

#BeRCSI Bulletin 1

Dear Colleagues,

As we head into autumn and continue to deal with the changes and challenges of living and working through a pandemic, we are delighted to bring back the HR bulletin! It is more important than ever to stay connected and support each other within our RCSI community and in line with the new #BeRCSI campaign for staff and students, we have changed the title of the bulletin. This campaign is based on important values at this time – Respect, Connection, Strength and Kindness and we will use these to guide the content of these bulletins. I would ask all our colleagues who are working and teaching on our campus locations to help us to honour our commitment to lead by example in protecting health and wellbeing to the highest standards by complying with the safety measures that have been put in place to keep us all safe. As more students return to our campus, it is important that we model the behaviours we ask of our students by ensuring we wear our face coverings when inside, maintain a 2 metre distance, clean as we go and practice the highest hand and oral hygiene. Thank you for your efforts thus far in ensuring our staff and students are returning to a safe working and learning environment. Only by working together can we ensure we all remain safe in the period ahead.

Whether you are working on campus or at home, one thing we know you all miss very much is seeing your colleagues in person, not just your own teams but the wider interactions we all had on a daily basis with other teams too. So to help keep us connected, in each bulletin we are going to catch up with a team or individual to hear more about how this time has been for them, how they are adapting to the changed working conditions and any new ways of working/engaging they have found useful which we could all take inspiration from! For simplicity, we are starting close to home with our own HR team this week but look forward to getting insights into lots of other teams in the coming weeks!

Team Spotlight!

Since our closure in March, the HR team's main focus was to support teams with the transition to remote working, with wellbeing and connectivity firmly at the forefront of all our considerations. Like most other teams, we struggled at the start to try to find this sense of team connectedness among ourselves. As an open and social team who usually get energy through interaction and team discussion, the sudden shift to working in isolation with all of us living in different areas of the country from Galway to Kildare, Skerries to Dublin city, and with vastly different home circumstances, it was a challenging adjustment for how we work and socialise together.

Some things that helped us to stay connected and adapt to our new way of working have been to continue with our usual Weekly Team meetings. We introduced a weekly Wednesday 'drop-in'

Barry Holmes

Director of Human Resources

coffee morning which is strictly social talk. This has been a great weekly practice as you frequently get to catch up with someone from the team that you may not be directly working with at the moment, also prime time to discuss the latest Netflix binge watch! We scheduled a few grueling 'team building' virtual gym sessions facilitated by our fantastic (and only slightly sadistic) RCSI Gym team ensuring we weren't forgetting to look after our physical health. When the weather permitted over the summer months and following all public safety guidelines, we tried to meet others from within our team pods for outdoor coffee catch ups or park lunches. While technology allows us to connect with each other while apart, it is important to remember to take time away from our screens where we can.

Having these regular and open lines of communication for both work and social purposes has been a huge source of strength for us as a team over the last few months. Whether that's deciding to call someone instead of back and forward emails or taking a few extra minutes at the start of a meeting to just chat like you would if you bumped into each other on the way to get coffee in Remedy!

One positive we will take from this whole experience is the certainty of two things. 1. That change is inevitable and 2. That by working together and having open conversations we can adapt to any new challenges.



For anyone who missed it this week, the myHealth session on 'Living with the new Normal' is definitely worth catching up on. Prof. Ciaran O'Boyle from our new Centre for Positive Psychology and Health was joined by a panel of experts to discuss the significant impact that sudden and extreme change has on our lives and share practical advice on how to live well during these challenging times. You can watch a recording of it [here](#). One great tip from our own Dr. Trudy Meehan, is to be more intentional about looking for what is good in our lives and she recommends that a gratitude journal can be a good way to do this. Capturing what we are grateful for has been shown to have an impressive range of benefits including better sleep, fewer symptoms of illness and more happiness. Researchers have also demonstrated that doing this 2-3 times a week is enough to reap the benefits and you can do it on paper or online – penzu.com is one free online provider if you prefer a digital format. The important thing is that we make an intentional effort to shift our focus to

Barry Holmes
Director of Human Resources

all that is still good in our world – we have attached this month’s ‘Optimistic October’ calendar from Action for Happiness which might be helpful with this.

Today is the last day of Positive Ageing week in the College – from talks on genealogy to a wonderful accompanying publication thanks to everyone involved in organising a range of diverse and life affirming activities to help us all celebrate the privilege of getting older.

Finally, as we collectively focus on ‘Being Kind’ we recommend this lovely [short video](#) from the world of Positive Education “Train your Brain to be Kinder”. In it, primary school children demonstrate how to boost your capacity for kindness by sending kind thoughts to someone you love and perhaps more importantly to those that you don’t get along with.

And what would our HR Bulletin be without an occasional poem!! Hope is something that costs nothing and will help us all to be strong as we face the coming months together.

“Hope” is the thing with feathers

By Emily Dickinson

*“Hope” is the thing with feathers -
That perches in the soul -
And sings the tune without the words -
And never stops - at all -*

*And sweetest - in the Gale - is heard -
And sore must be the storm -
That could abash the little Bird
That kept so many warm -*

*I’ve heard it in the chillest land -
And on the strangest Sea -
Yet - never - in Extremity,
It asked a crumb - of me.*

Mind yourselves and each other

Barry on behalf of the HR Team

Barry Holmes
Director of Human Resources