



#BeRCSI Bulletin 5

Dear Colleagues,

As we anticipate the loosening of restrictions next week and begin to prepare for an unusual countdown to the holidays and hopefully some much needed downtime with our loved ones, we are delighted to inform you that the additional '*Staff appreciation day*' of leave is now set up on your Core portal. You can book this extra days leave through your CoreHR account, as you would book existing types of leave, anytime that suits you best from 1st December 2020 to 31st March 2021. We would like to echo the sentiments made by Cathal at yesterday's Townhall meeting, thanking you all for the trojan work that has been done across the university in what has been a year we will never forget, and in which we have surely grown stronger by working together.

The Townhall meeting yesterday focused on how we are planning to support our students who are choosing to stay in Ireland over the holiday period (for those of you who missed it please watch it back [here](#)). For many students, this is their first time away from their homes and families for such a long period, during what has been a hugely challenging first semester. The fact that the majority of our student body are choosing to stay in Ireland shows their amazing spirit and embodiment of our RCSI values. It also reinforces our need to collectively support our students in the months ahead who are making these sacrifices in order to become future healthcare leaders. Many of you commented words of encouragement and support at the Townhall event, and for that we thank you. It is fitting that this week's 'Team Spotlight' piece features one of our teams who bridge the gap between our current and past students, and who are involved in fundraising for the #FestiveNightIn initiative (read more about this great initiative below!) This week we catch up with Caoimhe Ni Neill on behalf of the Alumni Relations Team:-

From the moment the team left the offices in March this year, our main priority was to make sure that the community of 21,000 alumni, living across 93 countries, felt a sense of connection with each other and with the students and staff of RCSI. To help alumni stay connected with each other, we launched the 'Alumni Messages of Support to the Frontline' campaign in May. As part of this we invited alumni to share words of support and encouragement with each other. Through the campaign we received and shared over 50 inspirational messages of support from alumni living all over the world.

Building on this sense of connection between alumni, our team lynchpin Laura Sherlock did invaluable work in organising the annual alumni reunion – The Gathering – virtually. With Laura's

Barry Holmes
Director of Human Resources

leadership the team ran a schedule of virtual events over the 22nd and 23rd August, managing the 1,600 'virtual attendees' who logged on to watch the videos over 3,000 times!

The unflappable Stuart MacDougall has done an incredible job in ensuring that alumni feel strongly connected to the University. At the outset of working from home, Stuart achieved what we all thought was impossible by increasing the frequency of our alumni eNews from once a month to once a week. In the past few months, he has kept alumni up to date with the fantastic work that is on-going across RCSI and has done a great job in growing the RCSI Alumni social media accounts by keeping them active and full of positivity.

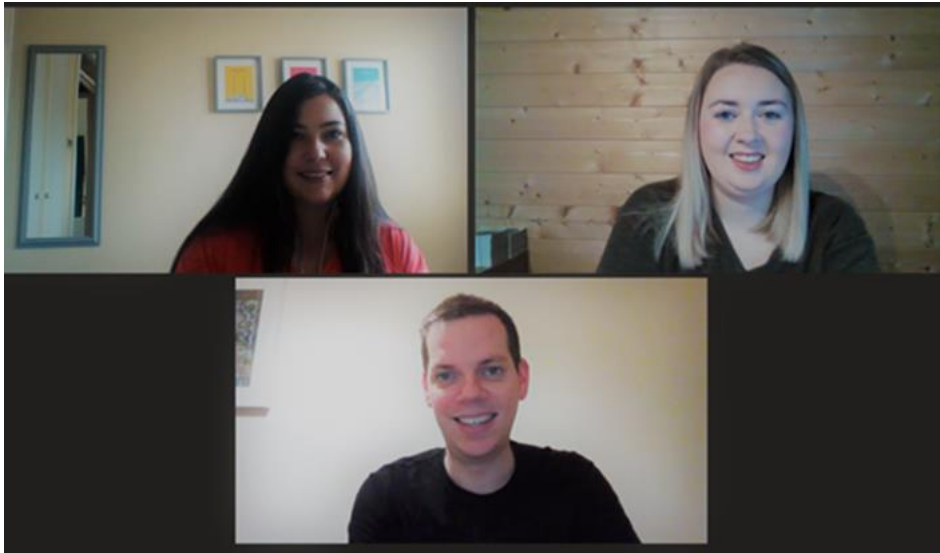
As a team, we have also done a lot of work to enhance the sense of connection between alumni and current students. In July and August, in support of student recruitment efforts, we invited alumni to participate in the #RCSIlwelcome Campaign. As part of this, 118 alumni volunteered to share video messages and words of wisdom with incoming first year students. More recently, we had the chance to team up with the SU to support Mental Health Awareness Week 2020. Three of our alumni gave their time to do a wonderful Q&A discussing how current students can look after their mental health during placement. Additionally, working with CoMPPAS, we have been able to recruit 152 new alumni to the online Mentor Network! As a team, we embrace the opportunity to work with so many stakeholders on these activities and are deeply appreciative that alumni are so enthusiastic to be involved too!

Like so many other teams in RCSI we have been challenged to work differently and we have really embraced the chance to be creative and innovative! Personally, I found myself in the deep end after only starting in my role three days before lockdown, but we have found a great rhythm as a team while working from home. We check-in with each other every morning for 30 minutes and every Monday we have a longer team call to look at actions for the week as well as taking the time to brainstorm different ideas and proposals. Because we have adopted so many new approaches, we also look to set aside an hour or two within the working week to learn new skills or do a course. Additionally, we keep our strategic focus by doing a sense-check against our annual objectives once a month.

Finally, we are incredibly excited to be involved in the upcoming #FestiveNightIn initiative, which will see staff and alumni unite to raise funds to gift a Christmas Stocking full of goodies for a cosy night in to our students who are staying in Dublin over the holidays. For us, this initiative is a culmination of what our year has been all about – celebrating the strong sense of community and connection that exists in RCSI. Keep an eye out on WorkVivo and follow the RCSI Alumni Instagram and Facebook pages for further information!

Barry Holmes
Director of Human Resources

RCSI Human Resources



Our most recent staff Pulse Survey gave us some really useful insights into areas that you would like further support with and in particular a key priority for many of you is maintaining your wellbeing. So this week we kicked off a fortnightly 'spotlight' on 4 key areas of wellbeing which can help with the challenges you expressed – Motivation/Morale, Managing Stress and Self Care, Resilience and Staying connected with others.

Our colleagues in the Centre for Positive Psychology and Health have very kindly agreed to make some short videos to share relevant scientific concepts and practical actions you can take in these areas. In addition to the videos, over each two week period you will see more posts on the topic here on Work vivo with the tag [#SpotlightOnWellbeing](#).

The first area we're spotlighting during these two weeks is **Purpose** – having a sense of purpose and meaning in our lives helps us to maintain motivation and morale when times are tough. Dr. Pádraic Dunne has recorded a really interesting piece on the Japanese concept of Ikigai which roughly translates as 'reason for being' and we are really grateful to Pádraic for taking the time to do this! You can watch this recording by following this link <https://youtu.be/nJd6dZkcGVo>. Watch out for more content over the coming weeks. Also see a post from myself from Work Vivo earlier this week –

Comments in our recent staff pulse survey highlighted that, for many colleagues, maintaining motivation and positivity levels is a challenge in these tough times. As you know, this week we are putting a spotlight on the area of Purpose as a way to maintain our motivation and positivity. Like many of you, I have experienced good days and bad days over the past number of months – days when I struggle to motivate myself and feel like I am not turning the dial or driving things forward like I think I should be – that is hard. I am blessed to have wonderful colleagues where we can openly talk about how we are feeling and ensuring we can create 'space spaces' to support and encourage each other. At an institutional level, what I have found really helps me, on these less productive days, is to remember why we are here and what a privilege it can be for us in some small part to support

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our students in their studies and careers. I can recall a conversation that I had with one of our undergraduate medical students who I had supported playing rugby for RCSI from the sidelines at Railway Union (when we could do this!), and he wanted some advice on interview preparation and how he could be his best when at interview – we had a great conversation and I gave him some helpful advice (so he told me!) Furthermore, he also told me that it was these little ‘moments of truth’ as he called them, which made RCSI so unique – how RCSI staff at all levels and in all disciplines genuinely care about our students, how accessible staff were, and how he and his fellow students really appreciate that – We all play a part in the daily enablement of the RCSI Mission - when we can give to our students in these ways, our purpose is truly lived and we feel more positive, motivated and privileged. [#SpotlightOnWellbeing](#)

As a way of helping us to prepare for the winter months ahead and a Christmas unlike any other at RCSI, our Inspire Team have created a **‘Winter Ready’** guide for staff signposting the great internal and external resources available to us to ensure we look after our health and wellbeing while remembering to have a bit of festive fun! It contains tips on how to avoid over indulging over the holidays (padlock the fridge??), different ways we can stay connected, how to remain active in these colder climes and how not to set the house on fire when putting up your Christmas lights! There is also information on **Christmas at RCSI**, coordinated by our Events team with Inspire, REACH and Sports & Social who are all busy planning lots of great festive activities for staff to take part in as we countdown to Christmas. Watch out on Work Vivo for more information.



We loved the department Christmas party ideas section! We have taken inspiration from these ideas in HR and booked in for our own virtual Prosecco and Paint party and are planning a Great HR Christmas themed quiz! We are taking bets on which HR staff members you think will paint the best winter wonderland picture, who is your money on??!!

We wish you all a safe weekend and look forward to getting into the festive spirit together as we head into December.

Regards and thanks

Barry & the HR Team

Barry Holmes
Director of Human Resources