

#BeRCSI Bulletin 11- A Year to Remember, Coffee Roulette, Sports & Social Club, IPO Team Spotlight!

Dear Colleagues,

This week we marked the one year anniversary of our campus closing as part of the Government's response to the pandemic. It is a year that we will never forget, when our work and personal lives were changed in so many ways. We hope you have had an opportunity to connect with your colleagues this week, to reflect on this important milestone. When we reflect on the past year, we remember the resolve and courage of teams and managers who pulled together to keep the lights on at RCSI, both literally and figuratively. We remember how new and frightening everything was at the beginning. We remember how colleagues reached out to check in on each other. We remember loss, of loved ones and previous freedoms. We remember the moments between work talk where we connected over the 'joys' of parenting and working, the latest Netflix show or laughed at the guest appearance of a small child or cat. We remember the joy of seeing faces of old friends from across the University or welcoming new faces to RCSI at what must be a very challenging introduction to life at RCSI. And lest we forget the ever comical 'You're on mute!' which remains in use every day!. We would like to thank all of you for making the moments that count over the past year. This year has made us stronger as a community, and we have every reason to look forward with great optimism.

If you have not yet had an opportunity to do so, we encourage you all to watch this [short video](#), which gives a moving reflection on our experiences over the past year. You may have already seen the [RCSI Reflecting on our COVID-19 Experience](#) booklet which captures just some of the incredible achievements we made together, despite the enormous challenges we have faced.

In our last bulletin, we asked what additional wellbeing supports would help you right now and thank you to those who responded. A lot of the comments asked for more social engagement opportunities among staff, and also supports for working from home. We have listed some ways you can connect with colleagues in a social context below. We will continue to post tips and guidance for working from home and would like to highlight the '[Working Remotely](#)' staff support page. If you have any concerns about your home working space please fill in the [Home Risk Assessment form](#) or contact our colleagues in Health & Safety at safety@rcsi.ie.

Coffee Roulette

We invite you to join us this morning for a coffee and chat with our monthly **Coffee Roulette**. The idea behind coffee roulette is that you will be randomly paired with 3 or 4 colleagues from across the University so that you might connect with colleagues you have not seen in a while or meet

Barry Holmes

Director of Human Resources

completely new ones. These random encounters are something we all miss about life on campus at RCSI. Join us at 10am [through this link](#) (please use google chrome to join). BYOB (bring your own biscuits)!

Sports & Social Club

The Sport & Social Club Committee would like to assure all Sports & Social Club Members that contributions made over the last year by both Staff members and the University are ready and waiting for when we can all have a very grand celebration (or two) together! Given that this will still be some time away and that many staff have expressed an interest in more online opportunities to meet with each other in the most recent Pulse Survey, we are planning to schedule some fun virtual ways we can all get together while apart. We are considering all survey suggestions such as Paint & Prosecco, family events, virtual wine tastings and more. If you have a suggestion please feel free to email sportsandsocial@rcsi.ie. Thank you the Sports & Social Members for your patience and please bear with us as we get the virtual party started. For any recent new starters or current staff who would like join the Sports & Social Club you can find out more information on how to do this [here](#). The Sports & Social Club AGM will take place in April, a communication to all members will follow.

RCSI Sports & Social Club Committee



#Project6Challenge

We would like to congratulate Justin Ralph, David Harris and the gym team, and Tara Justin & Laura McCartan from our Development and Alumni Relations team on the hugely successful **#Project6Challenge** whose aim was to raise much needed funds for the Student Hardship Fund and to motivate colleagues to get active. Thank you to everyone who got involved in the **#Project6Challenge** on WorkVivo, your donations raised a total of €6120 for such a worthy cause! We have loved seeing the pictures of colleagues with their families and beautiful surroundings. These glimpses into each other’s lives has been a welcome addition to our WorkVivo space. Watch out for the Development and Alumni Relations team **#Project6Challenge** video on WorkVivo later today to celebrate the success of this initiative.

In this week’s **Team Spotlight!** we catch up with an exciting team under the leadership of our newest Senior Management Team member, Abi Kelly, and hear of the strategic work her team leads and supports.

The [Insights and Planning Office](#) (IPO) works collaboratively across the university and wider academic sector to drive RCSI’s reputation for research and educational excellence, as well as having **Barry Holmes** Director of Human Resources

responsibility for embedding traditional institutional research activities (data governance, institutional metrics & analytics) within the university. We provide departments, research clusters and individuals with the insights and support necessary to foster international engagement and collaboration – this is a vital part of our office and we are always happy to help, so please do get in contact with any questions or suggestions!

The last twelve months have been a transformative time for the office as we transitioned to life during the pandemic, gaining a new Director of International Engagement & External Affairs in Abi Kelly and undergoing our evolution from what was the Office of Institutional Research & Planning, (OIRP) to the IPO.

Abi officially joined us in April 2020 and immediately set to work in her new role. A member of the Senior Management Team, her remit spans the IPO, as well as Strategic Communications and Outreach activity. Abi also chairs the Web Governance Board, EDI Committee and Student Engagement Group – while she's still based in Newcastle and yet to work from our office in St. Stephen's Green, Abi is already well acquainted with life at RCSI!

When lockdown was first announced a year ago, our team was well placed to handle the changes it brought. We already had a flexible work environment, with [team members](#) regularly working from home when appropriate. The following few months of the pandemic required us to reprioritise strategic activities like student engagement and retention, communications support, and assistance of other departments. Abi, Gráinne McDonagh (Head of Insights & Planning) and Catherine Sullivan (Data & Insights Manager) worked with the Dean's Office to produce weekly communications aimed at keeping students informed of everything concerning them. Isha McDonnell (Int. Reputation Project Coordinator) assisted the Communications team with press releases and other communications, with the whole team contributing to the development and launch of RCSI Inc, the new central [rcsi.com](https://www.rcsi.com) website.

In September 2020, the Insights & Planning Office officially expanded our remit to include the coordination of institutional performance and metrics, and participation in the Times Higher Impact Ranking. We also welcomed Roisin Moriarty back from maternity leave, returning as the office's new International Engagement Manager! These changes, alongside a shift away from the crisis management response of the initial few months, allowed us to restructure and once again reprioritise strategic objectives. The key areas our team is now focused on include student engagement, strategic communications and reputation, international engagement and impact, university rankings, institutional performance, and the development of new systems and processes to support international reputation and engagement.

Working from home permanently did present some challenges for our communication with each other and the projects we were focused on, but with HR, IT and each other's support, we all quickly adapted. Setting aside time for formal weekly team meetings to discuss our tasks and any areas across the college that needed support was an essential part of this transition and continued efficiency of our team.

Barry Holmes
Director of Human Resources

An amazing and noteworthy side effect of this move to remote working has been in our internal network – we have been incredibly fortunate to work closely with other departments throughout the pandemic, building stronger collaborative relationships and lines of communication than would have been possible working on site. RCSI is an entire community of incredible and hardworking people, so it's been an absolute pleasure to see that showcased over the last year!



Ending this week with the late Derek Mahon's beautifully reassuring poem 'Everything Is Going to Be All Right' which was read so well by our Student Union Presidents, DuPreez Smith and Katelyn Genoud, in the year mark reflection video linked above.

Barry Holmes
Director of Human Resources

Everything Is Going To Be All Right

How should I not be glad to contemplate
the clouds clearing beyond the dormer window
and a high tide reflected on the ceiling?
There will be dying, there will be dying,
but there is no need to go into that.
The lines flow from the hand unbidden
and the hidden source is the watchful heart.
The sun rises in spite of everything
and the far cities are beautiful and bright.
I lie here in a riot of sunlight
watching the day break and the clouds flying.
Everything is going to be all right.

DEREK MAHON

As always, stay safe and look after yourself and each other,

Barry & the HR Team

Barry Holmes
Director of Human Resources

RCSI Human Resources