Welcome to the latest edition of our school newsletter. This edition contains a variety of stories from the academic year. Of particular note in this edition was the inaugural Staff Student Fun Run in April (two participants pictured at the event opposite — more detail on page 8).

Over the last few months both staff and students have been awarded research prizes (see pages 2 & 8).

More recently the BSc in Psychology was accredited by the Psychology Society of Ireland (see page 6).

Read about the very successful psychology students Disability Project on page 9.

We also celebrated 10 years of the BSc in Nursing in January (see page 6).

Some colleagues who attended the celebrations are pictured below.

We welcome feedback on this newsletter and if you would like to contribute, please contact the editor.

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PISA Project

The beginning of the current academic year was a busy time for members of the DCU suicide research team, many of whom are based in the School of Nursing and Human Sciences. In September, we were delighted to welcome Yvonne Bergmans, Suicide Intervention Consultant at the Suicide Studies Unit, St Michael’s University Hospital Toronto, to DCU. The suicide research team are presently carrying out a mixed methods study evaluating the individual response to, and effectiveness and acceptability of a Psychosocial/Psycho educational Intervention for people with recurrent Suicide Attempts (PISA). The PISA intervention was developed by Yvonne with Prof Paul Links and has been in operation at St Michael’s Hospital since February 1999. Yvonne and Paul visited Ireland in 2009 to train a number of clinicians from four project sites in the delivery of PISA (i.e., HSE South Tipperary, Waterford and Wexford; St Vincent’s Psychiatric Hospital, Fairview and Mater Hospital).

During the visit, Yvonne provided advanced training to the Irish facilitators, this enabling them to train others in the delivery of PISA groups and sustain the intervention in their local area. She also visited Waterford where she delivered an insightful presentation on the PISA programme to HSE staff and attended a number of meetings with members of the suicide research team. Yvonne’s knowledge, energy and enthusiasm provided a terrific boost to all involved in the PISA project as we enter the final year of this project.

For more information on PISA project please go to www.pisa.dcu.ie.

Veronica Lambert Receives Jozien Bensing Research Award

Recently our colleague Veronica Lambert was awarded the Jozien Bensing Research Award for talented early career research at a ceremony at the European Association of Communication in Health Care Conference at St Andrews Scotland. This is the third time that award has been given out and the first time a nurse has received it.

ACCLAIM Programme 2012

DCU hosted its first transition and orientation programme for those on the Autism Spectrum, including Asperger’s, entering University.

The orientation ran in August. The local coordinators, Dr Mary Rose Sweeney and Professor Anthony Staines were committed to establishing and running this programme from the DCU campus.

Participants planning on taking up a place in any University in Ireland were eligible to apply and was open to anyone on the Autism Spectrum regardless of whether they disclosed this on their CAO documentation.

For more information contact
Dr Mary Rose Sweeney, maryrose.sweeney@dcu.ie
Mary Rose Sweeney, Lecturer in Health Systems Research in the School of Nursing and Human Sciences, at DCU, recently lead a study, published this August in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, to examine the levels of Folic Acid in the older Irish population, exposed to a food supply which is extensively fortified with folic acid.

In some countries such as Canada and the USA mandatory folic acid fortification of flour was commenced in response to research findings which showed that neural tube defects, such as spina bifida could be prevented by taking folic acid prior to becoming pregnant. Ireland did not go down the mandatory fortification route and instead a culture of very extensive voluntary fortification emerged.

Cells would not normally encounter the synthetic form of the vitamin in nature so some safety issues arise, including pernicious anaemia masking and possible cancer acceleration. Elderly people are at risk in both of these scenarios.

As part of this study fasting blood samples were collected from people between 60-86 years of age. Dietary intake data specifically relating to folic acid consumption was also collected. These blood samples were analysed for levels of unmetabolised folic acid. The study showed that over 90% of the elderly group had low levels of unmetabolised folic acid in their blood samples, even though they had been fasting overnight.

These findings suggest a persistence presence of the synthetic vitamin in blood.

If mandatory fortification goes ahead on top of this wide-spread voluntary fortification it would undoubtedly exacerbate the levels.

The consequences of these low levels of unmetabolised folic acid in blood are currently unclear but Dr Sweeney said that “this findings should be considered by those with responsibility for policy in this area”.

The psychology students here in the school were successful in their bid to host the 2014 Psychological Society of Ireland Annual Student Congress in DCU. It was really a significant achievement to get the congress. This is a fantastic achievement on their part and represents a wonderful opportunity to continue to build on the profile of Psychology in DCU.
This year's Health4Life conference at the HELIX, profiled some of the outcomes and activities particularly relating to the Schools research cluster 'Understanding and Transforming Practice'. Hosted by the School in association with the Mental Health Trialogue Network Ireland and D'Illusionary Players, the focus was on research and practice around communication across the life span. In keeping with this focus it was more of an interactive event than academic symposium. It explored oppressive dysfunctional communications in care and societal settings that consciously or unconsciously leads to marginalization and increased discrimination in societies. People, families and care professionals with an interest in or connection to youth, dementia, intellectual disability and mental health were the main representative conference participants. More info at [www.dcu.ie/nursing/TD](http://www.dcu.ie/nursing/TD)

The day started with the D'Illusionary Players 'Theatre of the Oppressed' putting on four micro performances that bring to the surface oppressive communications with the targeted four groups of people in society; and through exploration with the audience considering how communication could be improved. Further workshop exploration of perceptions and how they affect communications provided an inroad to the afternoon events that were initially geared towards identifying how legislative structures and language further enable oppression and marginalization. As the afternoon unfolded the practice of Open Dialogue as an effective open communication process was explored and the example of Trialogue was utilized as a demonstration of how oppression, discrimination and marginalization can be overcome. The presentations and performances from the day can be viewed at [www.trialogue.co](http://www.trialogue.co).

As part of the conference proceedings The Mental Health Trialogue Network Ireland (MHTNI) launched their report, 'Transforming Dialogue in Mental Health Communities'. According to the report, Trialogue offers a wonderful and creative mechanism for mental health promotion 'in the community to the community with the community'. It also helps to bring about a greater understanding of how to cope and manage mental health problems, making the community more aware of what is positive and what is lacking in mental health service provision and increasing awareness of the experience of stigma and discrimination in communities.
Research Developments

Dónal O’Mathúna, Senior Lecturer in the School, has coordinated a successful application to the EU COST programme. The project will address ethical issues arising in the delivery of healthcare and conducting of research during disasters. The proposal was developed with Professor Bert Gordijn from DCU’s Institute of Ethics, partners from 12 countries, and the involvement of WHO, UNESCO and the International Red Cross. Entitled “Disaster Bioethics: addressing ethical issues triggered by disasters,” the project was approved in 2012. COST is the oldest and widest European intergovernmental framework for collaborative research. It funds the development of networks to address new fields of research. Each project is known as a COST Action, and these are organised into nine domains. Disaster Bioethics falls into the Individuals, Societies, Cultures and Health domain. The project now involves 26 countries and had its first working meeting at DCU April 25-26, 2013.

The Disaster Bioethics Action aims to improve ethical decision-making for disasters by gathering knowledge of the ethical dilemmas encountered in disaster settings and by developing training materials and resources for tackling these dilemmas. Funded for four years, the Action will bring together ethicists, researchers, healthcare professionals, disaster responders, NGOs and international humanitarian organisations to identify and address relevant ethical issues. These include mechanisms for doing triage in the field, developing training materials to help reduce moral distress among disaster responders, and developing guidelines for the review and conduct of research in disaster settings. Further information is available on the COST website at http://www.cost.eu/domains_actions/isch/Actions/IS1201 and at the Action website at http://disasterbioethics.eu/.
Accreditation of BSc in Psychology

On the 11th March 2013, the Psychological Society of Ireland formally ratified the accreditation of the BSc in Psychology at their council meeting. We were given accreditation for the maximum of five years and without any recommendations for changes. This is a resounding statement of support for the programme and a huge testament to all concerned.

970 graduate nurses later ….

On 23 of Jan we had a celebration of 10 years of the BSc in nursing here in DCU. The programme had contributions for the school academic staff, clinical staff from the hospitals. Our two guest speakers were Dr Kathleen McLellan from the Department of Health who spoke about the future plans for nurse education in Ireland following the recent publication of the review of the BSc in Nursing. Our second speaker was Ms Anne Cody from CEART (a patient empowerment organisation) who presented a selection of patient stories about their experiences with nurses. They are pictured with Denise Proudfoot (Director of Quality and Public Relations) and Dr Gerry Moore (Head of School). Also at the event Ronan Clabby one of our 2nd year student nurses was presented with a Bursary from the Beaumont Foundation.
Second Year Student Nurse Conference at School of Nursing & Human Sciences

Pictures above are some of the second year nursing students who took part in a recent conference which was part of core BSc in Nursing module. Joanne Cleary-Holdforth coordinated this and over 200 students took part in this learning initiative, which formed the assessment of the Personal and Professional Development module in 2nd year. Students completed abstracts, posters and oral presentations as part of the conference. Topics covered by the students included a variety of professional related issues including evidence based practice, safe medication management, reflection, record keeping, informed consent, confidentiality and health and safety in the workplace, to mention a few. The conference went very well, with students doing both themselves and their educators very proud indeed. Congratulations to the 2nd years on their participation in this innovative assessment strategy.
FIRST PRIZE FOR SNHS STUDENT

At a recent Faculty of Public Health meeting in the Royal College of Physicians, Ann Reilly, a second year Health and society student, pictured with Dr Mary Rose Sweeney, won for her presentation on her study about healthy weight maintenance.

FUN RUN

The inaugural 5km fun run organised by the School of Nursing and Human Sciences took place on Wednesday 17th November in Albert Park. The event was a great success with over 100 students and staff taking part in this fun event. It had the dual purpose of promoting staff and student engagement through participation in a fun social activity and raising funds for DCU Access, Outreach and Sports Scholarship Programmes. While the event was open to all students and staff, most of the participants were from the School of Nursing & Human Sciences.

The winner was Dan Mera, a business student, followed closely by intellectual disability nursing student Thomas Kelly. The first girl to cross the finish line was Orla Duff, a first general nursing student, with Kate McCarthy in close pursuit. Declan Raftery, Chief Operating Officer, was the first member of staff to finish. Some very respectable times were recorded by lecturers from our own school with Donal O’Mathuna, Mark Philbin and Liam Mac Gabhann among the early finishers. Flying the flag for the ladies, Catherine McGonagle crossed the line with a personal best for the distance. Other members of staff took a more leisurely approach, taking time to enjoy the natural beauty of the park. Refreshments were served after the race and spot prizes, donated by the business community on campus, were presented. Pictured are participants at the commencement of the race and some delighted finishers.
Psychology students’ present their experiences of being a wheelchair user in Dublin City

On Thursday, 4th April, a group of third year Psychology students gave a public talk in which they outlined their experiences of a disability exercise they had undertaken in semester one. The students, who participated in this learning activity as part of their module called ‘Psychology, Illness and Disability’, spent time using wheelchairs in order to explore some of the personal, social and practical issues involved. Some students spent a day in their wheelchair at DCU; others ventured into the city centre as well, even taking public transport!

Their activity was picked up by RTÉ Radio’s Mooney Show, and the students were featured on the program in January 2013 following a day in the city centre in their wheelchairs. We were accompanied for the day by Brenda Donohue, a reporter and presenter on the Mooney Show, who recorded. The radio feature was a great success and the topics which were highlighted by the students led to the Mooney Show running more programs to deal with them.

Following the success of the activity, and in response to the generosity of various groups and individuals at DCU and in the community, the students wanted to share their experiences with the broader community as well as those groups and individuals who were involved. We hosted a reception on the evening of the 4th of April, followed by the talk, and were delighted to host guests from various organisations, including DCU and School of Nursing and Human Sciences, RTÉ, the Irish Wheelchair Association, and the Ballyfermot College of Further Education. Reaction to the students’ talk was overwhelming positive and they did a marvellous job representing the School and DCU.

Pictured below: Members of the Psychology team and Psychology students with special guest Olan McGowan, Senior Producer of the Mooney Show, RTÉ Radio 1 following the talk.
Cappagh National Orthopaedic Hospital is Ireland’s major centre for elective orthopaedic surgery. Cappagh has been the pioneer of orthopaedic surgery in Ireland and is now the biggest dedicated orthopaedic hospital in the country. The hospital provides elective orthopaedic services for St. Vincent’s Hospital, Mater Hospital, Beaumont Hospital, Connolly Hospital, The Children’s Hospital Temple Street, Central Remedial Clinic and other tertiary referrals.

The 15th National Orthopaedic Nurses’ Conference took place in the Lady Martin Auditorium at Cappagh on April 17th this year and was attended by nurses practicing in dedicated orthopaedic centres and affiliated areas in both Ireland and the UK. Co-ordinated by a former DCU (post-grad) nursing student, Ms. Caroline Kilcoyne (Education Facilitator), it was a wonderfully informative and discursive conference providing an eclectic mix of nursing, medical and academic presentations. Nurses from around the country delivered inspiring presentations that illustrated the clinical initiatives that they are spear-heading which are yielding significant improvements in both the patient experience and outcomes in the area of orthopaedics, not only in treating orthopaedic conditions, but also in their prevention.

In addition, some very exciting papers were presented on the areas of pelvic / acetabular trauma, spinal cord monitoring and the remarkable advances that are forging ahead in the area of radiological procedures for the treatment of orthopaedic conditions.

Notably, the keynote address was delivered by two lecturers from the School of Nursing & Human Sciences at DCU. Ms. Therese Leufer and Ms. Jo-anne Cleary-Holdforth were invited to address the principles and practice of EBP with a specific focus on orthopaedics. The conference was superbly co-ordinated and proved to be very successful, generating much debate and discussion and receiving very positive feedback from attendees.