



National University of Ireland, Galway
Ollscoil na hÉireann, Gaillimh

Ollscéala

Nuachtlitir Foirne - Staff Newsletter

Feabhra 2005

Múscailt - Celebrating the Arts on Campus



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Múscailt, NUI Galway's annual Springtime Arts Festival took place earlier this month with an exciting programme of events including music, dance, theatre, film and the visual arts. The wealth of talent in the student societies combined with performances from well-known, established artists resulted in a very successful festival.

Pictured: Arlene Murphy and Liam Hennelly members of the cast of the musical The Boyfriend which was presented in the Black Box Theatre throughout festival week.

Focal ón Eagarthóir

Anois teacht an Earraigh... welcome to the Spring edition of *Ollscéala!* The joy of Spring has truly been celebrated on campus with the exuberance and creativity of Múscaillt, NUI Galway's Springtime Arts Festival that's going from strength to strength. The student societies are to be complimented for presenting a comprehensive programme of events, which appealed to a wide audience.

In this issue, you will find details of the University's successful outreach programmes, engaging both children (pages 3 and 7) and adults (page 6) in creative initiatives. Lots of news also about staff and students, who have launched books, won awards and contributed in various ways to university life.

As usual, many thanks to all of you who submitted news items for this edition of *Ollscéala*.

Máire Mhic Uidhir,
Editor.

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Ollscoil na hÉireann, Gaillimh.
Tel. 091-750418 Fax: 091-750521
E-mail: maire.mhicuidhir@nuigalway.ie

Soroptimist International inaugurate Educational Scholarship at NUI Galway



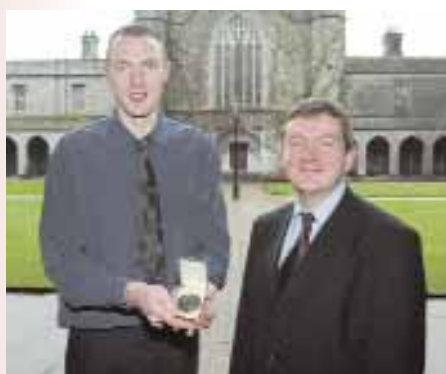
Pictured from left are, Carmel Garrett, President of the Galway branch of Soroptimist International, Elaine Scahill and Professor John Marshall, Dean, Faculty of Arts, NUI Galway.

The Galway branch of Soroptimist International has inaugurated an international scholarship in NUI Galway, the first of which, valued at €1,250, has been presented to BA International student Elaine Scahill.

The scholarship will be presented annually to a student entering the third year (Year Abroad) of the University's BA International programme. Elaine is spending her study abroad year in the University of Brest, Brittany. In this first year of the scholarship, Erasmus Students in the Faculty of Celtic Studies were invited to apply for the scholarship and to submit a 400-word personal statement in either Irish or English on the theme of 'Joy of Achievement,' this being one of the Soroptimists' ideals.

As part of the conditions of the Scholarship, when she returns to Ireland, Elaine Scahill will write and present a 1,000-word essay on 'Women Survivors of War'. This topic was chosen because the current Soroptimist International project is *Project Independence: Women Survivors of War*. The project aims to raise more than \$1.2 million over the next four years to assist women survivors of war in Afghanistan, Bosnia and Rwanda.

Bioengineering award for Computer models of bones



Pictured: Noel Harrison (left) and Professor Peter McHugh, Department of Mechanical and Biomedical Engineering.

Noel Harrison, a PhD student in Mechanical and Biomedical Engineering has been awarded the Bronze Medal of the Section of Bioengineering of the Royal Academy of Medicine in Ireland for presenting the best overall paper at the annual Bioengineering in Ireland Conference in Dublin recently. This is a significant achievement as 86 papers were presented, from third level institutions across the country, both North and South.

The winning presentation, entitled "Automated Finite Element Voxel Mesh Generation" describes a method of generating highly detailed computer models of bones to help engineers understand how bones deform and how they might fracture when subjected to the forces of daily life.

The models are particularly useful in the study of osteoporosis, which is a disease that causes weakening of bones and that can be partially detected using CT or MRI scans. Using the models, engineers will be able to quantify the extent to which the disease reduces the amount of force a bone can carry, and they will also be able to quantify how effective drug treatments are in counteracting the effects of osteoporosis and improving bone strength.

Noel Harrison is studying for his PhD under the guidance of Professor Peter McHugh at the National Centre for Biomedical Engineering Science (NCBES) and has received an Embark Initiative Postgraduate Research Scholarship, from the Irish Research Council for Science, Engineering and Technology.

Fun and games help break barriers to educational achievement



Pupils of St. Michael's Boys School, Mervue on the climbing wall in Áras na Mac Léinn.

Children as young as eight years old are currently the youngest students attending NUI Galway. They are participating in the Access Office's "Sport for Success" programme and enjoying every minute of it. Following one hour of concentrated homework, they rush to the sports hall for a game of soccer, uni-hockey, Thai-bo, or flex their muscles on the climbing wall. The programme is a combined sport and homework initiative aimed at 8-12 year olds and has been running successfully since 2001. "The aim of the programme is to break the cycle of educational disadvantage through

early intervention and to encourage pupils to remain in school and complete their education, as well as promote and increase their interest in third-level education", says Imelda Byrne, NUI Galway's Access Officer. This year's participants are Scoil Bhride, Shantalla and Holy Trinity Girls School and St. Michael's Boys School, Mervue.

Approximately 54 pupils from each school are participating in the programme that is specifically aimed at pupils from 4th, 5th and 6th classes who participate in a 6-week programme over three years.

Pupils also develop personally by building their self-esteem, confidence, communication skills and social behaviour through team games and sport activities in addition to their school curriculum. The pupils are helped with their homework by Access and Undergraduate students, who act as mentors to the pupils for the duration of the programme. After homework is completed, the pupils are rewarded with an hour of exciting sports and fun team-building games. The six-week programme concludes with a 'graduation' ceremony, where awards and certificates are presented to the pupils.

Defining borders in European Literature and Culture



Pictured are from left, Dr Deirdre Byrnes, Department of German; Dr Richard Robinson, University of East Anglia; Professor Michael Cronin, DCU; and Ruadhán Cooke, Department of French.

The Regional Centre for Modern Languages, NUI Galway, held a one-day, interdisciplinary conference in January, entitled "Borders and Margins: (Re)defining Space and Place in European Literary and Cultural Discourses." The keynote address, "Holograms, Cosmopolites and Tipping Points: Windows on Europe," was given by Professor Michael Cronin, Director of the Centre for Translation and Textual Studies, DCU, while the guest speaker, Dr Richard Robinson, from the School of Literature and Creative Writing,

University of East Anglia, spoke about "European Border Space in the Interwar Fiction of D.H. Lawrence, Italo Svevo and Joseph Roth".

The conference, organised by Dr Deirdre Byrnes, Department of German, and Ruadhán Cooke, Department of French, was supported by the Faculty of Arts, the Office of the Dean of Research, and the Centre for the Study of Human Settlement and Historical Change.

In brief...

Leabhar Gramadaí Gaeilge
Seo leabhar gramadaí Gaeilge i mBéarla leis an Ollamh Nollaig Mac Cóngáil, Scoil na Gaeilge, bunaithe ar na rialacha gramadaí atá le fáil i bhfoclóir Gaeilge-Béarla Néill Uí Dhónaill ina gcuirtear rialacha gramadaí i láthair ar bhealach díreach sothuigthe. This is a grammar book in English, by An tOllamh Nollaig Mac Cóngáil, Scoil na Gaeilge, based on the grammatical principles presented in Niall Ó Dónaill's Irish-English dictionary. The rules of Irish grammar are presented in a clear, easy-to-understand manner.

MIBE for Galway Woman
Margaret Whoriskey, from Salthill, a graduate in Psychology from NUI Galway, was awarded an MIBE in the British New Years Honours List, in December 2004. Margaret, who lives in Edinburgh, is a former Commissioner, Mental Welfare Commission for Scotland. She received the award for services to mental health and to disabled people.

Second edition of book
The second edition of 'From Civil Rights to Armalites', by Niall Ó Dochartaigh, Department of Political Science and Sociology, has been published. It includes a new chapter on the Bloody Sunday Inquiry.

Irish Academy of Management appointment
Professor Roy Green, Dean of the Faculty of Commerce, has been appointed Chair of the Irish Academy of Management.

Archaeology publications provide new insights on the past



Pictured from left are, Dr Elizabeth FitzPatrick, the President and Professor John Waddell, Department of Archaeology.

The strong publication record of the Department of Archaeology was emphasised this month with the launch of two books within a couple of days of each other. *Archaeological Investigations in Galway City 1987-1998*, is edited by Elizabeth FitzPatrick, Madeline O'Brien and Paul Walsh and was launched in Galway City Hall by Dr Pat Wallace, Director of the National Museum.

Evidence of Galway's strong trading links with France, Spain and Portugal in medieval times is provided in this volume which is the outcome of the Galway Excavations Project (GEP), established at the Department of Archaeology,

NUI Galway in 1998 in order to publish the results of seventy-nine licensed archaeological investigations conducted by contract archaeologists in Galway city from 1987 to 1998. It describes the background to the project and presents the reports of 27 archaeologists on their findings from the archaeological excavations, monitoring, trial-trenching and architectural surveys conducted by them, and specialist reports on the artefacts and human, faunal and environmental remains compiled by 35 archaeological specialists. Supported by the Heritage Council and by Galway Corporation, this book gives us a vivid picture of Galway's rich medieval past.

The second book, *Royal Inauguration in Gaelic Ireland* is by Dr Elizabeth FitzPatrick and looks at the places on the Irish landscape chosen for the inauguration of kings and the election of chiefs in the period 1100-1600 and features the inauguration sites in the lordships of the O'Neills, O'Donnells, Maguires, Magennis, McMahons, Burkes and O'Briens. It also views the Irish sites and inauguration practices in relation to royal assembly culture in Britain and greater Europe and concludes with an account of the circumstances that brought about the demise of royal inauguration in Gaelic Ireland.

Remembering a former President



Pictured from left are, Máirtín, An tAthair Éamonn, Mike and Johnny Newell.

The last President to live on campus - in the corner of the Quadrangle - was Dr. Máirtín Ó Tnúthail (Martin Newell), who lived there from 1960 until 1975. To honour his memory, the President and Rosaleen Ó Muirheartaigh recently hosted a special occasion in the President's area of the Quad (which was

the residence of President Newell while he was President). The event was attended by President Newell's four sons, including Professor Máirtín L. Newell, Department of Mathematics and many of their children, including Dr John Newell of the Department of Mathematics, and grand-children.

Conference Office introduces on-line booking system

NUI Galway's Conference Office has recently introduced a new website which can be viewed at <http://www.conference.ie>. This site includes an on-line booking facility for abstract submission, delegate registration and accommodation registration.

Conferences and seminars can be very effective in raising the profile of individual departments. However, organisation of conferences and seminars can also be very complex and time-consuming. This new booking system is user friendly and will assist in the following areas;

- planning and implementing conferences of all sizes
- receipt of abstracts and delegate registrations on-line, hence removing a lot of the paperwork involved
- providing general information to conference attendees such as access to Galway, tourism in the west of Ireland, climate, etc.

If you are considering organising a conference or seminar in the near future and would like further information on this package or general information on the conference facilities at the University, please contact Patricia Walsh. Email: tricia.walsh@nuigalway.ie Ext. 3467.

Civic Engagement and Service Learning conference

The 3rd Annual Teaching and Learning International Conference on Civic Engagement and Service Learning will take place in NUI Galway on the 23rd and 24th June 2005. The conference will address the civic mission of higher education, focussing on the links between universities, students and the wider society. Speakers from Ireland, the US, South Africa and the UK will address the conference and issues to be explored include embedding service learning activity in academic programmes; civic education, voluntarism and participative democracy; and the practical issues of implementation, curriculum design and assessment.

NUI Galway Entrance Scholarships reward academic excellence



Entrance Scholarship winners with the President and members of academic staff.

Entrance scholarships have been awarded to 67 first-year students based on the results of the 2004 Leaving Certificate. The wide geographical spread of the winners is most notable. While 29 of them come from Co. Galway, the winners are drawn from 16 counties, from Carlow to Donegal and from Antrim to Cork. The scholars are students from 52 individual schools

highlighting the fact that academic talent is to be found in a wide range of schools, large and small, throughout the country.

Entrance Scholarships are guaranteed to all new entrants who reach 560 points (or 575 in Engineering and 590 in Medicine and Health Sciences). In addition to a cheque for €1,375 each winning student was presented

with a specially designed scroll by the President to mark their achievement.

This year NUI Galway has also introduced a University Scholar Scheme, under which the title of University Scholar will be conferred on students who attain a stated Honours standard in their University examination.

Star student scoops Peel Prize



Pictured from left are, Eoin Shaughnessy, recipient; Professor Jim Ward, Vice-President for Physical Resources; and Dr Ros Dixon, Department of English.

Eoin Shaughnessy, a second-year BA student in English and Philosophy, has won the Peel Prize at NUI Galway. His essay entitled "Irresistible Forces, Immovable Objects: Eliot and Wilde in Conflict," scooped the award valued at €1,000. Eoin, a past-pupil of St Paul's Secondary School, Oughterard, Co Galway, won first place in Ireland in the Leaving Certificate in 2003.

New-look Postgraduate Prospectus launched



Pictured from left are, Professor Jim Browne, Registrar; Valerie Leahy, Postgraduate Admissions Officer; and Mike Kavanagh, Registrar's Office who chaired the postgraduate prospectus working group.

For the first time the postgraduate prospectus has been published in individual faculty format. The prospectuses for Arts, Commerce, Science, Engineering, and Medicine & Health Sciences, provide detailed, comprehensive information on each programme, on faculty research centres and ancillary services. Already the feedback is most positive from prospective students at the many careers and postgraduate exhibitions where the prospectuses have been distributed. A key objective of the University's Strategic Plan is to achieve a significant increase in postgraduate student numbers, including research degree students.

Numbers of Chinese students to increase



Pictured from left are, Professor Zhou Ji, Minister for Education of the People's Republic of China; Ms. Mary Hanafin, TD, Minister for Education and Science; and Professor Jim Browne, Registrar.

Registrar and Deputy President, Professor Jim Browne, represented NUI Galway on the recent Irish trade mission to China, led by An Taoiseach Mr. Bertie Ahern. A key focus of the visit was to increase the numbers of Chinese students in Irish universities and this was supported by the presence of university representatives on the mission.

During the course of a very successful visit, Professor Browne renewed longstanding contacts with colleagues in Tsinghua University and Harkin Institute of Technology, and met with seven alumni of NUI Galway all of whom are Ph.Ds and Masters graduates who

studied in CIMRU over the years. This group will form the core of a new NUI Galway alumni chapter in Beijing. Professor Browne also met with five educational agents who are interested in representing NUI Galway in China. It is expected that these agents, once appointed, will market the University's programmes in China. A key meeting of the representatives of Irish universities took place with Professor Zhou Ji, Minister for Education of the People's Republic of China, who had worked on a joint EU-China R&D project with Professor Browne in the early to mid 1990s.

Putting community development theory to work



Pictured: Martin Ward receiving his diploma from the President.

When Martin Ward, former Mayor of Tuam and Youth worker with the Tuam Travellers' Education Centre, undertook the NUI Galway Diploma in Community Development Practice, he decided to focus his project on facilities for the town's young Travellers. Through his research, he was aware of young Traveller boys becoming involved in 'driving horses'. The boys would tackle up the ponies and drive them through

town. As they lacked skill and supervision this became a dangerous hobby. Martin began to explore the possibility of establishing a community equine centre. His project outlined the necessity to involve people with horse care and to provide the means to develop the traditional skills, which have been lost to young Travellers in Tuam.

With the support of NUI Galway Course Co-ordinator, Jacqueline Murphy and Galway Rural Development, an application was made to the Dormant Accounts fund and a sum of €238,480 has been awarded. This will go towards the provision of three to five acres of land and stables, and employing a co-ordinator and part-time administrator. The equine centre will provide training programmes recognised by FETAC in a number of horse-care related areas including a farrier course, the grooming and care of horses, jockeying of ponies and care of tack.

The overall aim is to place some of these young people who have a keen interest in horses, in related employment. This is a dynamic youth programme, which is extremely important to the town and illustrates the practical application of programmes such as the Diploma in Community Development Practice.

Gala Banquet tickets sold out

Such has been the demand for tickets for the 6th NUI Galway Gala Banquet, which will take place in the Radisson Hotel on 5th March, that all tickets were sold out by early February. The glittering social event has been firmly established as the highlight of Galway's social calendar. The theme of the 2005 Gala Banquet, is the University's mission in international education and NUI Galway's role as an international force for change in improving educational opportunities for students from developing countries. To underline this global responsibility a major new initiative, the NUI Galway International Scholars programme, has been announced.

One of the highlights of the evening is the presentation of the Alumni Awards when seven graduates who have distinguished themselves in their various occupations will be honoured by their Alma Mater. The 2005 award recipients are Declan Kelly, President & CEO of Financial Dynamics; Professor Orla Conneely Baylor College of Medicine, Texas; Anne Butler, Consultant Engineer; John Coll, Sculptor; Cardinal Wilfrid Napier, South Africa; Daithí Mac Cárthaigh, Barrister; and Professor Frank Imbusch, NUI Galway.

Three in a row for NUI Galway Environmental Research Students

For the third year in a row, and for the fourth time in the past five years, an NUI Galway postgraduate student has been awarded the best oral presentation prize at the annual ENVIRON conference. The conference showcases environmental research in Irish third-level colleges, research institutes, state agencies and private consultancies.



Sarah Knight

This year's prize-winning student is Sarah Knight who is researching a new analytical system for determination of dissolved copper in seawater. Sarah's research, funded by an EMBARK scholarship from IRCSET, is jointly supervised by Dr Rachel Cave of the Dept of Earth and Ocean Sciences and by Dr Donal Leech of the Dept of Chemistry.

Copper has been identified as a potential hazardous substance in various EU & Irish surface waters monitoring programs.

Sarah explains that it is present in very low concentrations in seawater and therefore contamination of samples is a concern, so one of the main reasons for developing an in-situ system is to minimize sample handling, and therefore reduce the risk of sample contamination. "Results so far

are for total dissolved copper only, with concentrations in Galway Bay showing very low levels of copper contamination. However, future work is planned to measure 'free' copper as well as total copper to get a better picture of the potential biological impact," she says.

DERI helps Galway School win National Media Award



St Patrick's Primary School, Lombard Street has won a prestigious national Digital Media Award for a film

documentary on the History of Communication. The documentary was one of the highlights of St

Patrick's Golden Jubilee celebrations and was made as part of NUI Galway's Digital Enterprise Research Institute's (DERI) Schools Outreach Programme.

The plot followed the changing face of communications in the classroom – from the inkpot to the internet – over the 50 years that the school has been in existence.

Brendan Smith, DERI Education Outreach Officer, said "This is an incredible result for the pupils. Major companies like the BBC and the big banks were nominated in their respective categories, so the pupils have done an amazing job."

EU law and Disability

In partnership with the University of Maastricht (Netherlands), the Law Faculty, through its Disability Law & Policy Research Unit led by Professor Quinn, has won European Commission funding to host an annual international Summer School in July 2005. The event will focus on training lawyers from around Europe to bring appropriate test cases before the European Court of Justice (Luxembourg) dealing with disability discrimination. This will be the first fully-funded Summer School of its type in Europe and aims to impart practical skills as well as knowledge about EU law

and disability. It will be partnered by a Race Discrimination Summer School to be held in Maastricht. The teaching Faculty will include leading and experienced litigators from across Europe, the United States and the Law Faculty in NUI Galway.

Meanwhile, Shivaun Quinlivan and Ursula Connolly of the Disability Research and Policy Unit, are participating in a European Project on Disability Discrimination (EUDD), which has recently been awarded €176,000 by the European Commission.

The project is designed to provide training for NGOs representing disabled groups, on the disability aspects of the Framework Directive on Equal Treatment at Work in a number of European countries, including Romania, Lithuania, Estonia, Bulgaria and Hungary. The project involves disability experts from a number of institutions and NGOs. A series of workshops, which will help to empower locally based disability NGO activists in some of the new Member States and the Accession States, will eventually be provided.

Outstanding performance by Medical students



Pictured with Dr Phillip A. Carney, Dean, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences are 1st Prize winners, from left, Michelle O'Shaughnessy, Sinéad Walsh, Lorraine Jennings, and Siobhán Glavey.

NUI Galway medical students have once again performed excellently in the annual Henry Hutchinson Stewart Scholarships awards. Four students won 1st prize in the categories Gynaecology & Obstetrics, Pharmacology, Psychiatry and Surgery. In addition, three students won second prize and two students each won third prize.

The Scholarships are named in memory of Dr Henry Hutchinson Stewart, who had great compassion for mentally ill people in the eighteenth century and set up what became known as Dr Stewart's Hospital in Dublin, to care for those patients.

A New Team – A New Focus



Pictured from left are, Grainne Morahan, Dr Bernadette Walsh and Sheila Coyle.

A new team - the Syllabus Team - has been formed in Academic Affairs. Headed by Dr Bernadette Walsh, Academic Records Officer, Sheila Coyle and Grainne Morahan complete the team.

Its main focus will be to provide a conduit between the academic community, faculty offices and the central administration offices (Admissions, Examinations and MIS) in all aspects relating to programmes on offer in the University: their structure, content and Marks and Standards.

"Standardisation and simplification of existing and new programmes will be a priority focus," says Dr Walsh. "Work has already begun on the development of standard templates for programmes and Marks and Standards.

The Syllabus Team will work with the academic community and the central units to direct and advise in relation to QuercusPlus (the student record system), to provide training and support, and to implement changes to the system or programme structure where necessary.

MBA Class win inaugural award



Pictured are, Greg Fennell, Eamon Connaughton, Mike Cosgrove, JP Prendergast and Genevieve Carter. (Absent from photo: Tina Roytio)

The inaugural award for the best Interdisciplinary Group Project of the MBA programme has been won by six NUI Galway students. The award, the first of its kind for an MBA programme in Ireland, was presented by Denis McCarthy, Director General of the MBA Association of Ireland, who sponsored the award. The winning group based their project on Greenstar, which is part of National Toll Roads.