



Dear Colleague,

May I wish you a very happy 2012 (a little belatedly)! As you will see from this month's news, the RCSI year has taken off at great pace and the College is a hub of activity! It is fantastic to see the great work that happens in this College and the commitment, energy and determination with which all projects and activities are undertaken by staff.

### **OPEN DAY FOR YOUNG PEOPLE**

Over 500 young people from all over Ireland attended the annual open day early in January. This annual event is an excellent promotional opportunity for RCSI and attracts great media coverage. My thanks to the teams in **Admissions, Communications, Media Services, Porters** and **Events** for co-ordinating the programme and managing all the arrangements. Particular thanks to **Orna Tighe**, and **Celine Marmion** who made a significant contribution by putting together an excellent programme for the day. Thanks also to the academic staff that go to great trouble every year to put on a successful exhibition for the young people. This exhibition is a critical part of the programme as it gives the young people the opportunity to interact with academic staff.

### **GRADUATE ENTRY PROGRAMME (GEP) OPEN DAY**

Many thanks to **Seamus Sreenan** in Connolly hospital and **Celeste Golden**, Admissions for the organisation of the RCSI GEP Open Day. A total of 60 potential students, from a diverse range of academic backgrounds attended. The format of the day was based around small group interactive sessions which provided the participants with the opportunity to experience 'a day in the life' of an RCSI GEP Student. The annual Open Days have undoubtedly contributed to the success of the GEP programme which was recognised in 2010 by unconditional accreditation by the Irish Medical Council to 2013.

### **HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT**

#### **Insurance Group Scheme**

The Human Resources Department have successfully negotiated a new insurance group scheme for staff. The scheme is being offered by JLT Insurance Brokers who are offering highly competitive home and motor insurance premiums to RCSI staff. To mark the launch of the scheme, JLT are offering staff the opportunity to win an Apple iPad2. Further details are available from HR. Congratulations to **Barry Holmes** and **Sorcha O'Grady** for spearheading this initiative.

### **SCHOOL OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES**

### **Transition Year Mini Med School**

The fifth RCSI Dublin TY Mini Med School was held in January when 152 students from 86 schools around the country attended one week of medical school at St Stephen's Green and Beaumont Hospital. This is an excellent programme which we could probably fill ten times over because of such a high demand. The feedback has been outstanding. At least 45 members of staff contribute to the programme at both locations and I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for their very valuable contribution to an exciting and important programme. Particular thanks to **Helen McVeigh** and **Bernadette Kearney** for co-ordinating and managing the week long programme.

### **SCHOOL OF MEDICINE & HEALTH SCIENCES**

#### **GLOBAL HEALTH CONFERENCE**

This week, RCSI hosted an international conference, 'The Global Health Workforce – Pathways to Health', in conjunction with the Irish Forum for Global Health. This has proven an excellent opportunity for RCSI staff and colleagues – in Ireland, Africa and elsewhere – to showcase the range of research studies and projects which impact on Global Health, and in particular on health workforce responses in low and middle income countries. Invited speakers included Government ministers, policy makers, researchers and practitioners from Ireland and partner countries. Congratulations **Ruairi Brugha** and his team in Epidemiology on the organisation of such a successful and prestigious event. Thanks also to the teams in **Communications, Events, Catering, Media Services** and **Porters** who provided the crucial support services to ensure the success of this conference

#### **DEPARTMENT OF GERIATRIC MEDICINE**

Congratulations to **Cora McGreevy**, Clinical Lecturer in Stroke Medicine and **David Williams**, Associate Professor in Geriatric Medicine. Their article, *New Insights about Vitamin D and Cardiovascular Disease* published in the Annals of Internal Medicine has received great acclaim.

### **SCHOOL OF PHARMACY**

#### **SIGNING OF MOU with Pharmacy Department Mater Hospital**

The School of Pharmacy this week signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Pharmacy Dept, Mater Misericordiae University Hospital (MMUH). This memorandum was recommended by Academic Council to Medicine and Health Sciences Board and approved on Thursday, 26th January. The signing party comprised of **Prof. Hannah McGee**, Dean of the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, RCSI, **Mr. Brian Conlan**, CEO, Mater Misericordiae University Hospital, Mr. Ciaran Meegan, Head of Pharmacy Services, MMUH & **Prof. Paul Gallagher**, Head, School of Pharmacy, RCSI. The MOU will facilitate greater contextualising of learning for students undertaking their clinical modules in the undergraduate programme of the School of Pharmacy. Many thanks to **Paul Gallagher** and **Dr. Ben Ryan** of the School of Pharmacy for planning and implementing the provisions of the MOU.

### **LAUNCH OF INSTITUTE OF PHARMACY**

RCSI has been awarded a four year contract to establish and operate the new Irish Institute of Pharmacy on behalf of the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland. An Taoiseach Enda Kenny T.D. yesterday launched the new Institute of Pharmacy at an event in Dublin Castle. The role of the new Institute will be to oversee the management and delivery of continuing professional development (CPD) for pharmacists in Ireland, which is now mandatory under The Pharmacy Act 2007, and put in place a quality assurance system around CPD. Congratulations to **Prof. Paul Gallagher** and **Helena Kelly**.

### **SCHOOL OF PHYSIOTHERAPY**

**Aileen Barrett** has been awarded an ASME International Travelling Fellowship (for early career researchers in medical education). The bursary will cover a trip to Montréal for three days later in the Spring at the invitation of Professor Steinert and her team at the Centre for Medical Education at McGill. Aileen will present a report of her trip at the next ASME conference in July in Brighton

### **TISSUE ENGINEERING RESEARCH GROUP - ANATOMY DEPARTMENT**

Congratulations to **Fergal O'Brien** and his team in the **Tissue Engineering Research Group** who have had a remarkably successful run over the last short period of time. They have had confirmation of 5 successful grants over the past 6 weeks (3 in the past 2 weeks alone). All 5 projects began in January so it was a busy time for them! Some of the grants have a number of co-applicants and one of them (AO foundation) is technically awarded to TCD and **Fergal O'Brien** a co-applicant. The Principal Investigator on the biggest of them (Enterprise Ireland) is Dr. Garry Duffy with Fergal as co-applicant.

### **BPS UNDERGRADUATE PRIZE IN CLINICAL PHARMACOLOGY 2011**

The Clinical Pharmacology Section (CPS) undergraduate award of the British Pharmacology Society (BPS) was made to **Drs Caroline Delaney** and **Jan Griffen** who were nominated by RCSI following their performance in the Certificate in Safe Prescribing. This was the inaugural assessment in safe prescribing and is part of a new initiative to assess prescribing competence at undergraduate level at RCSI. This prize is awarded to undergraduate students from UK and Ireland who either undertake a project related to CPT/perform highly in an examination related to CPT.

### **MCT**

While publishing scientific articles is the bedrock of research output, there are other ways in which RCSI's standing can be judged. Thus, we're very pleased to congratulate **Steve Kerrigan** (MCT & School of Pharmacy) and his colleagues in the Cardiovascular Infection Group on their work being singled out for very favourable coverage in the *Irish Independent* from among those studies included in the recent HRB 'Picture of Health' research compendium. Congratulations to Steve and his team on this recognition of their work.

Over the autumn period **John Waddington (MCT)** was invited to participate in an EU COST SYSGENET workshop and discussion forum, involving leading basic and clinical neuroscientists across several European countries, to debate, formulate and prioritise a strategy for future research on models of psychotic illness and antipsychotic drug discovery.

The yield from this process has just been published in the new, prestigious journal *Science Translational Medicine*. Congratulations to John and his team on this recognition of their work.

Many congratulations to **Maria Morgan (MCT)** and her colleagues on (i) four successful proposals to Dublin City of Science 2012 Public Engagement and (ii) receiving, in collaboration with seven higher Education institutions, a People Award from the Wellcome trust for Debating Science Issues. These are important achievements in relation to the College's outreach mission.

Investigators in RCSI have participated in an unusually broad and fruitful inter- and intra-institutional collaboration. The contribution of mutations in genes underlying brain development is increasingly recognised for a number of neuropsychiatric disorders. Now, in a study led by SFI investigator **Kevin Mitchell** (Genetics, TCD), fellow SFI investigators **David Henshall** (Physiology & Medical Physics), **John Waddington** (MCT), Derek Morris (Psychiatry, TCD) and their teams have studied brain connectivity and neurodevelopmental deficits following mutation of the gene *Semaphorin-6A*; the important biological findings make this family of genes plausible candidates to explain human findings in schizophrenia and autism, as published recently in the journal PLoS One.

### **MERCER HOTEL COMPLEX**

As I advised you at our December staff meeting the Mercer Hotel Complex has reverted to RCSI. A considerable amount of work went into this lengthy process. Congratulations and many thanks to **Michael McGrail** (Director of Corporate Strategy), **Paula Wilson** (Associate Director, Office of the Director of Corporate Strategy) and **John O'Halloran** (Financial Controller) on their outstanding work in dealing with the surrender of the various operating leases relating to the Mercer Hotel and Millin and Mercer apartments.

### **RCSI BAHRAIN**

#### **RCSI BAHRAIN INAUGURAL DEANS AWARD**

Congratulations to **Ms Danah Smith**, Level Director Third Year BSc Nursing Programme who was awarded the Academic Dean's Award and congratulations to **Ms Elaine Cabrey**, Student Recruitment and Admissions Officer who won the Administration award.

Danah was recognised for her endeavours in teaching, research and outreach activities as well as her dedication to providing top class support to both colleagues and students alike. Elaine has been recognised for her successful endeavours in marketing and also representing RCSI Bahrain at the many promotional fairs in the region. Elaine's contribution has led RCSI Bahrain to exceeding the student target number.

Congratulations to **Fryad Henari** who has been appointed as a member of the editorial board for International Journal on "Thin Films Science and Technology".

## **QUALITY ENHANCEMENT OFFICE**

### **RCSI internal quality assurance/quality improvement reviews**

The first RCSI internal quality assurance/quality improvement reviews were carried out by the Quality Enhancement Office (QEO) during 2011, the **School of Postgraduate Studies** and the **Examinations Office** being the first units to go through the process. We are grateful to the staff of both units for their hard work and engagement with the review process, and to all other staff members who participated in the reviews. Reviews of the Institute of Leadership, the School of Physiotherapy and the Student Services Department will take place during 2012.

### **Annual Institutional Report 2012**

Early in January the QEO, working with the Senior Management Team, submitted the first RCSI 'Annual Institutional Report' to the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI). This report describes College's progress since January 2011 in implementing the recommendations of the international site-visit team who inspected RCSI as part of the process leading to the activation of degree awarding status.

This represents another milestone for RCSI as an independent degree awarding body, and it sets the agenda for preparations for the first formal Institutional Review of RCSI by the NQAI which is due to take place during 2013.

### **Central Assessment Bank**

In summer 2011, the QEO and Medical Faculty agreed to jointly purchase software to allow the creation of a central, online assessment bank. The QEO undertook a pilot project with the primary aim of importing all summative Junior Cycle MCQ examinations, complete with performance statistics for the last 5 academic years (2006/2007 – 2010/2011). This was successfully completed in December 2011 and included the import of 4051 MCQs (complete with performance statistics) used in 136 summative examinations in Junior Cycle and GEP Year 1. Based on the success of the Junior Cycle pilot project, it is envisaged that other Cycles and Programs will now undertake a similar process of migrating historical assessment data into the bank. The advantages are that the bank can be searched for items to match a specific assessment blueprint and that future MCQ examinations can be built collaboratively online within the bank with the benefit of previous item performance data.

If there is any information you would like to include in the monthly memo, please feel free to email me.

Best wishes

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