

Internal Memo

To: All RCSI Staff & Council
From: Cathal Kelly (CEO)
Subject: **CEO Monthly Update**
Date: June 8th 2012

Dear Colleague,

The month of June is always a hive of activity and a time for celebration as our conferring ceremonies take place in Dublin, Bahrain and Penang. It is hard to believe that another academic year has passed by. At the conferring ceremony in the National Concert Hall on Wednesday last, we conferred 240 undergraduate degrees and postgraduate awards. The ceremony is the culmination of a student's journey through RCSI and the work carried out by staff right across the College from the faculty centre, examinations, admissions, student services, communications, IT and the library. Everybody involved in our students' journey should be proud of the work they have carried out as these students move on to a new chapter in their lives. I would like to acknowledge our **Communications** and **Portering Teams** for all their work over the last week in organising the many events, reducing the anxiety of all involved, through their quiet efficiency and good humour.

RCSI Council 2012 – 2014

Congratulations to **Mr. Patrick Broe** who has been elected as the new President of RCSI and to **Mr. Declan Magee**, who has been elected as the new Vice-President.

I would like to congratulate **Professor Eilis McGovern** on her immensely successful term as President and would also like to thank Eilis and the 2010- 2012 Council members for all their work over the past two years.

The 2012 – 2014 Council comprises Mr Patrick Broe (President); Mr Declan Magee (Vice-President); Mr Frank McManus; Professor A.E. (Freddie) Wood; Professor John Hyland; Professor W Arthur Tanner; Mr Parnell Keeling; Professor Tom Gorey; Mr M. Kevin O'Malley; Professor Eilis McGovern; Mr Joseph O'Beirne; Professor P. Ronan O'Connell;

Mr Michael E. O'Sullivan; Mr David Moore; Professor Kevin Conlon; Mr Kenneth Mealy; Dr Laura Viani; Professor Michael Kerin; Professor Frank Keane; Professor Michael Earley & Mr Keith Synnott.

I would like to acknowledge **Mr Kenneth Purtell** in the IT Department for all his work which resulted in the smooth running of the on-line election process.

Honorary Doctorate Awarded to Professor Fr. Michael Kelly

The College awarded Professor **Fr. Michael Kelly**, Jesuit and internationally renowned expert on HIV / AIDS the second Honorary Doctorate of RCSI at the conferring ceremony earlier this week. The Honorary Doctorate Award was established in 2011 to recognise excellence and to provide an inspiration to our students on their graduation day. The awardees will be exceptional people who have made a difference to the world through education, research or service.

Honorary Degree Recipient for 2013 Conferring - Nominations

If you have any suggestions of worthy recipients for next year's award, please do let me know. Nominations for the award are brought to the "Honorary Degrees Sub-Committee" and criteria for selection include: distinguished career of relevance to a health sciences institution; meaningful to graduates and compatibility with RCSI positioning. The sub-committee will discuss and vote on each nomination. A majority of two-thirds will be required to approve each candidate for the award.

I.T. Department - Data Encryption

I'm sure by now you have seen the flashing padlock on the staff portal! The IT department have recently introduced data encryption to the College. RCSI holds a lot of confidential information that in the wrong hands could have serious or embarrassing consequences for RCSI, therefore we all need to take the necessary steps to protect RCSI from financial and reputational damage and to meet our legal requirements. I would ask that you please take the time to familiarise yourself with this new policy.

The information can be found under the IT section of the staff portal. This was an inter-departmental project involving the I.T. Department, HR and Communications.

Technology Transfer & Tissue Engineering Research Group

SurgaColl Technologies, a spin-out technology company of RCSI has been developed to commercialise breakthrough tissue regeneration technology developed by the **Fergal O'Brien** and his team in the Tissue Engineering Research Group. In excess of €2 million has been invested into the company from a funding syndicate including AIB Seed Capital Fund, Harmac Medical Products, Enterprise Ireland and a number of private investors in the UK, France and Singapore. Congratulations to **Dr Gearoid Tuohy**, Director of the Technology Transfer Office who has worked over the past 18 months to capture and protect the underlying intellectual property and negotiate the commercial licenses required to set up SurgaColl Technologies Ltd. The company is now poised to commercialise two breakthrough technologies for the regeneration of human tissue.

Department of Surgical Affairs – Launch of the National Office of Clinical Audit

Minister for Health, James Reilly, T.D. was in the College recently to launch the new National Office of Clinical Audit (NOCA). NOCA will design, develop and implement national clinical audit programmes in order to improve patient outcomes and promote patient safety in hospitals. RCSI will manage and administer the office on behalf of the HSE.

Congratulations to **Fiona Cahill** (Project Manager) and **Niamh Keane** (Project support) from the Department of Surgical Affairs who worked alongside **Mr Ken Mealy** (NOCA Clinical Lead), RCSI Council member to bring this project to fruition. A huge amount of work and collaboration with external stakeholders went in to creating this office which will provide a sustainable governance structure to advance national clinical audits and will bring Ireland in line with international best practice.

School of Pharmacy

Dr. James Barlow as Programme Director of Assessment for the National Pharmacy Internship Programme (NPIP) oversaw the May 2012 sitting of the Professional Registration

Examination. He was assisted by **Hugh Carroll, Michelle Flood and Sharon Kerswell**. This is the summative assessment of the NPIP and the assessment for Stage 4 of the Third Country Qualification Route. The examination was overseen by four PSI external examiners who were all satisfied with the conduct of the examination. Successful interns were conferred with a Masters in Pharmacy at the recent conferring ceremony.

Department of Medicine

Congratulations to researchers from the Respiratory Research Division of the Department of Medicine who have recently had a study published in the New England Journal of Medicine. The study is a major breakthrough in understanding why females with cystic fibrosis do worse than males.

The paper is an excellent example of the translational research presently underway in RCSI and illustrates interdepartmental and inter-institutional links. **Professor Gerry McElvaney**, Director of the Respiratory Research Laboratory, RCSI/Beaumont Hospital was joint senior author on the paper. Co-authors on the paper include colleagues from the Departments of Medicine (**Dr. Sonya Cosgrove**), General Practice (**Dr. Borislav Dimitrov**) and Molecular Medicine (**Professor Brian Harvey**), RCSI; Beaumont Hospital/RCSI (**Dr. Cedric Gunaratnam, Professor Shane O'Neill**); and the School of Medicine (**Dr. Stephen Smith**), Trinity College, Dublin.

Department of Pathology

Professor Mary Leader, Professor of Pathology has been awarded the President's Medal of the British Division of the International Academy of Pathology (BDIAP). This medal is awarded by the Council of the BDIAP to someone "who has made a major contribution to pathology education" at an international level. This is the first time that the medal has been awarded to an Irish Pathologist, representing a great honour for Professor Leader, for RCSI and for Irish Pathology. The medal will be officially presented to Professor Leader at the BDIAP annual meeting in November.

Department of Psychology

Dr Karen Morgan PU-RCSI is a co-researcher on a recent award by the Universiti Malaya Research Grant Scheme. The programme '*Falls and Frailty in Older People*' is a three year programme led by Associate Professor Dr Tan Maw Pin, Division of Geriatric Medicine, Universiti Malaya (UM). Other co-researchers are from the Faculty of Medicine and the Department of Design and Manufacturing Engineering UM, Newcastle University, UK and Curtin University, Perth, Australia. The programme will comprise of a number of sub-programmes starting with an evaluation of characteristics of falls in older patients presenting to the emergency room. Exercise therapy and home hazards interventions will be tested. Diagnostic markers of frailty will be assessed and the psychological impact of falls and perceptions of mortality will be explored.

New research on contraception, sexual health and crisis pregnancy was carried out by **Prof Hannah McGee, Dr Karen Morgan** and **Dr Orla McBride** in the Department of Psychology on behalf of the HSE Crisis Pregnancy Programme. The study was a nationally representative study which questioned 3002 people aged 18-45 years living in Ireland in 2010 on a range of topics including contraception, sex education, crisis pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections.

Department of Physiology and Medical Physics

Dr Annette Byrne, Department of Physiology and Medical Physics & Centre for Systems Medicine, is coordinating an international team of scientists on a major research study which aims to predict colorectal cancer patients' response to the 'angiogenesis inhibitor' class of anti-cancer drug which prevents growth of tumour blood vessels. The study will facilitate a more focused therapeutic approach thus limiting side-effects in patients. The researchers have secured approximately €6 million in competitive non-exchequer funding for the "AngioPredict" project which is supported by the European Commission's Seventh Framework 'Health' Programme (FP7).

Department of Psychiatry

Recent research carried out by the Department of Psychiatry and published in Nature Publishing Groups *Neuropsychopharmacology* has demonstrated how cannabis use during adolescence affects brain regions associated with schizophrenia. The research received widespread media coverage on RTE TV News, the Irish Times, News at One, Irish Independent to name just a few.

Lead author on the paper was **Dr Áine Behan**, Department of Physiology. Senior authors include **Professor David Cotter** and **Professor Mary Cannon**, Department of Psychiatry and **Professor John Waddington**, Department of Molecular and Cellular Therapeutics, RCSI. Additional authors in the study included **Magdalena Hryniewiecka**, Department of Psychiatry, RCSI, **Dr Colm O'Tuathaigh** and **Dr Anthony Kinsella**, Department of Molecular and Cellular Therapeutics, RCSI as well as collaborators Professor Maria Karayiorgou and Professor Joseph Gogos from the Department of Neuroscience, Columbia University, New York.

Department of MCT

Congratulations to **Gianpiero Cavalleri**, **Christopher Whelan**, **Saud Alhusaini**, **Norman Delanty** (MCT and Beaumont Hospital) and their international collaborators on publication of the article 'Identification of common variants associated with human hippocampal and intracranial volumes' in *Nature Genetics*.

Many congratulations to **Nina McCarthy**, **Ursula Quinn** (MCT) and **Alice Brennan** on receiving Young Investigator Awards to present their work at the recent meeting of the European Society of Hypertension in London; Alice Brennan won the prize for Best Poster in her section.

Further congratulations also to **Seamus Allen**, **Ana Lopez-Alonso** and **Thea Tilley** (MCT) on receiving Young Investigator Awards to present their work at the forthcoming meeting of the International Society on Thrombosis and Haemostasis in Liverpool.

Student Awards

Lord Mayor's International Student Award

Congratulations to RCSI student **Sami Backely** who was recently presented with the first International Student Award by the Lord Mayor of Dublin, Andrew Montague. The award recognises the international student who has best engaged with Dublin city. It is wonderful to see our students' dedication and commitment recognised at such a level.

Pharmacy Law and Ethics Association Bioethics Award

Congratulations to **Alice Holton**, Senior Cycle student on winning the Pharmacy Law and Ethics Association (PLEA) 2012 award in bioethics. In 2012, for the first year, undergraduate students across all Pharmacy Schools in the UK and Ireland were asked to participate in a competition for the best bioethics essay by PLEA. In addition to RCSI securing the top place, two other RCSI students were listed in the top 10 (**Lisa Geraghty**-4th and **Sinead Ryan**-10th). This award is an external validation of the teaching of bioethics in the pharmacy undergraduate curriculum and a tribute to the oversight of **Dr. Judith Strawbridge**, the Programme Director. Such external quality metrics are re-assuring ahead of the statutory accreditation (by the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland) of the undergraduate programme in Semester 1 of the academic year 2012/2013.

Rhodes Scholarship awarded to RCSI graduate

Alisha Gabriel, who graduated this week, has been awarded a prestigious Rhodes scholarship to attend Oxford University. Alisha has been accepted at Hertford College and where she will undertake an MSc in Public Health at the Department of Public Health, Oxford University. She will begin in Oxford in October 2013 after completing the first year of her residency position at the Western University in Canada specialising in Paediatrics.

National Sexual Health Awareness Week

Prof Ruairi Brugha, Head of the Department of Epidemiology & Public Health Medicine, **Prof Sam McConkey**, Head of the Department of International Health and Tropical Medicine and **Prof Hannah McGee**, Dean of the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences recently participated in Ireland first's national Sexual Health Awareness Week which took place in the RCPI.

Prof Brugha presented research findings from the Chlamydia Screening in Ireland Pilot Study which was carried out by in conjunction with the HSE and NUI Galway.

Prof Hannah McGee presented on Ireland's changing attitudes to sexual behaviour and Prof McConkey presented on new emerging issues of sexual health, faith and healing.

RCSI Bahrain

Following a recent accreditation visit by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research in Jordan, RCSI Bahrain has been granted official recognition by the Ministry. The recognition will enable Jordanian nationals to apply for sponsorship to study in RCSI Bahrain. It will also allow those graduating from courses at RCSI Bahrain to be registered to practice as healthcare professionals within Jordan.

Congratulations to **Professor Sameer Otoom** on his appointment to the role of Vice-President of Academic Affairs in RCSI Bahrain. I wish Sameer every success in his new role.

International Nurses Day celebrations recently took place in RCSI Bahrain (IND) under the theme: Closing the Gap: from evidence to action. Guest speakers include: **Mrs Batool Al Muhandis, Ms Zaianb Alanzi** (student at RCSI MSc Management & Leadership) and MSc graduand **Ms Muna Bucheri**. Money raised from these events will be directed towards the university's monthly charity of choice, which will see two healthcare professionals travel to Ireland and visit the Centre for Autism in Kilkenny.

For the second year the Friends of the Environment Club & Society (FES) collaborated with the Bahrain Yacht Club (BYC) to raise awareness of safeguarding the marine environment. Under the club's theme: The Earth Needs Love. The event at the BYC was part of a larger project that saw business and local companies volunteer their time for one day to fill nine large skips with rubbish and debris collected from the shoreline, water and seabed. The event also included a clean-up of Bird Island, and members of the BYC provided 8 boats to take volunteers out to clean the island.

REACH RCSI Programme

Thanks to **Alec Elliott**, Department of Biology and **John O'Brien**, Department of Anatomy for donating over 60 microscopes from the multi-purpose labs to schools in the local vicinity. The schools were delighted to get the microscopes and will be put to good use in their science lessons. Thanks also to **Maria Kelly**, REACH Programme Manager for coordinating the initiative.

Best wishes

Cathal