

Navigate stories

Welcome to the Summer issue of OVPLT eNews

New Guidelines on Groupwork

Recognition of UCC's 2020/21 'Teaching Heroes'

The Gateway to University Programme

Use of Extended Reality in Teaching and Learning

8th Scenario Forum Symposium hosted online by UCC

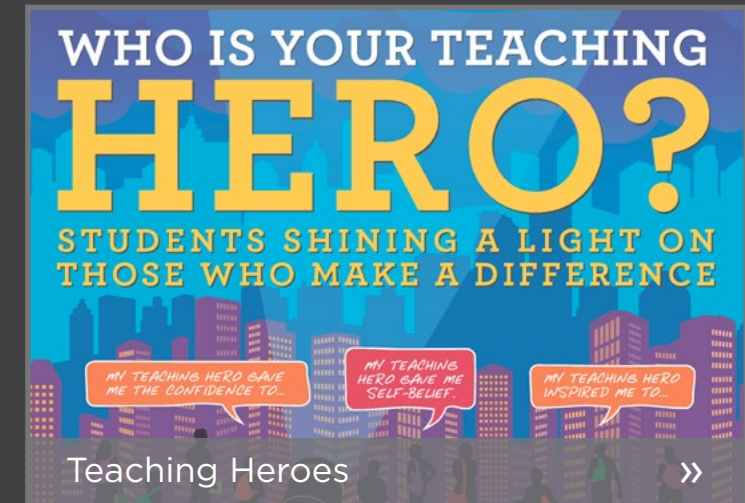
Interviews with ACE Students

National recognition for ELEVATE project team

Other news



New Guidelines on Groupwork



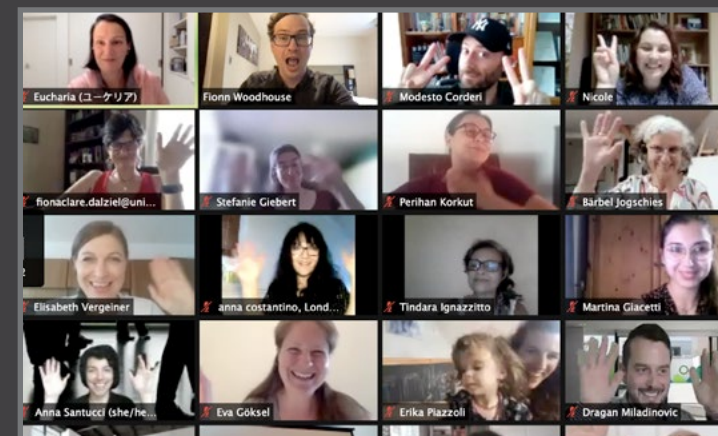
Teaching Heroes



Language Centre



Extended Reality



Symposium



Interview



Welcome to the Summer 2021 edition of OVPLT eNews



Professor Paul McSweeney, VP Learning and Teaching

Welcome to the Summer edition of the OVPLT eNewsletter. In this edition, we celebrate the achievements of 48 staff members who were recognised as Teaching Heroes in the recent National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning Awards. We congratulate the members of the Elevate Delta team who have received national recognition.

The annual call for nominations for the **Presidents Excellence in Teaching Awards** has recently been announced. These awards recognise staff who have made an outstanding contribution in the pursuit of teaching excellence through innovative and creative forms of teaching, learning and assessment. We look forward to receiving applications and to honouring the recipients at an awards ceremony later in the year.

The OVPLT centres continue to support staff and students by developing many innovative and creative initiatives such as the Teach Digi podcast series and the Design Sprint project among many others. As well as an update on these activities, the newsletter contains news of forthcoming plans

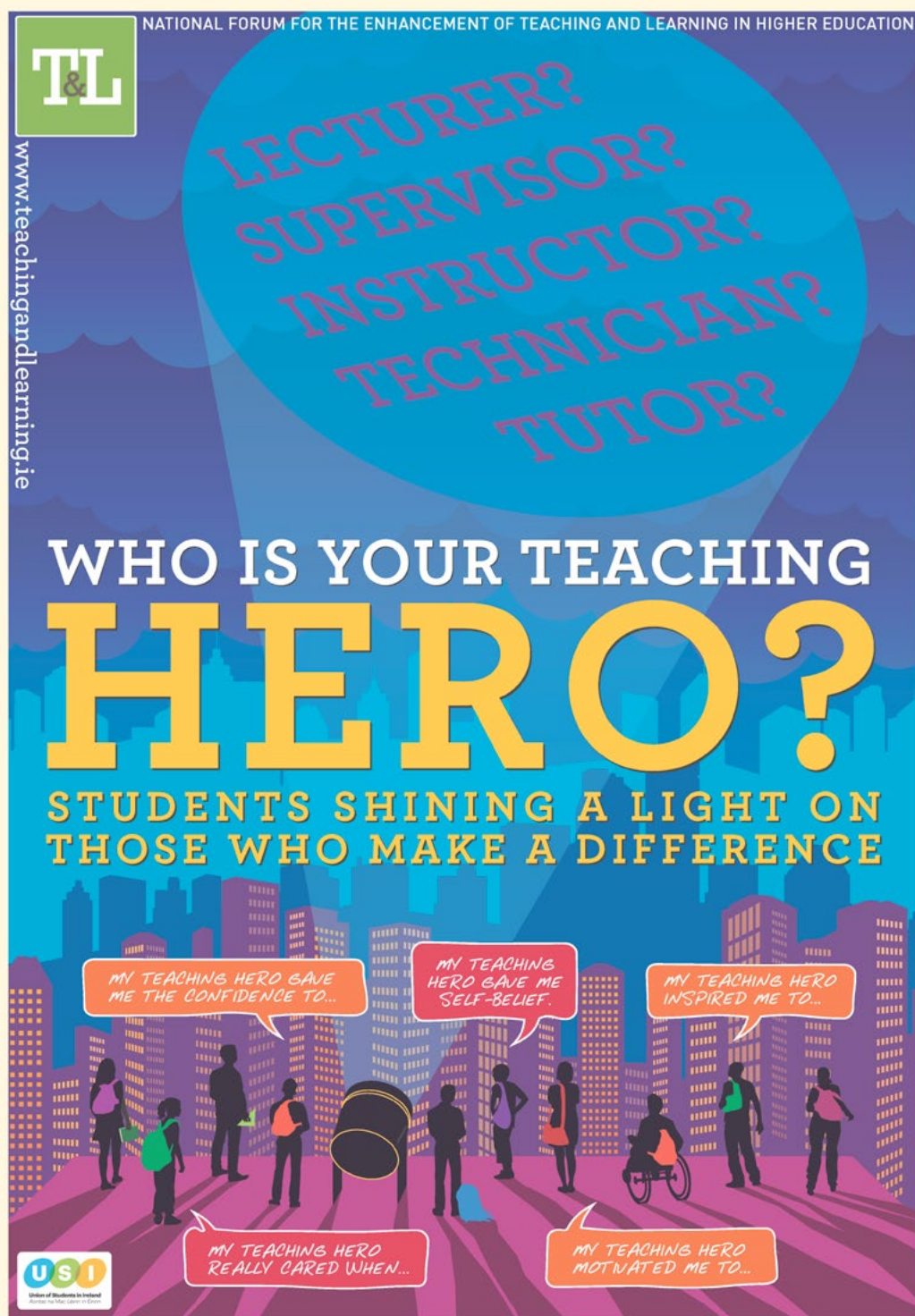
including a new Digital Education check-up resource, a new English for Academic Purposes programme and the launch of the Skills Centre's Student Success Strategy Working Group. We also hear from the Department of Theatre and Department of German on their recent Symposium and a fascinating piece about the history of the West Lodge, the home of CIRTLL.

We hope you enjoy reading this Newsletter and would like to thank all our contributors across the OVPLT and the wider university, for further information or feedback, please contact Jacqui at j.churcher@ucc.ie

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Paul McSweeney". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Professor Paul McSweeney
VP for Learning and Teaching

www.ucc.ie/en/teachlearn/



Teaching Heroes poster, National Forum 2021

<https://youtu.be/cFcbcxbFoGg>

UCC'S TEACHING HEROES 2021

UCC's 2020/21 'Teaching Heroes' were recognised at the recent USI Student Achievement Awards Ireland (SAAI) event.

The **Teaching Hero Awards** are Ireland's only national, student-led awards for all those who teach in higher education. The Awards are organised by the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching & Learning in collaboration with the USI and other students' unions nationwide. The Awards scheme provides an opportunity for students across the country to recognise and celebrate outstanding teaching in our higher education institutions.

Forty-eight 2020/21 Teaching Heroes from across UCC were celebrated at the event. The list of names follows below, and our warmest congratulations to all awardees.

- Aisling O'Driscoll
- Alan Kelly
- Andre Toulouse
- Andrew Keane
- Aoife Daly
- Caroline O'Connor
- Crystal Addey
- Dan O'Connell
- Dan O'Sullivan
- Darius Whelan
- Dave Otway
- Dean Venables
- Dearbhail O'Callaghan
- Derek Bridge
- Dragan Miladinovic
- Edel Walsh
- Fionn Woodhouse
- Frederic Adam
- Gillian Murphy
- James A. Kapaló
- James Cuffe
- Jérôme aan de Wiel
- Joel Walmsley
- John P. Morrison
- Katy Dineen
- Kevin Cahill
- Lydia Sapouna
- Margaret Buckley
- Marian Caulfield
- Marten Kaas
- Martin Kilian
- Michael Farrell
- Michael O'Connell
- Mohammed H. Abdulla
- Niamh Dennehy
- Niamh O'Brien
- Nicola Bessell
- Patrick O'Callaghan
- Rachel Woodlock
- Rui Silva
- Sabine Manhartsberger
- Samantha Dockray
- Seamus O'Reilly
- Shiho Lambe
- Tom Birkett
- Vittorio Bufacchi
- Willie McAuliffe
- Yvonne O'Connor



National recognition for ELEVATE project team

A collaborative team of educators, researchers, and technical staff from the School of Microbiology, School of Computer Science and IT, and the Centre for the Integration of Research, Teaching and Learning has won a national award. The ELEVATE project has uncovered active learning approaches to enhance student learning of challenging concepts in virology, cellular and molecular biology. Their use of innovative teaching approaches impressed reviewers as it demonstrated their passion for “accessing new modalities of teaching for understanding, guided by digitised immersive learning approaches”.

The Disciplinary Excellence in Learning, Teaching and Assessment (DELTA) Award is presented to disciplinary groups who can demonstrate a record of excellence in teaching and learning enhancement and an ongoing process of continued enhancement. The ELEVATE team is one of three national recipients recognised this year in this highly competitive award scheme.

The project team includes:

Dr Jerry Reen (School of Microbiology) – Team Lead	Erin Dalton (Microbiology Student)
Dr Martina Scallan (School of Microbiology)	Grace McEvoy (MSc Multimedia Student)
Dr John Morgan (School of Microbiology)	Christine Walsh (MSc Multimedia Student)
Dr Brian McSharry (School of Microbiology)	Ciara Ferris (Genetics Student)
Owen Jump (CIRTL)	John Brendan O’Leary (Microbiology Student)
Dr Niall O’Leary (School of Microbiology)	Kelsey O’Connor (Genetics Student)
Carmel Shortiss (School of Microbiology)	William Wallace (Microbiology Student)
David Murphy (School of Computer Science and IT)	Kelan Murphy (Biotechnology Graduate)
Dr John O’Callaghan (School of Microbiology)	Darragh Kelleher (Biotechnology Student)
Dr Sheila Ryan (School of Microbiology)	
Ay’sha Moore, (Microbiology Student)	
Jordyn Lynch, (Microbiology Student)	
Diego Bethencourt, (Microbiology Student)	

Above: ELEVATE DELTA Team Clockwise from Top: Dr Martina Scallan, Dr Jerry Reen, Dr John O’Callaghan, Dr Sheila Ryan, Dr John Morgan, Dr Brian McSharry, Carmel Shortiss, Dr Niall O’Leary, School of Microbiology, UCC; David Murphy, School of Computer Science & IT, UCC; Owen Jump, Centre for the Integration of Research, Teaching and Learning, UCC.

Further details:

DELTA awards press release

www.teachingandlearning.ie/2021/05/25/teams-from-mtu-ucc-and-ul-receive-delta-awards/

Elevate project

www.teachingandlearning.ie/project/enhanced-active-learning-in-virology-cell-culture-and-molecular-biotechnology-elevate/

LEARNING AND TEACHING EXCELLENCE SHOWCASED AT UCC

CIRTL were delighted to host a series of Learning Enhancement Showcases highlighting the work of 13 Learning and Teaching Enhancement Initiatives. These initiatives were funded by the Strategic Alignment of Teaching and Learning Enhancement Fund (SATLE 2019: National Forum, HEA). The showcase events, held over the course of four weeks, spoke to themes of Experiential Learning, Enhancing Student Success, Active Learning, and Professional Development.

Thirteen smaller scale initiatives, also supported by the SATLE 2019 fund, will be showcased in summer 2021. Keep an eye out for case studies detailing these initiatives in the Learning and Teaching Weekly email!



Learning Analytics LITE: Meet the Contributors

At the beginning of April, the successful applicants to the **Learning Analytics LITE project** were announced. We are delighted to have a representative from each of the four colleges in the project. The Learning Analytics LITE project strives to enhance the design, development, and implementation of teaching to enable students to reach their full potential. This involves analysing both engagement and performance data across a variety of disciplines. An overview of the project titles and leads are as follows:

- **CACSSS** – Cindy O’Shea, Applied Social Studies. Piloting a learning tool in Canvas to substitute or supplement field work for student placements.
- **CUBS** – Michael Murphy, Management and Marketing. Using Canvas analytics to gain insight into student engagement.
- **SEFS** – Dr Aoife O’Sullivan, Chemistry. Development and Implementation of a Student Engagement Dashboard for Early Intervention and Laboratory Management.
- **CoMH** – Dr Gabriella Iohom, Medicine. Investigating and analysing the effects of using Mixed Reality tools for scenario-based teaching practices.

Canvas tools such as **Module Requirements** and **New Analytics** will be deployed by Applied Social Studies and Marketing, while Chemistry and Medicine will include apps such as **Panopto** and **Teams** in their analysis. All the project teams are working closely with **Michelle Donovan**, Research Support Officer for the CDE. They are working towards a semester 1 implementation date. Combined, the teams form the start of a **UCC Community of Practice** around the topic of Learning Analytics.

Student inclusion is a cornerstone of this project and we will be recruiting student help over the coming weeks. For more information on this project, or to get involved, please email sophie.gahan@ucc.ie

THE CENTRE FOR DIGITAL EDUCATION AND UCC 2022

The vision of the Centre for Digital Education is:

'...to empower staff to improve student learning through the best practice application of technology.'

We achieve this by Advising Staff, Training, Informing Policy Development, Evaluating Emerging Educational Technology, Outreach and National and International Collaboration.

www.ucc.ie/en/digital-ed/about/

In recent months, all of these efforts have contributed to supporting UCC achieve the actions set out in Pillar 1 (Learning and Teaching) of UCC 2022, specifically the following actions:

- 1.3.1. Enhance the digital learning experience for on-campus and off-campus learners, by upskilling including via micro-credentials, through investment in simulation, virtual resources and flexible learning and assessment using technology.
- 1.3.2. Further enable *remote learning* through unique online programmes.
- 1.3.3. Prioritise investment in digital education through expanding our range of infrastructural resources to staff, deploy Instructional Design expertise in Colleges and Schools.

www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/strategicplanning/UCC_2022_Delivering_a_Connected_University.pdf

Some of our activities in support of these aims over the last number of months have included:

- Continuing to provide training and advice to UCC staff around the application of educational technology to education. This includes our **consultation service**, the **Teaching with Technology online course** with a new FAQs section and the **Teaching with Technology service**.
- Running and recording **Teach Digi** sessions with UCC academic and professional services staff, as part of the IUA Enhancing Digital Teaching and Learning project. This includes our new Teach Digi Ag Caint sessions which have had over 500 views.
- Maintaining the **Assessment Hub**, to support the work of the Exams Business Continuity Planning group;
- Administering the **digital badging** in UCC and inputting into the newly HCI-approved MC² (microcredentialling) project;
- Gathering of staff and student feedback on T&L through Covid through **townhall**

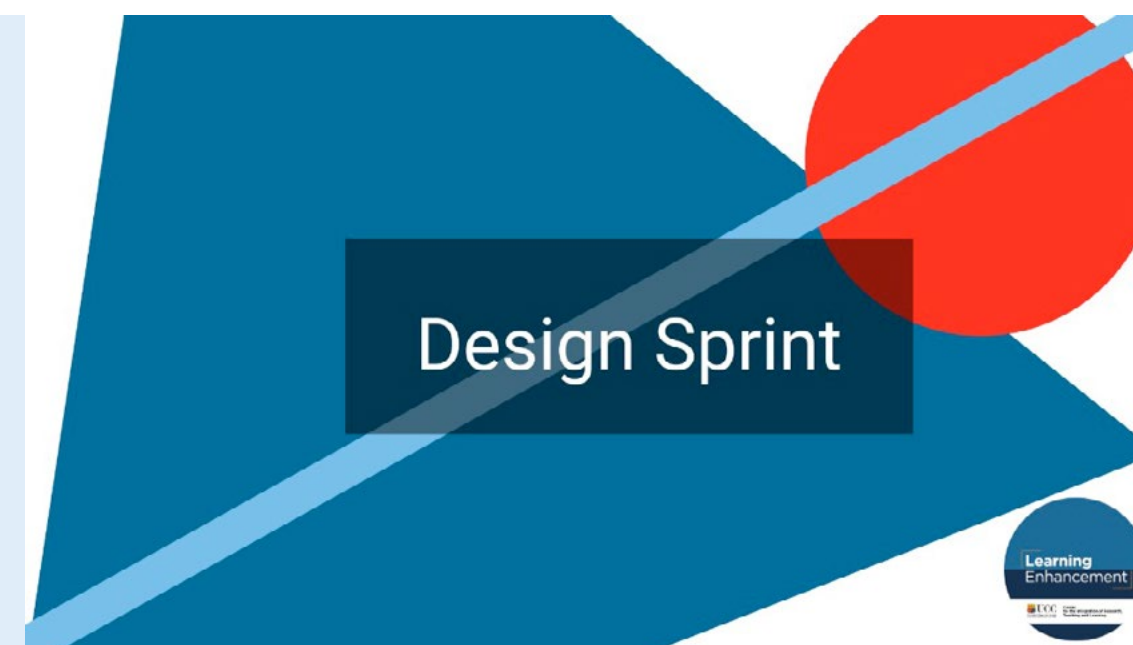
sessions (Q2 2022) – this includes a **detailed document** answering all questions submitted by staff;

- Setting up a new Digital Education Requirements Gathering project, to run and be complete by the end of Q3 2021; and
- Initiating a project on Learning Analytics.



Student Success Strategy in the UCC Skills Centre

Student Success is the focus of Pillar 3 of *UCC 2022 - Delivering a Connected University*. UCC is delighted to welcome Julie O'Donoghue who commenced as a Research Support Officer with the Student Success Strategy Working Group, chaired by Kathy Bradley. Since then, the focus has been on drafting the Student Success Survey questions to be circulated to students and all staff in September. The aim of the survey is to provide every student and staff member with the opportunity to share their views on the meaning of student success. This will help to develop an understanding of what student success means at UCC and how the university is helping students to reach their full potential. Benchmarking is being undertaken to evaluate the approaches of other higher education institutions and helpful consultation has taken place with the National Forum regarding UCC's approach. Drafting of the strategy is planned to begin at the end of June, once the survey questions have been finalised and submitted to SREC for approval.



DESIGN SPRINT FOR CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

In response to the Learning and Teaching Pillar within *UCC2022: Delivering on a Connected Curriculum*, an innovative professional development activity that models a student-as-partner approach in curriculum development was rolled out by CIRTTL staff in April 2021. This initial pilot featured 19 staff and 50 students, the Connected Curriculum Design Sprint supported the integration of civic engagement and sustainability, in this first instance, in existing or newly created modules. Participants engaged in a bespoke Canvas course to prime their thinking prior to engaging in an interactive, online Learning Design workshop. Staff and students were

grouped in the workshop according to the module under review and they agreed key actions to be undertaken as part of curriculum development. Following the initial workshop, the staff participants began engaging in further professional development activities guided by CIRTTL staff along the civic engagement and sustainability tracks. Participating staff are subsequently expected to update existing modules or development of new modules by integrated elements of the Connected Curriculum. Concurrently, a research activity is gathering feedback on the Connected Curriculum self-evaluation tool and the broader Design Sprint process from both staff and students.



Use of Extended Reality in Teaching and Learning

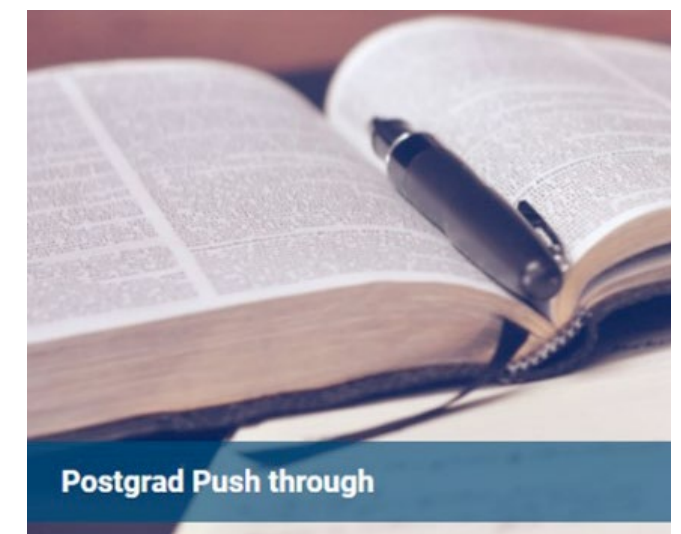
Technologies such as extended reality (XR) have the potential to fundamentally change the classroom space and augment student learning if thoughtfully implemented. Extended reality ranges from fully immersive digital worlds (Virtual Reality), to the overlay of digital objects in the real world (Augmented Reality), through to 360° videos where the user can see the environment in all directions. Some examples in teaching include bringing your students on virtual field trips whether contemporary or historic, or the use of simulations to visualise microscopic particles.

Since April, CIRTL has collaborated with staff in six different disciplines across UCC to explore the potential for integrating XR in teaching. This will culminate in live examples of XR integration in teaching practice across UCC as well as case studies documenting the teaching and learning questions to be considered when integrating XR and similar technologies.

Update from UCC Skills Centre

While it has been a year full of challenges, we at the Skills Centre are delighted with how students have persevered and engaged with us throughout the academic year. Over 10,000 students have actively engaged with our online assets through the Student Success Zone Canvas space, where they can avail of academic writing and development resources. We are also pleased to report 5,416 live (albeit virtual) student visits through our writing clinics, study coaching, programmes, and workshops. Many of these engagements include our suite of academic writing sessions for essay writing skills. SPEAK, our flagship digital badge on presentation skills, remains as popular as ever and we will continue to deliver it over the summer months. Our Critical Thinking workshops were very popular again this year with many academics inviting us into their classes to work with their students. We were delighted to work with societies throughout the year and really valued working in the evenings alongside the executive to meet students where they are.

Over the Summer month students availed of the Postgrad Push-Through. This is a weeklong writing retreat specifically designed to address the needs of PhD and Masters students coming to the end of their thesis/dissertation write-up. Taking place Monday 21st - Friday 25th June, this mid-summer virtual retreat offered a chance for students to meet, interact, and work with their peers to push through the final deadline slump.



Postgrad Push through



DIGITAL PASSPORT FOR NEW STUDENTS

Digital Passport



Students entering higher level education or students already enrolled within UCC can take part in the **Digital Passport programme**. This programme focuses on topics such as digital file management, Google calendar, the main components of Office 365, netiquette, and so on. By taking part in this course, students will increase their skills their digital literacy, which will help them manage their individual academic work. Registration is now open on our website.



Learning to Learn

Another exciting project currently underway in the Skills Centre having secure SATLE2020 funding is the Learning to Learn (working title) project. The main objective of this project is to provide a UCC digital induction programme that can be customised for undergraduate and postgraduate students from each college, school, and department. This is to equip students with the applicable knowledge and skills needed to understand the language and expectations of UCC, to explore and get comfortable with the setting and to start their journey towards successful graduation. We would like to welcome Seugnet Kritzingler as the RSO working closely with Kathy Bradley of the Skills Centre to deliver this programme. Colleagues from across the university join Kathy and Seugnet to form an Advisory Board. Current work involves mapping current orientation and transition programme content to develop this new programme outline. The next steps will include the development and digitisation of the module specific content. This is a very exciting project and we cannot wait to launch the result – watch this space!



ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The Skills Centre and CIRTL are teaming up on an institutional project focused on Academic Integrity. Over the next 12 months the project team will work with staff and students in UCC to create a suite of resources and development opportunities to foster greater understanding of academic integrity amongst students and staff. Academic integrity is defined as “the

commitment to, and demonstration of, honest and moral behaviour in an academic setting”. Resources may focus on topics such as plagiarism, research integrity, citing work, but may also consider more contemporary considerations such as contract cheating websites and collusion in online projects and exams. We look forward to connecting with over the year on this important topic.

CAMPUS ENGAGE NATIONAL FORUM PROJECT

Community Engaged Learning: a powerful pedagogy to develop graduate attributes and values.

A project funded by the national forum for the enhancement of teaching and learning is underway, directed by joint partners Campus Engage and UCC Graduate Attributes. The project lead, Dr Ruth Hally, is collating examples of Community Engaged Learning (CEL) occurring across Ireland. These examples will showcase the impactful and innovative CEL approaches that Irish HEIs are adopting and how CEL can support participants to actively work in areas related to the SDGs. The variety of CEL initiatives collated will be presented in written and digital case studies and housed on the Campus Engage website. The case studies, which will be available in Autumn/Winter 2021, will be of interest to both students and staff. The project also aims to reach an international audience, particularly international students seeking authentic and bespoke educational opportunities.

The Language Centre begins its collaboration with UNIC

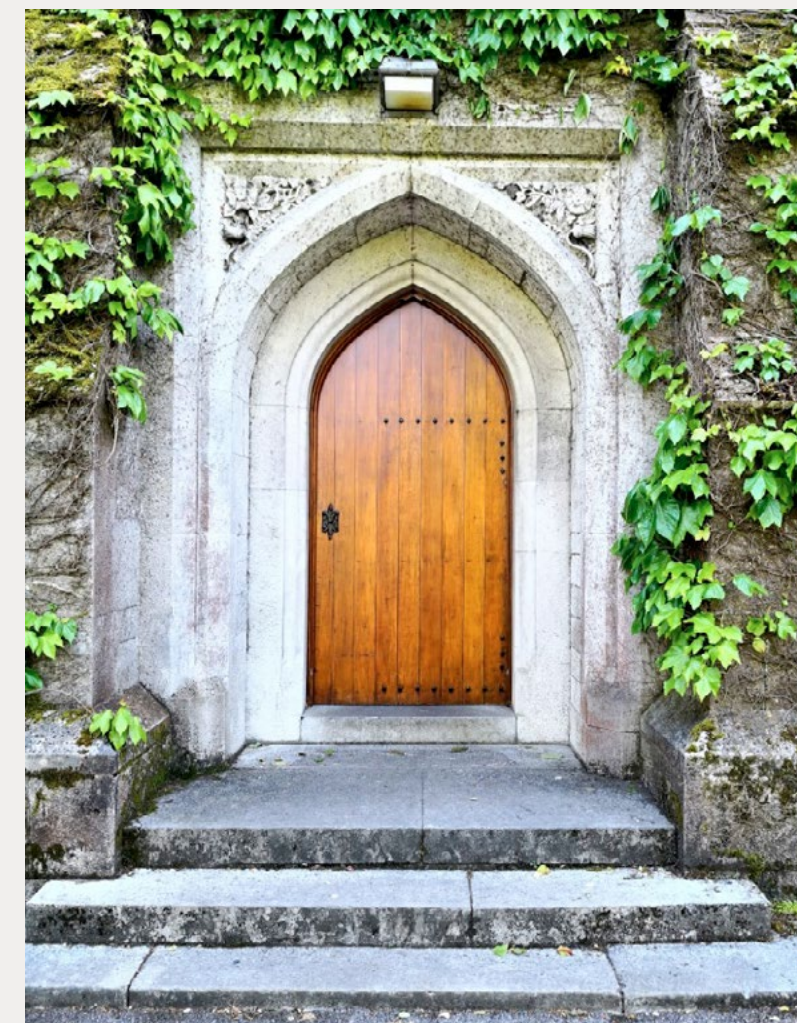


The European University of Post-Industrial Cities (UNIC) has recently formed a new sub-group to help achieve the aims of work package 3: Achievement of Inter-University Mobility.

Colleagues from the consortium of seven universities met for the first time in May to launch the work of the Language Modules Sub-Group. The main aim of this group is to create language/cultural/informative modules which will support staff and students as they prepare for travel to one of the seven member universities of the consortium. The languages offered are, Basque, Croatian, Dutch, English, Irish, Finnish, French, German, Spanish and Turkish.

The Language Centre has launched a new English for Academic Purposes programme designed for students at institutions overseas. Delivered online, its modules can be adapted to particular institutional or disciplinary contexts. The Centre is delighted to have recently signed an agreement to deliver this

programme to postgraduate students at Beijing University of Technology. Modules include Critical Thinking, Academic Conventions, Collaborative and Dialogic Learning, Autonomous Learning and Inter-cultural communication, alongside language development.





THE GATEWAY TO UNIVERSITY PROGRAMME

The Language Centre is delighted at the success of the recently launched English for Academic Purposes programme designed for students at institutions overseas.

This programme is currently successfully being delivered to a group of nine Kuwaiti students. The group have made enormous strides in achieving the next steps in their move to study in the medical field in Ireland.

The course has been delivered wholly online and the students have engaged with the medium to communicate in a wide variety of ways, making significant progress to reach their language goals.

Sponsored by the Embassy of Kuwait, the 20-21 course is the start of a relationship to bring students to UCC for a full-time programme developing the skills they need for university.

Language Centre Consultation on Programmes for International Recruitment

Julie Butters and Sally Orren are leading on a new project to develop pipeline programmes for international student recruitment at UCC. Consultations have begun with programme leads and recruitment colleagues in the colleges and with central admissions teams on the feasibility of creating UCC Level 8 pathways and Level 6 foundation programmes.

Any colleague who is interested in learning more or being involved in the consultation should contact academicenquiries@ucc.ie

Pathways and foundation programmes are designed specifically for international students to enable them to meet the minimum academic requirements for participation in a higher education programme in an Irish institution and to cope with living and studying in

Ireland. They are also designed to help students reach the minimum standard of English language proficiency required for successful participation in a wide range of degree programmes.

Pathways and foundations can be designed for general outcomes, such as STEM, or they can be discipline-specific. Students are provided with skills, knowledge and confidence-building to enable them to make a successful transition to a being a degree student in an Irish, English-speaking institution.



The Professional Language Suite - A new focus for the Language Centre

As well as assisting students with academic aims in life, the Centre works with those who are looking for career-related language development. Sometimes this is specific to a particular context or industry, or it might be through a more general programme, such as English for Business, which cover generic skills like how to chair a meeting, conduct negotiations, write a report or present professionally.

This summer, the Centre will be launching a new range of programmes aimed at professionals, badged as the 'Professional Language Suite'.

The suite will provide a range of services aimed at individuals or organisations looking for bespoke packages to further their aims for the workplace.

Watch this space for more information.

Recent graduates of the Centre have gone on to career success in business, accountancy, academia, medicine, sales and engineering. One graduate of 2020, Francisco Fosser credits his studies in the Language Centre with helping him 'secure his dream job' with Ernst and Young in Argentina in 2020. He says, 'You gave me the opportunity to reach the next level ... and I am grateful to UCC in general.' Like many full-time Language Centre students, Francisco also benefited from access to UCC's Career Service.

Future Proofing the Curricula with Sustainability

In the past academic year, 6 workshops have been offered to provide tips and tricks for further integrating sustainability into the curricula in support of the Connected Curriculum. A total of 57 UCC staff and 14 staff from external HEIs completed the 90-minute workshop which introduced broad concepts surrounding the U.N. Sustainable Development Goals and their underlying targets. Staff also examined connection

points between SDGs and their existing module content and then reflected upon ways to deepen SDG integration. Funding was secured from a National Forum SATLE extension award to expand the scope of these professional development trainings into a thorough interactive 30-hour programme. Elements of this workshop were also modified for the recent Connected Curriculum Design Sprint pilot.

APPOINTMENT TO FOOD SAFETY CONSULTATIVE COUNCIL

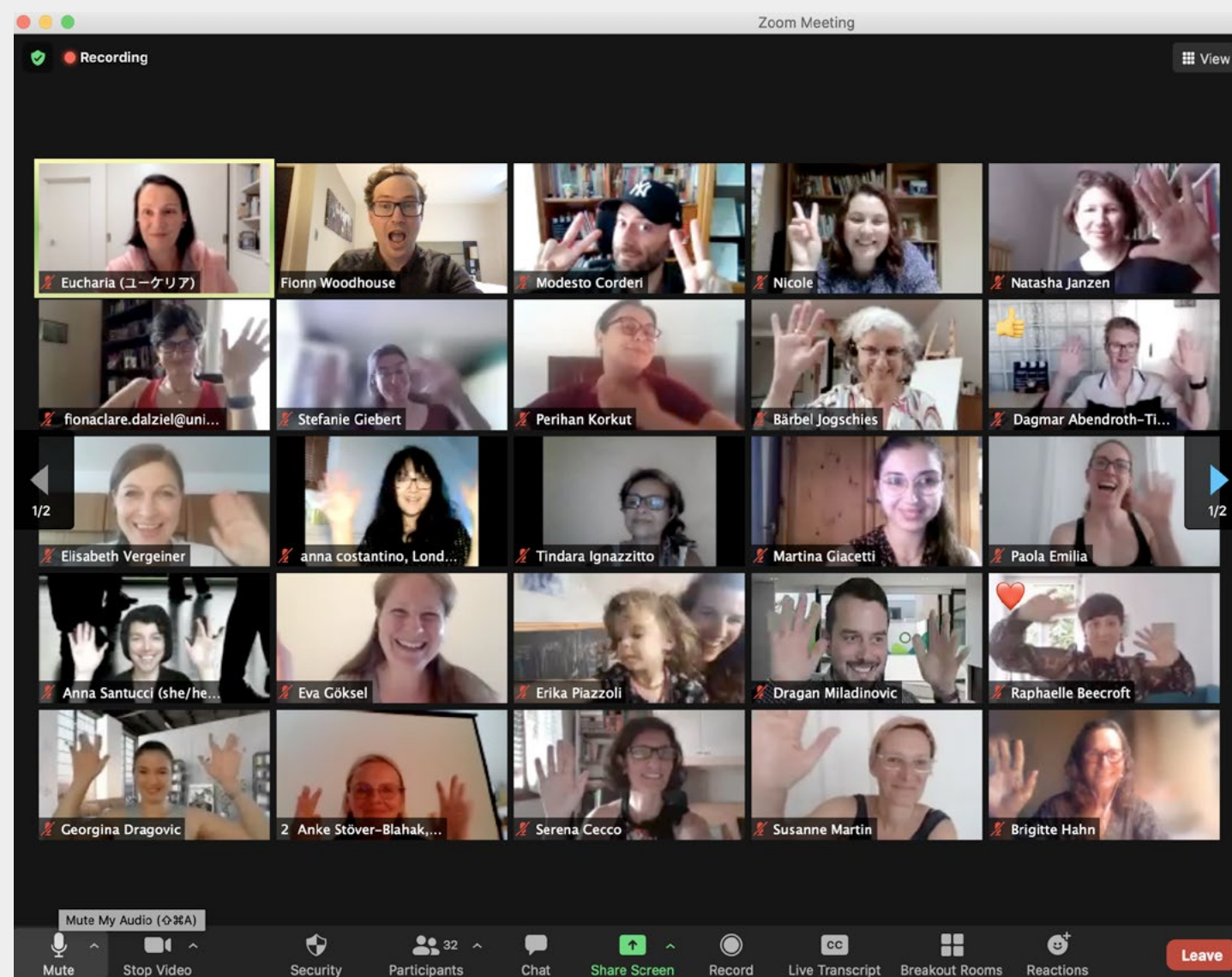
On Wednesday, May 26th, it was announced that Regina Sexton of ACE has been appointed to the Food Safety Consultative Council (FSCC) for the period 2021/2026 by the Minister for Health, Stephen Donnelly TD. The FSCC acts as a conduit to provide feedback to the Food Safety Authority of Ireland on the views, opinions and recommendations on the food sector, so that these can be placed on the FSAI's agenda for appropriate action, where necessary. The FSCC examines segments of the food chain from farm to fork to review the food safety initiatives already in place and those required to ensure consumers' health and interests continue to be to the forefront. Regina is a food and culinary historian, Member of the Irish Food Writers' Guild, Committee Member of the Agricultural History Society of Ireland and co-ordinates the Postgraduate Diploma in Irish Food Culture in UCC.

Pictured right: Regina Sexton, Adult Continuing Education.



8th Scenario Forum Symposium: “Sore Back, Square Eyes? Going Performative in Digital Teaching and Learning Spaces”

The 8th Scenario Forum Symposium was hosted online by UCC on June 18th and 19th. We, **Dragan Miladinovic** (Department of German) and **Fionn Woodhouse** (Department of Theatre), organised this two-day event which brought together colleagues from 8 different time zones to address the questions raised by the ongoing pandemic and its consequences on teaching and learning. The symposium focused on digital aspects of teaching and learning, especially addressing performative approaches, i.e., approaches that are inspired by the (performing) arts.

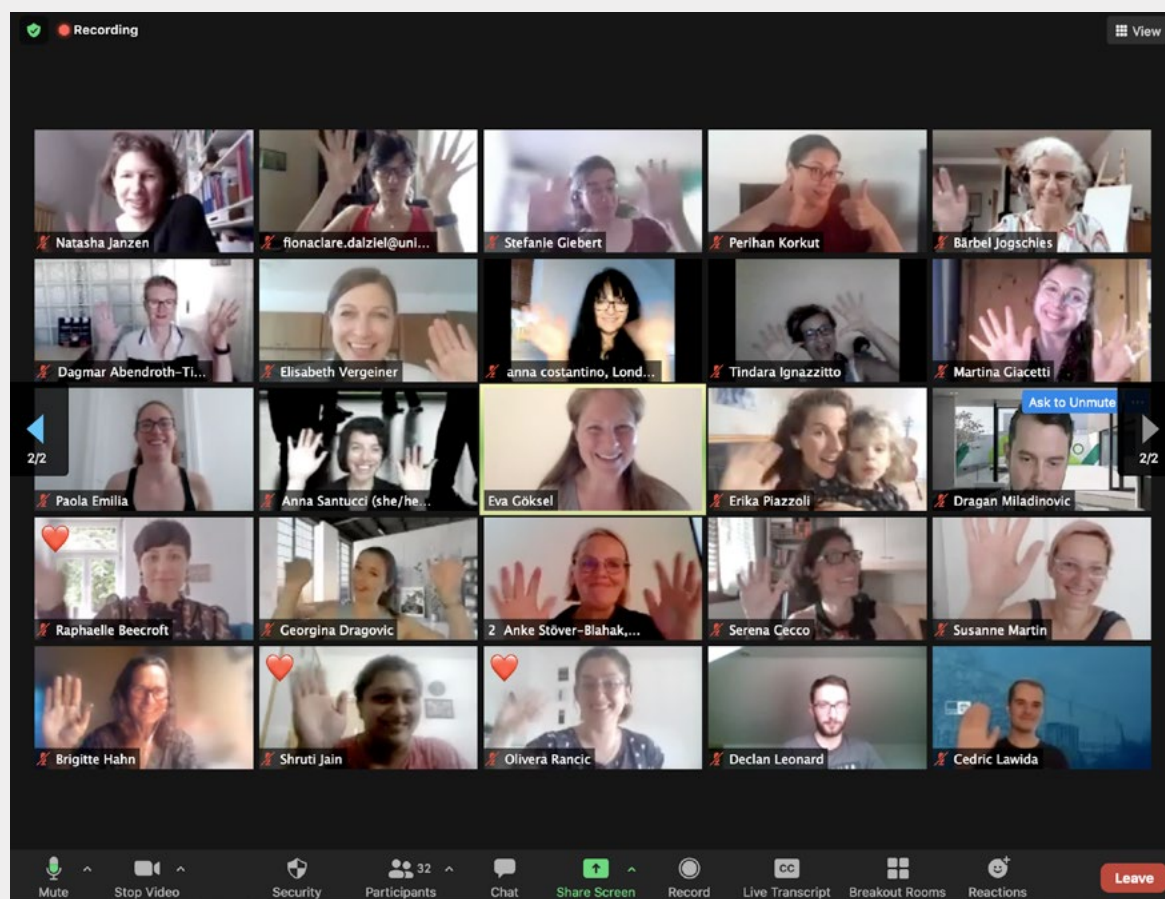


Above: Participants at the closing session of the symposium.

Out of the necessity

With the closure of universities and after a year of teaching online, we felt the need to take a step back, reflect on the learnings of past year, and explore how to go forward into the so-called ‘new normal.’ While the new (June 2020) and successful **Scenario Forum Online Research Colloquia** allowed our field to share research, we wanted to create a forum to specifically address the topic of going digital *and* performative in education. Hence, the 8th Scenario Forum Symposium was born: a space for reflection on the past year, for theoretical explorations, to highlight new practice, give insight into challenges, and to discuss promising paths for the future.

The title “Sore Back, Square Eyes?” coined, at first humorously, resonated with us: Its provocative nature was on the one hand a reflection of the shared experience of the past year, spending many hours teaching in front of the screens. On the other hand, it scrutinizes this very notion by use of the question mark: What were the positive revelations of the past year? This area was what we wanted to address with our symposium, and the contributions exemplified some of the many paths which colleagues have embarked on and will walk on in the future.



What emerged as a potential common ground from many of the contributions is that some element of improvisation was needed over the last year. Teaching staff faced various challenges and had to creatively invent new digital performative approaches, with little to no preparation time and a lot of uncertainty. As was pointed out in many of the presentations, it is precisely in these challenging times that it becomes clear how important an institution-wide support system, as well as a collective approach, is so that the individuals can succeed in their endeavours.

The sense of community was very strong at the symposium: Over two days, more than 70 participants from 17 countries attended twelve paper presentations,

seven workshops and one keynote, and discussed questions around digital and performative teaching and learning. The collegiality of participants, and the inspirational nature of the contributions led us to look very positively at actively integrating digital performative elements in the wider context of teaching and learning in the future.

We would like to thank all participants for their engagement, the **National Forum for the Enhancement for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education** for their kind support, and finally Declan Leonard for his technical expertise and patience.

Dragan Miladinovic & Fionn Woodhouse

Above: More participants at the closing session of the symposium.

DIGITAL BADGE AWARD

On the 14th April, Dr Ciara Staunton of ACE was awarded an Ambassador Digital Badge in recognition of her commitment to professional development for the National Forum, by board member Professor Paul McSweeney. Having herself completed two digital badges from the National Forum in 2020, Ciara co-facilitated the roll out of the two badges in 2021 to over 30 professionals across the Irish Education Sector in the Recognition of Prior Learning.

Pictured right: Dr Ciara Staunton, Adult Continuing Education.





Boole Library, UCC

GUIDELINES ON ENABLING RESEARCH STAFF IN UCC DEVELOP TEACHING SKILLS

University College Cork is committed to the training and development of research staff and recognises that the opportunity to teach is not only beneficial for many researchers in terms of career and skills development but is also a beneficial experience for students, giving a broad exposure to a diverse academic community.

“**Guidelines on Enabling Research Staff in UCC to develop teaching skills**” has been approved by Academic Board and these guidelines are focused particularly on teaching opportunities for early career research staff, however, much of the guidelines will also be relevant to research staff at other levels (Post PhD). For further information click on this link:

www.ucc.ie/en/academicgov/policies/research-policies/

CIRTL strongly represented at EdTech 2021

EdTech 2021 (www.ilta.ie/edtech2021/) was held online on 27-28 May 2021. Ireland’s principal educational technology and digital education conference attracted over 200 delegates from Ireland and abroad and there were over 100 papers across various tracks. CIRTL was well represented with Owen Jump, Ruth Hally and Siobhain O’Neill all presenting their work, insights and research. Owen spoke about ‘Moving Community online: Community based participatory research education in the context of lockdown’. Dr Ruth Hally shared CIRTL’s recent Connected Curriculum Design Sprint experience with a paper entitled ‘Design Sprint: Integrating Civic Engagement and Sustainability into the Curriculum’. Siobhan O’Neill delivered a paper on her recent excellent research on ‘Pandemic Pedagogy: The Impact on Teaching and Learning and Implications for the Future’.



Coming Soon from the Centre for Digital Education

The CDE has been offering a free consultation service to staff since July 2019.

www.ucc.ie/en/digital-ed/advising-staff/consultations/

Staff can fill in an online form and request advice and training on how to improve student learning through technology.

However, starting in June, the CDE will be offering a Digital Education Check Up to all schools in UCC. In collaboration with the Inclusive Learning project being run by James Northridge in the Registrar’s Office, we will be giving schools the opportunity to have the CDE and James sit

down (virtually, initially), review and discuss how you use technology to enable learning in your modules.

Please keep an eye on your emails for further details.

NEW GUIDELINES ON GROUP WORK

A wide range of group work activity takes place across the University and provides valuable learning opportunities for students. As well as strengthening students' capacity with respect to rigorous scholarship, group work facilitates the development of a range of transferable skills which are much sought after by employers (e.g., leadership skills, problem-solving skills, working as part of a team, time management, communication skills, presentation and report writing skills, self-reflection etc). The use of group work, and the emphasis on developing an active, student-centred learning environment through problem based and project-based learning, has increased in recent years. This trend is likely to continue into the future with the strong contemporary focus on "work ready" graduates who have acquired a wide range of skills in the course of their programme of study.

Revisions to the UCC Groupwork Policy have recently been approved by Academic Board. The policy has now been amended into a Guidelines document and is available for staff on the [Academic Policy Portal](#).

The overarching objective of these guidelines is to commend best practice and positive learning outcomes which aim to ensure, inter alia, that an individual student's contribution to group work is accurately assessed and

rewarded and that students are supported in achieving maximum learning from this assessment format.

These guidelines are built around a set of general principles governing the design, delivery and assessment of group work. The guidelines apply to all modules, including those delivered via online / blended learning and should be read in conjunction with UCC's Assessment Framework.

In addition, CIRTl has made available a checklist intended to support good practice in the delivery of group work and organises seminars / workshops on group work and related matters www.ucc.ie/en/cirtl/



Photo by Brooke Cagle on Unsplash



Student and Staff Feedback

Professor Paul McSweeney, Vice President for Learning and Teaching ran a consultation session with UCC's Student's Council on February 23rd and a townhall session with all staff on March 12th 2021. These sessions were entitled 'UCC+2: Digital Education supporting learning in a post-covid university'. The purpose of these sessions was to give students and staff to share their thoughts on the future direction of Digital Education in the context of **UCC 2022 Delivering a Connected University**.

You can read all of the feedback, including answers to ALL questions asked during the Staff session on www.ucc.ie/en/teachlearn/teaching-and-learning-townhall-consultation/



Photograph of West Lodge was published on Twitter by Jack Murphy, UCC, October, 2020.

A hidden history of UCC told to me by the late Mr Michael Holland, former University Curator, was that five families originally lived on the main college grounds. The families of the President and Registrar lived in separate apartments in the East Wing, cleverly concealed by the neo-Gothic façade. The President's apartment opened into the President's Garden. The Registrar's apartment opened into the main quadrangle close to the President's Doorway. Three families of non-teaching staff, who performed general services, lived in three separate gate lodges that marked the entrances to campus.

Hidden Histories of UCC

WEST LODGE, MAIN CAMPUS

By James Cronin

Today, the Centre for the Integration of Research, Teaching and Learning (CIRTL) occupies the historic West Lodge. This was the first gate lodge occupied as a domestic residence by services staff and their families. The original building footprint of the college was the Quadrangle that opened for learning and teaching in 1849. This was the heart of the university and the campus expanded over time from this compact site. In 1864, the main gateway was moved to College Road. The South Lodge was the original gate lodge built to a design commissioned by the Board of Works from Thomas Newenham Deane who designed the Quadrangle with Benjamin Woodward in a neo-Gothic style. The South Lodge formerly housed the Teaching and Learning Unit during the 1990s and, most recently, the Disability Support Services. The current East Lodge at the Western Road entrance was rebuilt on its current location as a direct consequence of the devastating flood of November 1916. Today, this lodge houses the administrative space supporting the Glucksman Gallery.

The West Lodge was built during the expansion of campus from 1880 to 1920, when Queen's College Cork changed its status to University College Cork upon its incorporation into the National University of Ireland, founded in 1908.

The current gate lodge was built in 1924. Its architectural style is domestic neo-Tudor in timber and brick to the gable with a pitched slate roof and red brick chimneystacks. It has roughcast rendered walls with a box bay window to the east. Historic features that survive include tooled limestone window sills, timber windows, and red brick door surrounds that add colour and texture to create a picturesque building. The gate lodge was constrained by its site, but its interior was home to generations of staff families. The lodge was divided into a living room, kitchen and parlour, or reception room, on the first floor with a bedroom at the rear facing onto the river Lee that snakes through the lower grounds of campus. There were two bedrooms downstairs divided by a doorway leading down steps that opened onto an enclosed brick-walled courtyard flanked by out-houses for storage, a privy, and just enough space to hang up a washing line. The West Lodge was home to staff who performed general services for members of the college community. It has also served as an administrative space for the Heritage Office and the Visual Arts Office. The hidden history of the West Lodge is steeped in a tradition of both stewardship and hospitality.

Word of mouth: ‘Not in my wildest dreams did I see myself in UCC’



Donal Feen feels a sense of duty to spread the word about his education journey and his time with UCC ACE. Not because he was asked to, but because if people didn't point him in the right direction, he wouldn't be where he is now.

Donal was going up the escalator in Debenhams one day when he met a woman from his hometown of Cobh. She had finished her degree in UCC and after some chat and congratulations about that achievement, she said, 'Donal, you'll end up in UCC yet... you ought to try ACE'.

'Never in my lifetime will that happen to me,' he replied, and he truly believed those words.

He never thought the day would come but a few tentative enquiries later and next thing, he was there. He was there collecting his student card and getting a feel for life on campus. That first day, he popped into the Boole Library, just for 10 minutes, and then went over to the restaurant. He had, in his own words, a fine dinner and said to himself, 'You know what, I've arrived'.

"If you said to me two or three years ago that I would be in UCC, not in my dreams," says Donal. "And if the

girl up in Debenhams didn't say to me, 'Donal, you ought to try ACE'... I didn't know what ACE was, never heard of it in my life. But she passed the word on to me.

"And I met someone recently I would've come across about two years ago and she's doing a degree in UCC now the last two years because she heard me saying that I'd gone back to school."

So while the escalators in Debenhams may not run anymore, and chance meetings have been put on hold by the Covid-19 pandemic, that word of mouth continues to spread and improve the prospects of those who hear it.

ACE wasn't the first point of contact for Donal's return to education almost four decades since dropping out of school at a young age. He went on to spend 34 years with the Department of Defence civilian section working at Haulbowline until his early retirement in 2012.

"When I retired, I'd a brilliant reference but I'd no qualification, no Junior Cert, no Inter Cert, no Group Cert, nothing. It was a void really. I started from scratch at 57 and every year I've been involved in study on some course or another. And every college and establishment was very encouraging."

He started off in the Altrusa Literacy Scheme on Douglas Street, working one-to-one for eight months on areas he struggled with academically, like English grammar. From there, he was guided towards Youthreach on Dean Street, where he took eight subjects and found the system of continuous learning suited his mind.

That opened the door to the College of Commerce, where he did courses on computer skills, counselling skills, and substance use issues in youth and community work. It was there the opportunity of going to UCC was raised.

Above: Donal Feen at home in Cobh with his Certificate in Mental Health in the Community after UCC's virtual conferring ceremony last November.

“I remember looking at a chart in Youthreach and I was at the bottom, down at Level 1, and I never thought for one minute that I’d ever go to Level 4 or 5, and go above the Leaving Cert, up to Level 6.”

He took up the Certificate in Mental Health in the Community, a course that provides a uniquely safe space for those who study it, bringing together, as it tends to do, a mixture of those with personal experiences of mental health issues, people with family members who’ve died by suicide, and those working and volunteering in the sector.

Many of the lecturers, too, have lived experience of mental health difficulties and personal recovery, combining the academic and the practical in the classroom. “Every lecturer was very open and there was a lot of honesty there, kept in the room, but they weren’t afraid to tell us a bit about themselves either.”

When graduation plans were disrupted by Covid, Donal and his classmates were able to graduate via a live-streamed ceremony last November. In his graduation gown, Donal was joined at home by his two children, who inspired him

with their own degrees and career paths, and grandchildren, and while the lecturers could not be there to congratulate them, there was still, and remains, contact.

“I was able to email them the pictures and they were thrilled. An awful lot of support, and they’d say, ‘we might see you next year’, or ‘let us know how you’re doing’.

“Good support, good follow-up. You weren’t just dropped away, ‘oh, this is it now, good luck’.

“They were brilliant, totally different to what I would’ve expected, not because I didn’t expect anything but because I didn’t know what to expect.

“Everyone, from the girl answering the phone to the security guard standing at the library, they couldn’t be helpful enough. Every one of them was just perfect and I’ll tell you now, I will go back.

“It was a great experience. You can see why it is so successful. But it was something beyond my wildest dreams that I would end up in there.”

A NEW OUTLOOK ON LIFE

Where once there was a void is now a growing surplus. He speaks over the phone with 14 certificates scattered across the table in front of him, and no plans to stop.

The Wellness Recovery Action Plan programme is his next aim, while he continues volunteering in Cobh Youth Services as he has done over the past three years.

“I chipped away at it one course at a time. And sometimes I struggled with it. When you start going into Level 5 and 6, it’s a big step up. The word UCC, you’d be afraid of it.

“But once you got in the door, the lecturers, everyone, they were so helpful. I emailed them all when I finished and I thanked them for the courtesy they had.

“There was no age barrier with education. People were just delighted to go back. The attraction was everyone inside there wanted to be there. And we didn’t realise the skills we had outside of not having the education on paper.

“My learning journey has given me a new outlook on life and it gives you skills for a rewarding career because it allows me now to go into an area, the youth and community sector, and that’s where my interests lie.

“It gives you a lot more confidence. And it gives me a choice of work now, that I can produce a UCC Level 6 cert whereas I couldn’t before.”

It’s funny, he remarks, that day one on his education journey he was told, ‘Donal, you’re going to end up working with kids’. The default response was returned, ‘That’ll never happen’.

But unbeknown to him, he had many of the skills all along. The likes of teamwork and outside-the-box thinking, honed in his previous career and through life in general, rather than picked up in a classroom. The bit of paper was proof, as much as anything, of how much he has to contribute.

The 2020 Farmer of the Year planning to future-proof her business



When an interview was suggested with ACE student, Caroline Walsh last spring, it came with a warning that finding the time for a chat may be a challenge.

The 2020 Grassland Farmer of the Year was in the midst of calving season on the farm near Ballinascarthy, with the unexpected challenge of home-schooling five children, while also pursuing her studies in UCC, with an assignment due at the end of the month.

Picking up the phone in the middle of sorting out pedigree certs for heifers, Caroline cautions that she has about seven minutes to spare so when someone calls to the door three minutes later, it just underlines how many aspects there are to juggle in this lockdown life.

That she keeps them all going and calls back for double that allotted time is the merest microcosm of the efficient operation she is running in West Cork.

Caroline has always had many strings to her bow, as a reality TV show-winner on the second series of TG4's popular Feirm Factor in 2010 and as inventor of the award-winning O'Neill Calf and Sheep Staller, which she developed with her uncle John after seeing her mother repeatedly suffering from a bad back when catching and feeding calves.

Always innovating and looking ahead to the next trend, Caroline has been studying the Diploma in Environment, Sustainability, and Climate since last autumn.

The course itself is particularly innovative in its partnership with the Carbery Greener Dairy programme, of which Caroline is a member. A Recognition of Prior Learning process means the farmers' practical expertise and skills gained through their participation in the programme are academically recognised.

The farmers are awarded 60% of the credits needed for UCC's Level 7 diploma, with exemptions for

modules relating to environmental law, environmental impact, environmental monitoring, ecology, and climate, while studying modules relating to geology, GIS [Geographic Information System] mapping, sustainable development, and social policy.

Caroline joined in the third cohort of Carbery farmers to enrol in the course, a decision she jokes was a "higher form of lunacy".

"I said I'd do it to enhance my knowledge of environmental science and soil management more than anything.

"You'd be trying to have a better understanding of it because if you can understand it, you might be able to figure out how better to manage it."

That understanding is already evident in Caroline's work, with the judges for the Grassland Farmer of the Year award noting her emphasis on increasing the amount of grass grown on the farm and improving

Above: Grassland Farmer of the Year for 2020 Caroline Walsh (second left) pictured on the farm in Ballinascarthy with her husband Joe, children Louise, Daniel, Leanne, Katelyn, Conor, and her mother-in-law Ann. Picture: Donal O'Leary, Irish Farmers Journal

the quality of that grass. Her focus on raising profit margins and sustainability has seen Caroline reduce cow numbers from a peak of 80 in 2018 to 64 cows for 2021.

CLIMATE CHANGE

But with the help of what she’s learning in UCC, she’s already planning ahead for more changes to her grass-growing strategy.

She already measures the grass every week so she can quantify how productive each paddock is and where needs attention, while clover has been incorporated into the grassland sward as it contributes to nitrogen fixation from the air into the soil. That means less chemical nitrogen is needed, while using protected urea leads to less emissions.

“We re-seed every year. There’s a great grass variety there, AberGain/AberChoice, and it grows a serious amount of grass but the sward is

very open. If we’re meant to get a higher predictive rainfall because of the impact of climate change, I don’t know whether that variety will stand the test of time.

“If there’s going to be more rain then the soil needs to be more porous and root structures need to be better because there’s no point in growing a whole load of grass if you can’t graze it, if it’s going to be damaged easier. So the grassland species you use might be different.

“In a drier year, you could have cows out the 20th of January but the ground needs to dry to let the soil structure be capable of carrying the weight of a cow. That all goes back to your root structure and understanding how permeable your soil is, your rocks underneath it, everything.

“It’s a big picture and the course has enabled me to get a better understanding of it.”
It is a holistic view, and Caroline is

equally invested in making gains whether it’s genetics or grazing, but it has to be a business built on a solid ground.

Another area Caroline has embraced through the course is the possibilities of GIS mapping, the subject of that impending assignment.

“I didn’t think it could be used in the agricultural industry or realise you could map so much data,” she says, pointing to the picture that could be created for disease control by mapping positive cases.

“Information is critical and I just think GIS mapping could be used a lot more in the agricultural industry.”

For the national BVD eradication scheme, areas with a cluster of positives could be targeted for a control programme, and for dealing with the likes of Johne’s Disease, which can affect dairy herds, publicly mapping positives could

inform farmers’ risk assessments when buying from herds.

With so much going on, the return to the classroom, albeit virtually, has posed a challenge.

“It was all fine until the home-schooling came on stream so now you have to prioritise. There’s an essay due for the end of February, there’s cows calving, there’s children needing to be home-schooled, so you have to say right, they’re a priority. But hopefully it’ll all get done in the finish up.

“The course itself is great for anyone to do because the importance of environmental management, biodiversity, and climate change in the whole agricultural industry is just going to evolve.

“It’s like the new buzzword, to protect what’s here before us and to be sustainable going forward, and I think there’s going to be massive prospects for jobs in it.”

And finally...

There is something in the air in the OVPLT at the moment... babies galore!
The Language Centre welcomed three new members to its extended family in May...
Julie and her partner are the proud parents of twins Arlo Jack and Elio Robin Butters, and Michelle and her partner have Dylan James Minguet Finn.
Congratulations to both new families!