Colm O’Gorman on Thursday evening, 5 November. There are many other stories including successes for staff members, Clodagh Harris and Theresa Reidy. Enjoy this issue and please contribute to **Government Times** during the year.

*Aodh, Noelle, Jessica, Richard and Emily*

# ***Successful Teaching & Learning Conference***

## ***Organised by Dr Clodagh Harris***

On 18 September, the Political Studies Association of Ireland (PSAI) teaching and learning specialist group held a one-day conference on 'Teaching politics in our universities: inspiring, inciting and enlightening' to discuss the significance of education in, for and about politics in our institutions of higher education. This well-attended conference brought together students, academics, the media, politicians, educationalists and managers. Professor John Craig (Leeds Beckett University) delivered the keynote speech on 'Linking academic study and practice'. Professor Craig also presented the PSAI prize and special award 2014 to Dr Theresa Reidy (UCC) and Dr Chris McInerney (UL) respectively.

The conference also hosted a panel discussion on 'Why teaching and learning politics is important for society' that included Senator Fiach MacConghail (Director Abbey Theatre), Lorraine McIlrath (Community Knowledge Initiative, NUIG), Noel Whelan (Barrister and media commentator) and Michelle O'Donnell Keating (Women for election and DCU). The papers and keynote presentation can be accessed at <http://www.psaie.com/specialist/teaching.asp>.

For a flavour of the roundtable session see *The Irish Times* article (Monday September 21st) - <http://www.irishtimes.com/news/politics/arts-community-not-as-politically-active-as-it-should-be-says-abbey-director-1.2359122>

The conference was organised by Dr Clodagh Harris (Department of Government, UCC) and Dr Brid Quinn (UL) co-convenors of the PSAI specialist group on teaching and learning. The event was funded by the PSAI and the National Forum for the enhancement of teaching and learning in higher politics.



**Dr Brid Quinn (UL), Professor John Craig (Leeds Beckett University), Dr Clodagh Harris (UCC) and Dr Attracta Halpin (Registrar NUI) at the opening of the conference in the NUI offices Merrion Square, Dublin.**

## ***Dr Theresa Reidy Receives Award for Excellence in Teaching and Learning***



At the PSAl teaching and learning specialist group's conference on Friday 18 September (see previous page), Dr Theresa Reidy (Department of Government, UCC) was awarded the PSAl prize for excellence in teaching and learning (2014).

The presentation was made by Professor John Craig of the Leeds Beckett University.

Congratulations, Theresa!

# The Patrick O'Sullivan Essay Writing Competition 2015/2016 Academic Year



This essay writing competition celebrates the life and spirit of Patrick O' Sullivan, who tragically died on 3 March, 2001. Patrick should have been amongst our first group of students who graduated in September 2003. Patrick had a deep interest in politics and he also possessed a great sense of humour. We try to combine both of these elements in this annual essay competition.

## *Love & Politics*



500 word essay, 1-2 pages

Please supply your name and class year on a separate cover page

NO need to adhere to academic assignment guidelines re: referencing etc.

Essays can be as light-hearted and as irreverent as you wish!

Submit to: Aodh Quinlivan, Room 2.54, Department of Government, or electronically to  
[a.quinlivan@ucc.ie](mailto:a.quinlivan@ucc.ie)

**DEADLINE: - Friday 23 October 2015**

The writer of the winning essay will receive the Patrick O' Sullivan Perpetual Shield at the Annual Philip Monahan Memorial Lecture on **Thursday 5 November**.

**NOTE: This competition is open to all under-graduate students of our BSc Government degree and to Arts, Commerce and international students studying Government modules.**

**GOOD LUCK TO ALL!**

# Colm O’Gorman to deliver annual Monahan lecture on Thursday 5 November



The Philip Monahan Memorial Lecture is a highpoint on the Department of Government calendar and we will shortly have our 17<sup>th</sup> lecture in the series. Past speakers have included President Mary McAleese, Taoiseach Enda Kenny, John Hume, Senator David Norris and Senator Ivana Bacik. The 2015 lecture will be delivered by Colm O’Gorman of Amnesty International Ireland. The event takes place on Thursday 5 November from 6:30-8:00pm in Boole 2. As part of the proceedings, the Department of Government annual student awards will be presented.

Colm O’Gorman was born in Wexford, Ireland in July 1966. The son of a farmer, he spent the first eleven years of his life in the village of Adamstown before moving with his family to Wexford town in 1977. He left Wexford in 1984, living in Dublin for a few years before moving to London in 1986. He worked as a waiter, a barman, a charity fundraiser, a hair salon manager, a security guard, a coat check attendant, a radio DJ, a cook, a restaurant manager and a mini cab driver before he finally decided to get serious about a single career and train as a therapist in 1994. He qualified as a physical therapist in 1994, and as a psychotherapist in 1996. He worked initially in private practice before founding the organisation *One in Four* in 1999 to support women and men who have experienced sexual violence. In 1998 he launched a legal case against the Roman Catholic Church as a result of his experiences of sexual abuse at the hands of one of its priests when he was a teenager. He went on to sue the Bishop of his home diocese of Ferns and the Pope. In 2002 he took part in a BBC documentary, which told the story of his battle with the Roman Catholic Church. The film, *Suing the Pope* aired in March 2002 and resulted in the resignation of the Bishop of Ferns Dr Brendan Comiskey. Colm returned to live in Ireland in 2003 to found *One in Four Ireland*. In his role as Director of One in Four, he was instrumental in the establishment of the *Ferns Inquiry*, the first state investigation into clerical sexual abuse in Ireland. The inquiry investigated the management of child sexual abuse concerns and allegations by the Catholic Church and by State authorities.

In 2005 he helped to establish *Gorey Educate Together National School* ; a multi-denominational, co-educational, child centred and democratically run primary school. Colm is a regular media commentator and contributor, has written extensively on social justice and human rights. He has made a number of documentary films, including the BAFTA awarding winning *A Family Affair* (2000), *Suing the Pope* (2002) and *Sex Crimes and The Vatican* which he presented for BBC Panorama in 2006. Colm’s work as a human rights defender is driven by a deep commitment to human rights and social justice and an abiding belief in the power of advocacy and activism, which challenges all of us to use our individual and collective voices to demand change where it is most needed.

Colm served briefly as a member of Seanad Éireann, the upper house of the Irish parliament. He unsuccessfully contested the 2007 Irish general election and discovered that electoral politics was most definitely not his thing. In February 2008, Colm was appointed Executive Director of Amnesty International Ireland. His first book *Beyond Belief* was published by Hodder & Stoughton. It became an instant bestseller, reaching number one in the Irish non-fiction bestsellers list within a week of its publication. Colm lives in County Wexford with his family.

# 'SAVE OUR SKIN' Organisation Formed by BSc Government Fourth Year Student

(as reported in *Cork Evening Echo* on Wednesday 23 September)



AN INSPIRATIONAL college student who was diagnosed with melanoma last year warned that many young people are sheltering themselves from the dangers of skin cancer, as she continues her mission to raise awareness.

Twenty-one-year-old Eimear Tynan from Carrignavar learned she had melanoma — a tumour of melanin-forming cells — in 2014, but refused to let it undermine her determination to succeed as she thrives in her final year of BSc Government at UCC, while holding down a part-time job in fashion store New Look in Blackpool. She has also formed her own organisation called Save Our Skin, which operates under the umbrella of Cork-based, Breakthrough Cancer Research and raises funds to help develop research of the disease as well as promoting awareness.

A series of operations have helped Eimear on her road to recovery and tomorrow will see her collect at UCC while educating young people on the importance of paying attention to early warning signs. Transition year students from her former secondary school Coláiste an Phiarsaigh, Glanmire will also be out in force as they take to the streets of Cork city to support her fundraising efforts.

The college student is no stranger to charity work and ran in the New York City Marathon for Breakthrough Cancer Research in memory of Cork surgeon Jerry O'Sullivan who passed away from cancer himself after operating on her mother Patricia who made a full recovery from bowel cancer.

With further surgery scheduled for the end of this month, Eimear remains positive and feels lucky that both she and mum Patricia were both diagnosed during the early stages of the disease.

“The first sign of melanoma for me was just a blood blister on my foot so I really thought nothing of it,” she said. “I made an appointment with the doctor but it was only really to keep my mum happy, as I could see she was concerned. My mum had cancer years before that but I never in a million years thought it would hit our family twice. It still hadn’t hit me when I got home but my mum burst into tears as soon as I told her. I even went to work the next day and felt fine but it took about two weeks altogether for the news to sink in. There were days with a lot of tears but my friends were always there to listen.”

Although cancer had touched her family before, Eimear maintains she was protected from its harsh reality. “When my mum had the disease there was no big unveiling and she did everything she could to protect us from what she was going through. It was only when I heard her use the word chemotherapy on the phone one day that I actually asked her about it.”

Nobody is immune to skin cancer, she said, and shying away from sun tan lotion and indulging in sun bed sessions can enhance the chances of developing the condition.

“I’ve never used sunbeds and was only really exposed to the sun while on holiday. You don’t need to be constantly lying in the sun for this to happen. You can be burned while out in the garden and if you’re unlucky enough that burn can turn to cancer. What’s happened has taught me that you have to be vigilant when it comes to the sun’s rays. Melanoma is a young person’s disease so you have to be extremely careful.”

Eimear urged young people showing visible signs of sun damage such as moles to visit their GP without delay. “The longer you leave a doctor’s appointment the more damage you do, not just to your health, but to your emotional wellbeing as well. Most of the time these things turn out to be nothing but it’s worth visiting a doctor even if it’s just to put your mind at ease.”

She encouraged supporters of the cause to dig deep tomorrow adding:

“Even a cent is much appreciated in the battle against melanoma and won’t go to waste.”



<http://www.breakthroughcancerresearch.ie/>

# Local Government Symposium and Launch of Special Edition of *Administration*



Dr Aodh Quinlivan, editor of 'The Changing Nature of Local Government in Ireland' with the Lord Mayor, Councillor Chris O'Leary, who gave the opening address at the symposium.

The Department of Government hosted a local government symposium on Wednesday 16 September. The symposium marked the launch of 'The Changing Nature of Local Government in Ireland', a special edition of the journal *Administration*, edited by Dr Aodh Quinlivan. The journal features contributions from Department of Government lecturers, Dr Theresa Reidy and Fiona Buckley, as well as from Caroline Hofman who will be graduating with her BSc Government degree later this month.

The symposium was opened by the Lord Mayor of Cork, Councillor Chris O'Leary, and he was followed by Dr Aodh Quinlivan who addressed the topic 'Change and Reform'

Next up was Councillor Marcia D'Alton of Cork County Council who gave a fascinating presentation on the role of a modern councillor in a changing environment following the ground-breaking Local Government Reform Act, 2014.

Marcia was followed by Dr Theresa Reidy who delivered a talk on local government finance which is always a hot topic, especially following the introduction of the Local Property Tax (LPT).

Dr Adrian Kavanagh of Maynooth University next presented his views on the political landscape of Irish local government following the dramatic elections of May 2014.

Caroline Hofman was the next speaker and she outlined how women are under-represented in council chambers and in senior managerial positions in local government. The situation is improving but at a slow pace.

The symposium ended with a lively and informative talk by Eoin English of *The Irish Examiner*, describing the role of the journalist in a fast-paced world where social media and immediate information are becoming ever more vital.



**Left: Three of the speakers who made great contributions to the symposium on local government – Caroline Hofman, Adrian Kavanagh and Marcia D’Alton. All three also contributed to the special edition of *Administration*. Right: The special edition was officially launched by the President of UCC, Dr Michael Murphy, who praised the Department of Government for its ongoing commitment to research in local government.**

Following the symposium, a reception was held in the O’Rahilly Building which was jointly sponsored by the Department of Government and the Political Studies Association of Ireland (PSAI). Opening the reception, the Head of the Department of Government, Dr Andrew Cottey praised his staff for their work in the area of local government and for contributing to recent debates on local government arrangements in Cork. He highlighted that academics should enjoy the freedom to participate in and contribute to these debates.

The President of UCC, Dr Michael Murphy, formally launched the special edition and he commented on the ongoing work of the Department of Government in the areas of sub-national government and local democracy. The reception was closed by the Chief Executive of Cork City Council, Ann Doherty, who offered her support for the establishment of a local government research centre in UCC. She announced a special bursary arrangement with the Department of Government through which a staff member in Cork City Council will commence a local government research masters in January 2016.

## To merge or not to merge? – That is the question



**Dr Theresa Reidy of the Department of Government, co-author of the minority report on local government arrangements in Cork.**

Local government has rarely had such a dominant position in the local and national media as it has had in recent weeks following the publication of two reports by the expert statutory committee on local governance arrangements in Cork. Three members of the committee produced a report recommending a merger of Cork City Council and Cork County Council while the other two members produced a minority report arguing against a merger and favouring a city boundary extension. Dr Theresa Reidy of the Department of Government was one of the co-authors of the minority report and she subsequently addressed a meeting of Cork City Council. Dr Aodh Quinlivan of the Department of Government has also contributed to the ongoing debate in the local and national media. The two reports can be downloaded from the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government at <http://www.environ.ie/en/PublicationsDocuments/FileDownload,42666,en.pdf>.



# GRADUATE PROFILE: AMY O'FLAHERTY

*Interview by Noelle Nally*



**Amy O'Flaherty, BSc Government graduate 2011**

**Where do you work?** I work for Musgrave Group and I am a Trading Graduate on the Musgrave Graduate Programme.

**What year did you graduate? (Did you do a post-grad?)** I graduated from the BSc Government in 2011. Following this I worked for a year with Hays Accountancy & Finance. They are a recruitment company. I quickly learned that recruitment was not the career for me. I decided to travel to the United States and did the one year J1. I worked in a bank in Boston and did make-up in Macy's part time during the weekend. I loved my time in America. I decided to come home and do a Masters because I felt I needed a quantitative post grad to go further in my career.

**Where did you go on work placement? What can you tell us about the experience?** I completed my work placement in my third year of Government in the Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh. It was the best experience of my life. I had real responsibility and Edinburgh as a city is very student friendly. There is a lot to do and see and the cost of living was far cheaper than in Ireland. There were eight of us that went from the course and we had a ball.

**What clubs and societies were you involved with? Did you hold any committee position?** I was a member of the Commerce society but held no committee positions.

**Can you give us an idea of what electives you took/ what modules you were most interested in?** I loved the modules around politics. The 5 credit ones were easy to do well in. French & German politics were a couple of my favorites. My advice to anyone picking subjects or degrees would be to pick the subjects you enjoy studying. They are the easy wins. I often speak to people who have done degrees in IT, law etc. because they thought they "sounded good". Nothing sounds good if you fail it. Do what you enjoy.

**Did you see yourself in the career you are in now?** No, never. I am on the Trading Graduate Programme with Musgrave which means I am learning to be a buyer. I am so glad my career has gone the way it has and I am so grateful to be doing something I enjoy. Musgrave is a great place to work.

**Just for kicks:**

**Who was your favorite/least favorite lecturer? Why?** My favorite lecturer was Aodh. His lectures were to the point and he is very fair. Learn what he asks you to learn and you will finish his courses with First Class Honors.

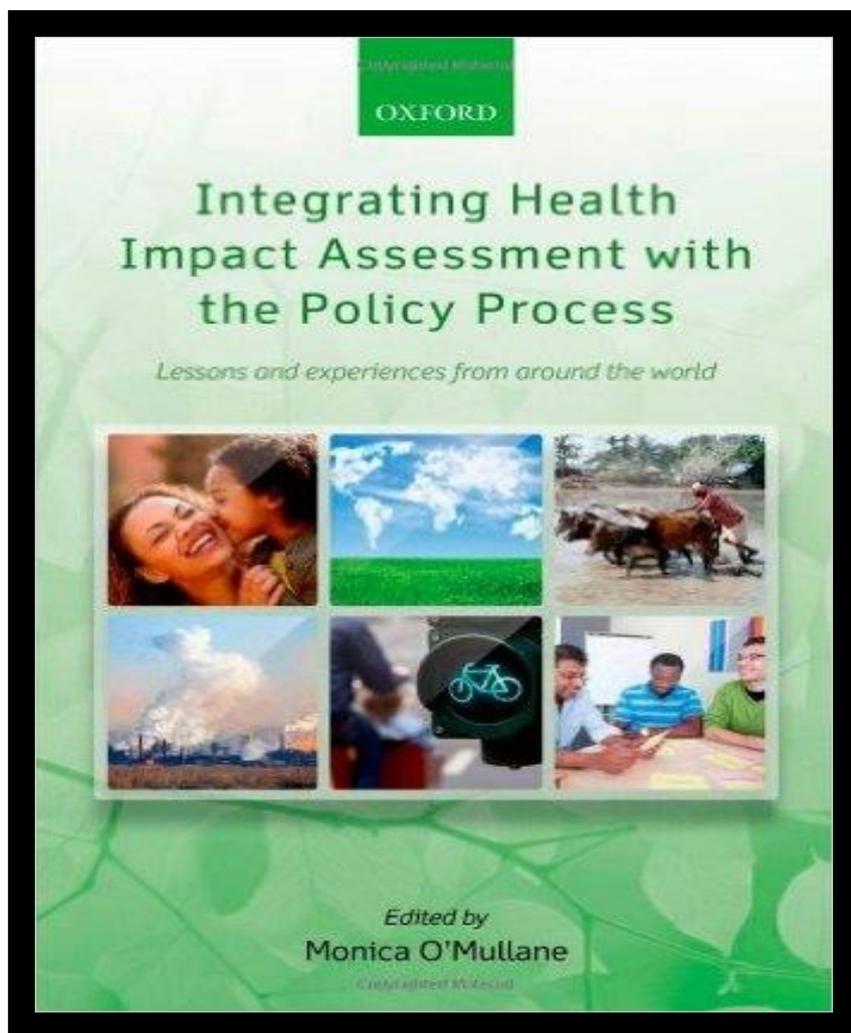
**What was your favorite/ least favorite module?** My favorite module was planning. My least favorite was sociology.

**Did you ever fail a module?** No. I came close once or twice though!

**Any funny stories for us about your time in the course?** None that I could put in print!

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## New book by BSc Government graduate, Dr Monica O'Mullane

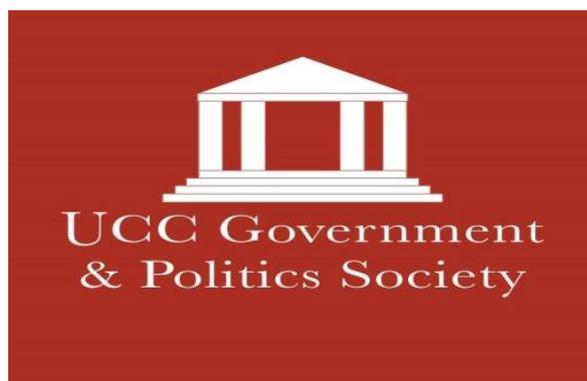


Congratulations to Dr Monica O'Mullane on the publication of her latest book through Oxford University Press, entitled ***Integrating Health Impact Assessment with the Policy Process***. Monica is a graduate of the BSc Government and she also completed her PhD at the Department of Government, UCC.

# BUSY YEAR AHEAD FOR SOCIETIES

*By Emily Burns*

The UCC Government and Politics Society wishes to welcome everyone back for another academic year. For all students new to University College Cork, the Government and Politics Society takes a completely non-partisan and interesting approach to ensure that students are kept up to date with current political affairs. From organising topical debates and talks to Politics Week taking place in February (which includes the Government and Politics Ball and sees students and lecturers competing in the annual soccer tournament for the coveted Government Cup) the society has something for everyone throughout the year. This year, under the leadership of auditor, Shannon Sweeney, the society has many events already in the planning. The society will be holding their EGM on 7 October with First Year Rep, Ordinary Committee Members and a PRO position up for grabs.



For enthusiasts of European issues, the many events being planned by UCC's Europa Society for the upcoming year are not to be missed. Last year marked a major year for the society including fighting off much competition from university societies all over the country to take second place in the 'Most Improved' category at the National BICS awards. A trip to Brussels to visit the European Commission and Parliament and the society's first ever conference which included talks from numerous Irish MEP's all contributed to this well-deserved success.

This year's auditor, Aoife Crotty, has already led the society in three events this year, their EGM, an introductory social and a 'Tasting of Europe' evening. With many more events currently being planned including a trip to Dublin another Europa Conference for semester two and other events in collaboration with other societies including the annual Languages Ball and talks on the Refugee Crisis and many other topical issues with Europa Trinity it is expected to be another hugely successful year for the Europa Society.



# Amber is the Choice for UCC's Political Societies

*By Jessica Ni Mhaoláin*

Mental health and wellbeing have come to the fore this month within UCC's political societies, as the UCC Fianna Fáil Society held an event to honour the awarding of an Amber Flag to the wider Ógra organisation by Cork charity Suicide Aware, with Young Fine Gael to follow. FF Auditor Joanne Keating, a third year BSc Government student, explained why the Cumann was chosen to hold the event on Monday 28 September - 'UCC Fianna Fáil has been fundamental in raising funds for Suicide Aware through numerous events and our annual BBQ over the past number of years, and we as a society have been an instigator of most of the work Ógra, as a wider organisation, has done with mental health'.

Suicide Aware is a Cork based charity which works to provide information and understanding around mental health issues. It offers a range of supports to those affected by suicide and mental illness, including running a 24 hour helpline, and also provide accredited counselling and psychotherapy to anyone in need.

The charity, founded in June 2009, is entirely dependent on donations and has a board of directors who work voluntarily to promote the charity and its services around the country. Joanne explains, 'They spread the key message that "it's okay not to be okay" and most of those involved with the charity have been affected by suicide in some way, which makes the personal aspect of the work that bit more important.'

The Amber Flag initiative has been a great success for the charity since its inception a number of years ago. The society was awarded its Amber Flag in February 2014, with UCC's Students Union following on quickly afterwards. The decision was taken earlier this year to also award the flag to Young Fine Gael, who will accept their Amber Flag on Saturday 3 October. The flag can be awarded to schools, workplaces, clubs, societies, and other social groups. who have met the charity's criteria of promoting positive mental health through campaigning and various other activities. For more information on applying for the Amber Flag, visit Suicide Aware on Facebook or at [suicideaware.ie](http://suicideaware.ie).



Joanne Keating (BSc Government 3), auditor of the UCC Fianna Fáil Society with party leader, Micheál Martin

# MY PLACEMENT EXPERIENCE

By Alison O'Connell (BSc Government IV)



Alison with Scottish First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon

My name is Alison O'Connell and I am currently a fourth year student in BSc Government. For some of you reading this piece work placement will seem to be a hundred years away, while for others it is just around the corner. Either way for every BSc Government student it will play an important part of your four years at UCC, both academically and personally. For my third year 14 week work placement I was lucky enough to get the opportunity to work with the SNP (Scottish National Party) at the Scottish Parliament in Holyrood Edinburgh. I will admit that this placement had always stirred my interest from the beginning, however as the years of study began, I always thought of the Scottish Parliament as a far flung dream never to be reached. Therefore when I was placed there I felt extremely privileged.

The SNP are Scotland's social democratic political party; it has been established since 1934. They currently hold the majority power with 64 of the 129 seats in the Parliament and have been in Government since 2007. Within the SNP I was assigned as a parliamentary intern for Bill Kidd MSP. Bill was first elected to the Scottish parliament in 2007 and again in 2011. He is a constituency MSP for Anniesland Glasgow and the current Government Chief Whip; a post he has held since the 2011 general election. It is due to these two facts that Bill's office ran differently to other MSP offices in the Scottish Parliament. A part of Bill's job as being the Government Chief Whip required him to remain as neutral as possible within the parliament. This meant that Bill rarely spoke within the chamber and while he was on committees he only occasionally attended them. Bill's main job was to liaison between the cabinet secretaries, ministers and the MSPs to make sure they were all working together so that the government fulfilled its set out business for their term in office. My work consisted mainly of the running of the office e.g. answer calls, post & emails, dealing with constituent issues, writing motions, media and dealing with other MSP enquires. As I previously mentioned Bill is a constituency MSP, this means he is the first port of call for his constituents.

Due to this fact I got to deal with many of the issues that arose from his constituency such as: housing, funding for education, issues with the health and transport services and immigration cases. I realised early in my placement that I was given a lot of responsibility dealing with these casework issues and I got to deal with problems that I did not realise were still an issue in society in this day and age. I also found that this placement handed me the opportunity to see the theory I had learned in three years of lectures being put to practise. For example during the UK General Election I witnessed first-hand First Past the Post work; I also conducted research into the combined Scottish electoral system of FPTP and AMS.

However I also learned skills that can never be thought in a lecture hall such as showing compassion to a person who is facing losing their house or learning to be firm with a reporter who is looking for the next big story. Scotland at the moment is going through a lot of changes both political and socially and I got to witness this when I attended the SNP Spring Conference in the SECC in Glasgow. It was the largest conference the SNP ever had with 3,000 attending both days of the conference. While I was there I got to see various SNP members speak from ordinary party members to the First Minister. It was an interesting experience to see people with such drive and determination for where they wanted Scotland to go.



Alison at the SNP conference; James Sheehy (BSc Government 4) also got to meet up with the First Minister.

My whole work placement was a really enjoyable experience but I did have one major highlight during my time working for SNP and that was when I got the opportunity to meet the First Minister Nicola Sturgeon. The female members of one of the SNP branches in Bill's constituency visited the parliament in late May. As a treat Bill organised a private meeting with Nicola after FMQ session. I had often seen her speak at FMQ's but to see her speak in a personal setting which was really natural was a unique experience. She sat down and chatted to the women as if they were old friends. Nicola answered their questions head on and to the best of her ability. She got her staff to take notes and details of people who had queries which she wanted to follow up. In my opinion Nicola Sturgeon showed that her job is to do the best for the people of Scotland and throughout my time in the Scottish Parliament she showed how driven she is by her duty.

The overall experience was unforgettable as it gave me the opportunity to do so much in a small time period. I discovered that I would enjoy doing similar work after college. It also helped me see what I have learned in this course fit into reality. It is something that I hope everyone can achieve from being on placement.

**Note: BSc Government students are placed in the Scottish Parliament annually, except every fifth year when elections take place and parliament is closed. The next elections will take place in May 2016.**

## UCC GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT GRADUATE COMMANDS IRISH NAVAL SHIP IN MEDITERRANEAN TO ASSIST IN HUMANITARIAN CRISIS



**Lieutenant Commander Tony Geraghty, currently commanding the LE Samuel Beckett in the Mediterranean**

Many of you will remember from an earlier issue of **Government Times** that Lieutenant Commander Tony Geraghty, a graduate of the MBS Government (now MSc Government) programme in 2013, took Command of the Irish Naval Vessel LE Samuel Beckett in Oct 2014. The Government Department have since learnt that the ship was deployed to the Mediterranean on 27 September in order to take over from the LE Niamh and further Ireland's humanitarian rescue efforts in the region. We interviewed Tony during the ship's transit to the area of operation and have the following report.

Tony is leading a crew of 59 military personnel including four medics and a full naval diving team. They expect to be operating in the region until they return to Ireland on 18 December. The LE Samuel Beckett is the third Irish naval ship to deploy to the Mediterranean as part of the Irish Government's efforts to assist in the humanitarian crisis that has unfolded in the Mediterranean and wider region. To date the Irish Naval Service has rescued 5,900 people including women and young children. In one particular case a baby was born on-board the LE Niamh. We were also saddened to learn that on two separate operations a total of 39 bodies were recovered from an over loaded barge and from the sea when a vessel capsized.

In May the LE Eithne was the first ship to deploy and was replaced some months later by the LE Niamh. Whilst operating the Mediterranean, Irish Naval Ships conduct rescue operations when either requested to do so by the Italian Coast Guard or when they come across a vessel in distress. When Irish Naval Ships arrive on scene they conduct an initial assessment of the vessel and those on-board. Women, children and those with mobility issues are then transferred by ship's boat to the Naval Vessel. The men are then embarked. Upon embarkation, they are screened for medical attention and brought to triage if necessary by the paramedic team on-board. After medical attention, if necessary, they are assigned locations on deck and given water and food as necessary. It is not unusual to have 500 on-board after several rescue operations in the same day. They are then cared for until arrival in an Italian port which is decided by the Italian authorities.

Once in a port of safety, generally in Sicily or the south coast of Italy, the rescued persons are brought ashore and taken under the care of the Italian authorities. The shore reception centres generally consist of a number of Governmental agencies similar to the Irish HSE/ immigration/police, and non-governmental organisations, for example the Red Cross.

On completion of disembarkation, naval ships then return to sea and prepare for the next rescue operation. This cycle of rescue, disembarkation and return to sea continues for 14 days before returning to port for logistical requirements and rest for the crew. After which the ship will return to the area of operation and the cycle continues.



Pictures by Tony Geraghty from the humanitarian mission in the Mediterranean

Tony stated that the ship had been planning for the deployment for six weeks before they sailed from the Naval Base in Cork and that they were looking forward to the challenge ahead. He explained that most of the elements for an operation of this type are normally conducted or practiced in home waters. *'We launch the ship's boats routinely, search and rescue operations are conducted all year round and we practice mass evacuation operations in case we are tasked with extracting our citizens from hostile areas. It's then just a matter of bring all these routine operations together. You add a larger than normal crew, and work them up so they can conduct mass search and rescue operations at the required standard. As well as ensuring the safety, security and needs of the crew, the other major consideration is a significant logistical network which is supported from Ireland and local suppliers.'*

The Government Department wishes Tony and his crew the very best and know they will do the country proud. We wish to acknowledge the navy's continuing and extraordinary work in what can be very difficult circumstances and we look forward to the LE Samuel Beckett's safe return in December.

**We hope you enjoyed this issue of *Government Times*.  
If you have feedback for us, or if you want to  
contribute to the next issue, please e-mail Aodh at  
[a.quinlivan@ucc.ie](mailto:a.quinlivan@ucc.ie).**