

Professor Sameer Ootom appointed President of RCSI Bahrain

Professor Sameer Ootom has been appointed President of RCSI Bahrain. The decision was ratified at a recent meeting of the RCSI Council in Dublin.

Since April 2013, Professor Ootom has been acting in an interim capacity and has for many years been a central figure in successfully establishing the university, previously serving by turns as Professor of Clinical Pharmacology, Dean and Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Professor Ootom qualified in medicine from Jordan University of Science and Technology, and then undertook an MS and a PhD in Pharmacology from the University of Houston, Texas, and a Certificate in Clinical Pharmacology and Therapeutics (CCPT) from the University of Glasgow, UK. He is also a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland.

Making the announcement, RCSI Chief Executive Officer – Professor Cathal Kelly said he has “every confidence in Professor Ootom’s ability to lead the next exciting phase of our university’s development. I very much look forward to working with him in his new role”.

Professor Kelly added, “I wish to personally thank him for his ongoing commitment and contribution to the University and RCSI”.

Professor Sameer Ootom said “It has always been a pleasure and an honour to work in such a reputable organisation as RCSI. With its dedicated staff and multi-national students, I look forward to continue working with them and all our stakeholders for a very successful future for RCSI and Bahrain”.



Outstanding success for RCSI Bahrain interns

RCSI Bahrain interns are achieving a 100% pass rate in licensing exams conducted by the National Health Regulatory Authority. Each year, the National Health Regulatory Authority conducts a licensing examination for all medical interns in Bahrain.

RCSI CEO, Professor Cathal Kelly sent his congratulations from Dublin to the students, to Professor Sameer Ootom, Professor Joe McMennamin and all the team who have worked so hard to achieve these outcomes.



133 students take Physicians oath at the 2014 White Coat Ceremony

More than 130 students attended this year’s White Coat Ceremony in the presence of their parents in RCSI Bahrain on Tuesday 18th of February. The symbolic event celebrates medical students’ transition into clinical training and notably includes the presentation of a physician’s white coat with the student’s name embroidered on it.

This year’s ceremony featured guest speaker, Dr. George Cheriyan, Chief Medical Officer and CEO of the American Mission Hospital. Ms Maysah Almulla, from RCSI Bahrain’s senior class, also addressed her fellow students and spoke to them about her experience and what they should be expecting in the years ahead.

The ceremony concluded with the students’ recital of the professional declaration, through which they vowed to maintain professional attitudes and behaviours in work and relationships with classmates, teachers, patients and the community.



Professional Development Unit established at RCSI Bahrain



By Dr. Kathryn Strachan - An RCSI Bahrain Professional Development Unit (PDU) has been established within the university's Quality Enhancement Office. This is essential for a variety of reasons, such as achieving the goals set out in the RCSI Bahrain strategic plan around teaching, learning and quality; and meeting both internal and external requirements for Quality Assurance.

The PDU will support and enable each member of staff to reach their full potential and to develop collective excellence. The remit of the PDU is to promote and, where appropriate, provide support in staff development, in teaching and learning and in research for healthcare professions.

The PDU will work closely with the Health Professions Education Centre in Dublin to share expertise, resources and partnerships with schools and departments to offer a range of learning and development activities.

New prize announced for clinical lecturers



Over the past few weeks, RCSI Bahrain has held meetings with clinical senior lecturers in its three teaching hospitals. The purpose of the meetings was to initiate improved communication between RCSI and the clinical senior lecturers and to receive feedback from them about their involvement with students and the undergraduate programme.

At the meetings, Professor Sameer Ootom welcomed everyone and thanked the senior lecturers for their good work in teaching the undergraduate students. He announced that there will be a prize this year for the best teacher in each hospital, voted for by the students. The prize will be presented on graduation day.

He also briefed them on the new Higher Professional Education Unit in RCSI Bahrain, which will facilitate a module on teaching skills and student assessment. Professor Ootom said he hoped that all the part-time teaching staff will participate in this course.

Professor Martin Corbally carries out vital charity work in Tanzania

Professor Martin Corbally has recently returned from a lifesaving charity trip to Tanzania. Professor Corbally travelled with a team from Operation Child Life where, over a two-week period, they performed complex and lifesaving surgery on children with liver and kidney cancer at the Oncology Centre at Muhimbili National Hospital in Dar es Salaam.

This programme has been operating in Muhimbili since 2007 and a similar one with Children's Hospital #2 in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.

In Vietnam, local surgeons, anaesthetists and nurses have significant exposure and teaching in these complex areas. Operation Child Life has opened an open-heart programme in Ho Chi Minh City, and so far has treated more than 650 children diagnosed with congenital heart disease.

Students return from charity trip to Lesotho



Four students have recently returned from two weeks' charity work in Lesotho, Africa.

Medical students Julia Fox and Zaid Marhoon, and nursing students Hanan Ali Malek and Ebrahim Abdullah, left for Lesotho on February 7. Nursing lecturer, Ms Maeve Royston accompanied the students on the trip, which was organised by the Community Engagement Office.

In conjunction with Action Ireland Trust, the trip gave the students the opportunity to work in St Joseph's Hospital and the Roma College of Nursing. They spent time in the general wards, clinics, children's unit, gynecology, labour and maternity units and they also visited isolated rural clinics.



BD11,000 investment in new gym equipment for the Sports and Recreation Centre

New equipment is on the way for RCSI Bahrain's male and female gyms. Over the past few months, students have been working with senior management to improve the range of equipment in both gyms, following which the University approved a contract for additional equipment.

The new equipment includes a dip/chin machine, in-flight functional trainer, a preacher curl bench, two dumbbell racks containing weights up to 100lbs, a multi-leg press, an Olympic flat bench, squat rack and a range of other fitness items. The new equipment is due to be in place by the end of February.

RCSI's new Chief Operating Officer, Stephen Harrison-Mirfield is now overseeing the operation of the Sports and Recreation Centre (SRC). Stephen is working with the Student Council and SRC management to review the current uses of the centre and to see how the space can be made more appealing to students and staff.

As part of this drive, the SRC's new opening hours from March 2 will be 8am to 10pm, Monday to Thursday. More staff are being recruited for the SRC and Student Services, which is currently run by Fatima Ahmed, is moving to be based there as well.

The management team is also considering a full renovation of the centre's communal areas. The idea behind the renovation is to create a space away from the main academic building, where students and staff can relax with colleagues. The University will run a competition for students and staff to have their say on what should be included in the new communal areas.

In addition, advanced discussions are underway with a number of vendors about providing coffee shop facilities in the SRC.

Watch this space for further details over the coming months.



RCSI Bahrain's American Medical Student Association Chapter wins award

RCSI Bahrain's chapter of the American Medical Student Association (AMSA) has won the Paul R Wright Chapter Success Award. This award will be presented during the national convention of the American Medical Student Association in New Orleans on March 7.

The Bahrain Association is among six chapters which will receive the award this year and is the first chapter to win in the Middle East.

The award is given to chapters which have best-promoted AMSA's mission of inspiring future physicians through local events, innovative programming, leadership development or calls to action.

Kaplan Medical Services to run courses from RCSI Bahrain

RCSI Bahrain and Kaplan Medical Services recently signed an agreement, which will allow Kaplan to offer its USMLE Step 1 Live Prep programme at RCSI Bahrain during the summer.

The programme will see expert Kaplan lecturers visiting Bahrain from the United States to teach courses to students five days a week over an eight-week period from mid-June to mid-August.

The live lecture programme will provide 270+ hours of lectures covering various topics such as anatomy, behavioural science, biochemistry, immunology, medical genetics, microbiology, pathology, pharmacology and physiology.

Registration for this programme is available through the Kaplan website, for medical students and staff from RCSI Bahrain and other institutions within Bahrain and the region.

Kaplan, the world's leading educational services company, helps more than three million individuals achieve their educational and career goals through programmes ranging from high school and college admissions consulting, to graduate school, professional licensing and English-language training.



Student News

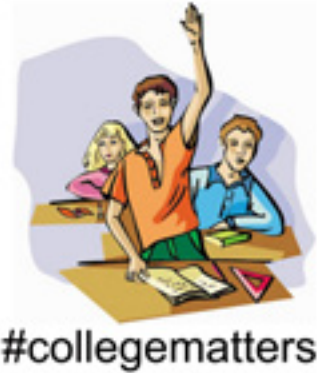
Attendance Matters – the new attendance system - by Dr Jean Hughes

To coincide with Attendance Awareness Week, the new electronic swipe-card attendance system went live on February 9. Building on the manual attendance recording system implemented last semester, the electronic system now requires Foundation Year and Junior Cycle students to swipe in and out of each class.

This system can reliably record a student's good attendance – which can be used in the future when providing references – as well as allowing us to identify and address poor attendance before it negatively impacts a student's performance.

We already have seen correlations between student's attendance and academic performance. Good attendance is an early indicator of good professional conduct and our goal is to encourage students to develop good habits early – something which will stand them well in their professional careers.

The cooperation of staff and students has resulted in the system being introduced with minimum disruption and inconvenience. Remember: If your card does not swipe you should report this to the Student Desk, room 427. Special thanks for the smooth implementation of this process to Ms Evelyn Anand, who managed the entire project and to Mr Sami Abid, Ms Bindu Ramankutty, Ms Yoga Hassan, Mr Cathal Prendergast, Mr Hussain Madi, Ms Manal Al Hashimi and Mr Ali Mohammed Jaffar, whose efforts combined to the successful implementation of the new system.



RCSI Bahrain students attend Federation of Medical Students Association



The tenth regional meeting for the Eastern Mediterranean Region of the International Federation of Medical Students Association (IFMSA) took place in Kuwait from January 22-28.

The theme was medical ethics and involved many prestigious Arab and international guest speakers from the World Health Organisation (WHO) and other supporting organisations.

The Bahraini delegates included RCSI Bahrain graduate and Director of the Humans Rights and Peace Committee, Fares Al-Fares; IFMSA Bahrain President and fifth-year medical student, Sara Al-Saad, and final-year medical student and Head of Research Exchanges in the Middle East and North Africa for past two years, Maysah Al-Mulla.

Friends of the Environment Society event at Budaiya Farmers Market

On February 8, the Friends of the Environment Society (FES) – comprising a group of RCSI Medical students – organised a series of joint activities with the youth-run, environmental-awareness initiative, Tri Bahrain.

The events were hosted at the Farmer's Market in Budaiya – a weekly gathering at which farmers sell their products directly to the community. The groups' three main activities included an awareness booth highlighting the dangers of and alternatives to genetically-modified organisms; a workshop which demonstrated how to reuse waste material to produce creative items and a children's painting competition organised in association with UNEP Tunza – an initiative aimed at engaging young people in environmental activities.

Mr Ali Rajab, the Head of FES said the society's new vision is "to raise awareness among medical and nursing students, to encourage responsibility and to promote an enviro-health partnership with local and international communities."



RCSI Bahrain students attend International Diabetes Federation Congress in Australia

For the first time, undergraduate students from RCSI Bahrain's School of Nursing have attended the International Diabetes Federation Congress, which took place in Melbourne, Australia.

Held every two years in a different country, the event consists of keynote speakers, themed workshops and debating forums, at which healthcare professionals can collaborate, initiate and learn up-to-date research advancements, specifically related to treatment of diabetes.

The conference was attended by more than 10,000 delegates and RCSI Bahrain students Nazia Al Amri, Lulwa Al Muqla, Ghufraan Aqeel and Sara Qaidoom met the International Diabetes Federation President, Sir Michael Hirst.



Students attend Model United Nations Conference in Utrecht

In early February, 14 students attended the Model United Nations Conference in Utrecht.

The Conference was called "A Brave New World – It's Time for Africa" and the keynote speaker was Dr Johannes Pieter "Jan" Pronk, a Dutch politician, diplomat and professor who, in 1985, was Assistant UN Secretary-General.

At the closing ceremony, two first-year RCSI students Mariam Alzeera and Gaydah El-Shami – who are part of the Human Rights Council – received Honorable Mention Awards.

The 14 students included Foundation Year students Maryam Alzeera, Ghaydah El-Fatih Elshami and Samar Alomran and those from JC1/2 were Ahmed Omar Aljamal, Ahmed Abdelkarim, Mohammed Toorani, Paul Kooner, Rateb Fouad, Rafeat Azim, Ahmed Kamel Ashry, Dina Ghazal, Aya Elsalah, Tooba Khan and Momina Umair.



Certificate in basic life support

Third-year RCSI Bahrain nursing students completed their basic life support certification through the American Heart Association in the RCSI campus from January 19-22.

The certification enables the students to participate in resuscitation in the clinical area.



Philanthropy Club event

On December 12, 2013, the Philanthropy Club held a fundraising dinner as part of the University's National Day festivities. Guests enjoyed delicious Bahraini food, a raffle (during which five students won wonderful prizes, including an iPod) and a trivia quiz about Bahrain. The event raised around 200BD for our winter drive supporting the Migrant Workers Protection Society (MWPS).



Research News

Study looks into how well RCSI graduates are prepared for internship

Dr Sameer Kassim, a recent graduate of RCSI Bahrain presented a research study at the AMEE conference in Prague into how well prepared interns from RCSI Dublin and RCSI Bahrain were for their clinical practice. The study showed that international graduands tend to feel they are better prepared than local graduates staying in local jobs. He concluded that there needs to be a greater emphasis in the undergraduate curriculum on non-academic roles: evaluation of the patients in non-medical terms, knowledge of multi-disciplinary team roles, and issues including stress management, work/life balance and coping strategies. Overall, RCSI medical school is doing reasonably well in preparing graduands for their clinical roles particularly in the areas of science, medical practice and team skills. The research was supervised by Professor David Whitford and Professor Hannah McGee.

Strategic Use of English to Study Science: A Perspective from Communities of Practice

Dr Aneta Hayes and nursing student Nazia Al Amri have recently published a paper in a peer reviewed journal called ISRN Education. Strategic use of the English language was the focus of their study and the aim of the research was to establish whether differences in the strategic use of writing and reading skills in English exist between students of various educational backgrounds. The full reference for the paper is: Hayes, A. Al-Amri, N.M. (2014) Strategic Use of English to Study Science: A Perspective from Communities of Practice. ISRN Education.

RCSI Bahrain awards annual research grants

Research grants have recently been awarded to the following faculty:

Dr Aneta Hayes - Describing Thoughts Can Tell Us Lots : A Pilot Study into How English Language Learners Solve Problems in Science

Dr Claire Donnellan - Cognitive impairment including metacognitive function and associated correlates in stroke patients and age-matched healthy volunteers

Dr Edwina Brennan - 5-ALA and MAL: in vitro effects as photosensitising agents for antimicrobial photodynamic inactivation of opportunistic fungi.

Ms Eman Ahmed Tawash - Nursing as a career choice in Bahrain

Ms Fatima Al-Hannan - BRCA1 and BRCA2 mutations in breast cancer patients from Bahrain

Dr Michael Keogh - Community acceptable approaches for safe clean drinking water

Head of School of Postgraduate Studies & Research, Professor David Whitford congratulated everyone involved and said he would like to remind faculty that funding is independently available from the Research Committee for publishers' costs in publishing in peer reviewed journals.

RCSI study examines experiences of Bahraini women with breast cancer



Dr Ghufuran Jassim and Professor David Whitford have published a piece of qualitative research looking at the quality of life of Bahraini women with breast cancer. Themes that differ from previous Western studies include a heavy emphasis on spiritual practices for comfort; the use of traditional clothing (hijab and abaya) to hide hair and body changes; the important role played by the

family and husband in treatment decisions; and concerns regarding satisfying the sexual needs of the husband, which were related to a fear of losing the husband to a second wife.

Previous quantitative literature has not captured important elements related to a good quality of life of breast cancer survivors, particularly those with a more cultural and religious basis such as the role of the husband and impact of prayers.

These themes are important to healthcare professionals for ensuring an individualised approach to the treatment of women diagnosed with breast cancer. The research is published in the journal Social Science & Medicine <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2014.01.031>



Nursing lecturer presents poster at Health Conference in Thailand



Eman Ebrahim Fateel recently presented a poster of her research work titled 'Caring Practices in Intensive Care Units: The Experiences of Family Members and Nurses' at the international conference, The Network 2013: Towards Unity for Health (TUFH).

The overall goal of the conference was to convene health professionals, educators, students and researchers from around the world to share experiences, opportunities and challenges of community participation in education, service and research.

Professor Seamus Cowman appointed to UK's Lancet Nursing Commission

Professor Seamus Cowman, Head of School of Nursing & Midwifery is set to play a major role in deciding the future of nursing in the United Kingdom after he was appointed to the Lancet Commission in Britain.

The Commission plans to review the education, workforce, practice, image and future of UK nursing, and to provide recommendations on each to the profession, the public and key decision-makers.

Taking into account international comparators, the Commission will then produce a report on its deliberations and proposals, which will be published both in The Lancet and as a separate booklet.



RCSI Bahrain and Saudi Aramco hold first BSc Nursing Programme Board Meeting



On January 16, a delegation from Saudi Aramco, which included students, travelled to RCSI Bahrain for the first board meeting of the BSc Nursing Programme Board. Reports were very positive about the project, and the programme board will have further meetings each semester.

A collaboration between RCSI Bahrain and Saudi Arabian Oil Company (Saudi Aramco) is providing an RCSI Bahrain BSc Nursing Bridging education programme in Saudi Arabia.

Staff from the University's School of Nursing & Midwifery travel to Dhahran in Saudi Arabia to deliver the individual modules of the education programme. Twenty nurses are registered with the University and the first semester has been completed.

RCSI Bahrain undergraduate research summer school award programme

Each year, RCSI enables students to carry out research during the summer months, made possible through funding kindly donated by alumni of the University. A call for applications will be announced soon.

Funding is available to undergraduate students from any year in any School to carry out research in either Dublin or Bahrain. At least eight weeks is required to spend on the research.

Interested students should identify a supervisor, a project and prepare their proposal as early as possible. Expressions of interest in carrying out research over the summer of 2014 should be forwarded to Professor David Whitford, Head of the School of Postgraduate Studies & Research, dwhitford@rcsi-mub.com

Small grants (up to BD500) are also available to faculty from any School who require funding for materials for a summer student programme. Expressions of interest should be forwarded to Professor David Whitford.

Health Professions Education Corner by Dr Aneta Hayes



Student-staff partnership is a growing trend in literature on such agendas as research, assimilation of students into university life, student experience and student satisfaction. A very interesting view on student-staff partnership is held in a paper by Maunder (2013), in which the author uses students as researchers to ensure greater credibility of her data from a qualitative investigation into undergraduate study in one UK university. In the limitations of the study, Maunder (2013) addresses the issue of reflexivity and highlights that the student-as-researcher model adopted in her research helps to overcome problems related to staff impact on research. According to Maunder (2013), the status of researchers as fellow students allowed for a particular relationship with participants to emerge, which would not have been possible for a staff member to achieve. Maunder (2013) argues that this contributed to the legitimacy of data because the student-led approach gave unique insights into student life without the effect of staff presence. I thought that this was a very novel approach to ensuring greater quality of data and definitely worth trying, especially with the student summer research projects approaching so quickly. I will continue with staff-student partnership in the next edition of Connected where I will present a range of staff-student partnerships that facilitated educational change.

Maunder, R.E. Cunliffe, M. Galvin, J. M. Jalil, S. Rogers, J. (2013). Listening to Student Voices: student researchers exploring undergraduate experiences of university transition. *High Educ*, 66:139–152

Arabian Gulf University President visits RCSI Bahrain



On January 23, a delegation from the Arabian Gulf University (AGU) visited RCSI Bahrain. The AGU delegation included the University President, Dr Khalid Abdul Rahman Nasser Al Ohaly, the Dean of the College of Medicine and Medical Sciences, Dr Khaldoon Al-Roomi and the Associate Professor of Microbiology, Dr Abdulrahman Ismaeel. Collaborations between the two universities were discussed, especially in the area of research.

Dr Catherine O'Neill receives Fellowship at conferring ceremony in Dublin



Congratulations to RCSI Bahrain's Dr Catherine O'Neill who was awarded a Fellowship Ad Eundem of the Faculty of Nursing & Midwifery at a conferring ceremony in Dublin. Last December, RCSI conferred more than 170 healthcare professionals with postgraduate awards at the ceremony in the college. A Fellowship Ad Eundem of the Faculty of Nursing & Midwifery was awarded to John Adams, Susan Moran and Dr Catherine O'Neill.

Professor Whitford's son Peter is a big hit on the Voice Ireland

Peter Whitford, son of Professor David Whitford, is set to play a major part in this year's Voice of Ireland programme on Ireland's RTE television. To earn his place in the next round of Voice of Ireland, Peter sang the Spice Girls' song, Viva Forever, which impressed all four judges. His alternative take on the song was lapped up by The Cranberries' Dolores O'Riordan.



"I loved it," she said. "Very unique. It really was lovely. You have massive potential. You could do something on a global scale with that voice." Westlife's Kian Egan was equally impressed, telling Peter he has what it takes to win the show and could go all the way. Eventually, Peter opted for Dolores as his mentor. His next show will be aired on February 23 on RTE1.



Photography Competition – Guess Who?

Congratulations to JC2 student Ahmed Ali Alderazi who correctly guessed that Professor Andrew Curtain and Professor Seamus Cowman were the two academics who got into the festive spirit in December. Ahmed wins a BD20 voucher for his effort. Hard luck to all those who guessed Professor Joe McMenamin and Professor John Fennell.

New Appointments

Dr David Misselbrook - Senior Lecturer in Family Medicine

Dr Azra Mahmud - Senior Lecturer in Pharmacology

Elaine Treadgold - HR Officer

Have a laugh!!!

So we all know that Professor Eamon Tierney could have been a professional comedian in another life. Here he shares some of his latest medical jokes with us.

What is a physicist's favourite food?
Fission chips

A weed scientist goes into a shop. He asks: "Hey, you got any of that inhibitor of 3-phosphoshikimate-carboxyvinyl transferase?" Shopkeeper: "You mean the weedkiller Roundup?" Scientist: "Yeah, that's it. I can never remember that name."

The anatomist and the frog

One day, after sleeping badly, an anatomist went to his frog laboratory and removed from a cage one frog with white spots on its back. He placed it on a table and drew a line just in front of the frog. "Jump frog, jump!" he shouted.

The little critter jumped two feet forward. In his lab book, the anatomist scribbled, "Frog with four legs jumps two feet."

Then, he surgically removed one leg of the frog and repeated the experiment. "Jump, jump!" To which, the frog leaped forward 1.5 feet. He wrote down, "Frog with three legs jumps 1.5 feet."

Next, he removed a second leg. "Jump frog, jump!" The frog managed to jump a foot. He scribbled in his lab book, "Frog with two legs jumps one foot."

Not stopping there, the anatomist removed yet another leg. "Jump, jump!" The poor frog somehow managed to move 0.5 feet forward. The scientist wrote, "Frog with one leg jumps 0.5 feet."

Finally, he eliminated the last leg. "Jump, jump!" he shouted, encouraging forward progress for the frog. But despite all its efforts, the frog could not budge. "Jump, frog, jump!" he cried again. It was no use; the frog would not respond.

The anatomist thought for a while and then wrote in his lab book, "Frog with no legs goes deaf."