



NUI Galway
OÉ Gaillimh

Nuachtlitir Foirne | Staff Newsletter | Earrach 2012

50 Years in the Making



President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins, made his first official visit to NUI Galway on 24 February to launch the University's new Irish Centre for Autism and Neurodevelopmental Research (ICAN).

OILLSCÉALA

The visit took place 50 years after President Higgins was initially enrolled as a mature student at the University and he was welcomed by President of NUI Galway, Dr Jim Browne, NUI Galway's Dr Geraldine Leader, Director of ICAN and Tom Joyce, Galway University Foundation. Through scientific research, education and services to the community, ICAN is dedicated to ensuring improvements for individuals with autism and their families.

President Higgins in his remarks said: "I acknowledge NUI Galway as a leader in civic engagement – a leader in putting its intellectual assets at the disposal of the community. I applaud the move to value academic achievement not just in terms of the number of published articles but also in terms of its social and community impact. I see the research and

educational work to be pursued by this new Centre in this broader context. To me it is a prime example of research that is socially aware, socially responsible and that lives up to the highest vision of what a university is for – a constructive agent of change for the good in our society."

Co-funded by Galway University Foundation, the Centre is the first centre of its kind outside North America that uses an integrated approach to the delivery of postgraduate education, research and the delivery of autism support services.

President Jim Browne said the establishment of this new centre highlights NUI Galway's commitment to autism research and underscores the translational dimension of the University's work.

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OLLSCÉALA



Focal ón Eagarthóir

Fáilte romhaibh go dtí eagrán eile d' Ollscéala.

Our cover story features President Higgins, who visited the campus in February to launch the Irish Centre for Autism and Neurodevelopmental Research. A proud day for the University as President Michael D. Higgins was welcomed back 50 years after he first stepped foot on campus grounds as a mature student in 1962.

Another great occasion celebrated former students when An Taoiseach Enda Kenny returned as special guest at the annual Alumni Awards ceremony and congratulated those honoured on the night for their exceptional achievements since their time here on campus (page 3).

The University has been awarded a five star rating by the QS Stars rating which President Browne will speak about (page 7). Many other developments across campus this semester include new programme offerings at undergraduate and postgraduate levels, as well as a new postgraduate scholarship scheme unique to this university (page 9).

The first ever Women's Network has been established on campus (page 10) and there has been prestigious appointments for our academic staff (page 2). Research outcomes are constant and in this issue we see advances in cornea transplants and where the first Irish report into formulating a National Strategy for Dementia was launched (page 5).

My sincere thanks for all the contributions and while we endeavour to include all submissions space does not always allow.

Mo bhuíochas do chách a chur scéalta chugainn don eagrán seo - beidh mé ag súil le go leor scéalta eile uaibh roimh an chéad eagrán eile.

Slán tamall

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Appointments

Director-in-Residence Appointed

NUI Galway and Druid Theatre have announced the joint appointment of Thomas Conway as the first Director-in-Residence to be based between Druid Theatre and the School of Humanities at the University. The 'Druid Director-in-Residence' will participate in the development of theatre and performance education on campus.



Thomas Conway

Thomas Conway, a practising professional director, will particularly focus on enhancing the undergraduate programmes in drama, including the new BA in Drama Theatre and Performance. He will also contribute to the MA in Drama and Theatre Studies as well as expanding the University's current offerings in these areas. As well as teaching on the current drama and theatre programmes, Mr Conway will also coordinate workshops offered to the BA and MA programmes by members of the Druid Theatre Company, and will direct an annual student production with BA and MA students.

NUI Galway Academics Appointed to Council of State



Professor Gearóid Ó Tuathaigh



Professor Gerard Quinn

Professor Gerard Quinn, Director of the Centre for Disability Law and Policy, and Professor Gearóid Ó Tuathaigh, Professor Emeritus in History have been appointed by President Michael D. Higgins to sit on the Council of State. Judge Catherine McGuinness, Adjunct Professor of Law has also been nominated by the President.

RIA Gold Medal



Professor William Schabas

International human rights scholar Professor William Schabas was recently presented with the Royal Irish Academy (RIA) Gold Medal. Professor William Schabas, Chairman of the Irish Centre for Human Rights, is one of the leading scholars in the field of international criminal law. His work is closely linked with a range of international judicial institutions including, the international criminal tribunals for the former Yugoslavia, Rwanda and Sierra Leone and the International Criminal Court (ICC). His writings are regularly cited by international courts and tribunals, including the ICC and the European Court of Human Rights.

Law Lecturer Appointed to Law Reform Commission



Donncha O'Connell

NUI Galway law lecturer, Donncha O'Connell, has been appointed by the Attorney General, Máire Whelan, SC, to the Law Reform Commission to replace Mr Justice Donal O'Donnell of the Supreme Court. He will serve as a part-time Commissioner.

The Law Reform Commission is an independent, statutory body established under the Law Reform Commission Act 1975. Its purpose is to keep the law under review and to make recommendations for law reform in keeping with the changing nature of Irish society. Donncha was also recently appointed by the Minister for Justice and Equality, Alan Shatter, TD, to the new Legal Aid Board.

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An Taoiseach Celebrates NUI Galway Alumni Awards 2012

A celebration of the achievements of NUI Galway's alumni took place in the Bailey Allen Hall on campus in March with special guest An Taoiseach Enda Kenny TD. Over 450 people gathered for the 12th Annual Gala Banquet, a glamorous occasion hosted by RTÉ's Deputy Director of TV Programmes and NUI Galway graduate, Máiréad Ní Nuadháin. Entertainment for the Gala was provided by internationally renowned Donegal singer Moya Brennan, formerly of Clannad fame.

Among the guests were alumni, staff, students and friends of the University. The feature of the night was the presentation of the Annual Alumni Awards to:

- **Máire Whelan, Attorney General of Ireland**, who received the Bank of Ireland Award for Business, Public Policy and Law
- **Gerry Kilcommins, VP Global Vascular Operations & General Manager Medtronic Galway and past President American Chamber of Commerce, Ireland** who received the Bank of Ireland Award for Engineering and Informatics
- **Professor Fergal O'Gara, Chair of Microbiology UCC** who received the Aramark Alumni Award for Science
- **Marie Mullen - actress, Druid Theatre Company co-founder** who received the AIB Award for Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies
- **Professor Tim O'Brien, Director, Gait Laboratory & Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon, Central Remedial Clinic** who received the Medtronic Award for Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences
- **Peadar Mac An Iomaire, Iar-Phríomhfheidhmeannach, Acadamh na hOllscoilaíochta Gaeilge**, NUI Galway who received the Duais Hewlett Packard don Gaeilge

Special guest on the night An Taoiseach and former NUI Galway student, Enda Kenny TD, said: "In honouring the six distinguished graduates this evening, we highlight not only their achievements, we also take the opportunity to recognise the contribution, and indeed the calibre, of Irish graduates generally. Since its establishment well over a century and half ago, NUI Galway has always aimed to be one of Ireland's foremost centres of academic excellence. Since spending time as a student on this campus in the 1970s, I have seen NUI Galway, and indeed the surrounding city, grow and develop continually. In particular the transformation that has taken place over the last decade has been remarkable. The campus now offers the best of facilities for teaching and research and a wealth of modern amenities for students."



1: (back row, l-r): RTÉ's Máiréad Ní Nuadháin; Professor Fergal O'Gara, Gerry Kilcommins, President Browne, Peadar Mac An Iomaire, Sandra Butler.
Front row, l-r: Máire Whelan, Professor Tim O'Brien, and Marie Mullen.

2: An Taoiseach Enda Kenny.

3: MC on the night, RTÉ's Máiréad Ní Nuadháin and Marie Mullen.

4: President Browne, Mayor of Galway, Hildegard Naughton and An Taoiseach Enda Kenny.

5: Attorney General Máire Whelan and President Browne.

6: Tom Joyce, Galway University Foundation and his wife Ailish, with Professor JJ. Gilmartin, GUH, Galway.

7: Maeve Browne, RTÉ's Seán O'Rourke and his wife Caroline Murphy, An Taoiseach Enda Kenny and his wife Fionnuala, and President Browne.

OLLSCÉALA

Conferences

Cross Border Orchestra of Ireland - Galway Peace Proms

2,000 children from schools all over Co. Galway took part in the very successful Galway Peace Proms held on campus in February. Choirs from over 40 local primary schools performed with the internationally acclaimed Cross Border Orchestra of Ireland (CBOI) to local audiences. The CBOI was established as a peace initiative almost seventeen years ago and is made up of 120 young musicians from all over Ireland including Galway.

ANCORIM

A range of scientific resources and handbooks to facilitate better coastal planning were launched at a national seminar on campus in February. The resources are the result of a three-year, €1.9 million project, funded by the EU which has assessed the extent to which coastal risks are currently considered in development plans. It appears that across Europe's Atlantic countries, despite guidance from policy documents at national and European level to include considerations of coastal risks, existing development plans are lacking in this area. Using existing scientific knowledge and legislative instruments the ANCORIM project - a collaboration of scientists and decision-makers from Ireland, Spain, Portugal and France - has developed a set of tools to improve the current situation.

Conference Ambassador Programme

If you are thinking of hosting an International Conference you can become a conference ambassador for NUI Galway. Conference ambassadors are members of international associations who can influence their colleagues to host their next conference in their home country.

To become a conference ambassador or find out more on the benefits of bringing conferences to campus contact the Conference Office; E: conference@nuigalway.ie, T: 091 49 3467

Agricultural Biodiversity for Sustainable Food and Agriculture

The Plant and AgriBiosciences Centre recently hosted AgBioDiv2012, Ireland's first Annual AgroBiodiversity Conference. Agricultural biodiversity or agrobiodiversity refers to all biological and genetic diversity which is directly relevant to agriculture and food production.

Conference organiser Professor Charles Spillane, Head of Plant and AgriBiosciences said: "The time is right for an annual conference to bring everybody together to take stock of what has been done, what can be done and what is necessary to do over the coming years to ensure that agrobiodiversity contributes to a vibrant and sustainable food and agriculture sector in Ireland."

Development Education Day

The School of Education recently hosted its first Development Education Day. Organised in partnership with Self Help Africa and with support from Irish Aid, the event was the first step towards integrating Development Education as a more significant component across all Initial Teacher Education programmes offered at NUI Galway.

Launched by President Browne, keynote addresses were provided by Sydney Chisi, Director of Youth Initiative for Democracy in Zimbabwe, and Ray Jordan, CEO of Self Help Africa.

The day provided a forum for those working in second-level teaching, third-level education and the non-profit sector to actively engage with emerging issues within Development Education and included subject-specific workshops which provided student teachers with tools to embed Development Education in their subject teaching.

Gender ARC

Gender ARC's (Advanced Research Consortium on Gender, Culture and the Knowledge Society) public lecture series continued this semester with Professor Diane

Negra's lecture 'Gendering the recession in Ireland'. Diane Negra is Professor of Film Studies and Screen Culture at University College Dublin. This was followed by Professor Jackie Stacey (University of Manchester) who gave a lecture 'Feminism and the cultural politics of Thatcher's legacy' in the Kemmy Business School, University of Limerick in March. The lecture series returned to campus for Professor Diane Elson's lecture 'Expenditure cuts and human rights with special reference to women's rights'.

First Ever International Autism Conference



Pictured is Dr Geraldine Leader, School of Psychology and Director of the Irish Centre for Autism and Neurodevelopmental Research

The Irish Centre for Autism and Neurodevelopment Research in the School of Psychology, in partnership with Autism Speaks, Galway University Foundation and The American Ireland Fund, hosted their first international conference, "Autism Spectrum Disorder: from Clinical Practice to Educational Provision," in January.

The audience of over 600 researchers, healthcare professionals, teachers, and parents from around the world was addressed by Minister of Health, Dr James Reilly TD. The conference, which was the first of its kind in Ireland, unveiled the latest research on early diagnosis of autism and will focus on providing practical solutions and approaches to diagnosis, clinical management, education, and adult service provision. www.nuigalway.ie/ICAN

Research Breakthrough Shows Promise in Offsetting Cornea Transplant Rejection

Success rates for cornea transplants could be greatly improved following a major advance in genetically modifying donor corneas. Scientists at REMEDI have determined a method, in pre-clinical trials, to genetically modify donor corneas so that they are less likely to be rejected by the host immune system.

With more than 100,000 procedures a year worldwide, cornea transplantation (keratoplasty) is the most frequent transplant procedure. The cornea is the transparent, dome-shaped surface of the eye, and accounts for a large part of its focussing power. Transplantations can restore vision, reduce pain and improve the appearance of a damaged or diseased cornea.

Although keratoplasty is a procedure with good success rates, incidence of graft rejection still exists. For some high-risk patients, rejection rates can be as high as 50%. Using their breakthrough technique on the donor corneal tissue before grafting, the REMEDI team showed success in laboratory trials of decreased inflammatory response and protection against rejection.

The research team at NUI Galway, funded by Science Foundation Ireland, was led by Dr Thomas Ritter: "What we have succeeded in doing with the latest molecular biology techniques is to successfully encourage the donor cornea to produce ample PD-L1. It is known that Programmed Death-Ligand 1 (PD-L1) stops the activity of the body's fighter immune cells and prohibits their ability to disrupt the transplantation process. By encouraging the donor cornea to produce PD-L1, it increased what known as the 'immune privilege' or ability of the eye to accept the graft."

Dr Ritter added: "Potentially, what is most exciting is that these strategies could be of value for other transplant models. It could be applied, for example, to protect pancreatic islet cells transplanted for the treatment of type 1 diabetes."

Ministers Launch ICSG Reports

A report from the Irish Centre for Social Gerontology (ICSG) that will lay the foundation for Ireland's first National Strategy for Dementia was recently launched by the Minister for Health, James Reilly. The report estimates prevalence rates of dementia in Ireland; quantifies the economic and social costs of dementia; assesses current service availability for people with dementia and best practice in dementia care nationally and internationally.

'Creating Excellence in Dementia Care: A Research Review for Ireland's National Dementia Strategy' is the result of a joint collaboration between researchers at the NUI Galway's ICSG, Trinity College Dublin and St James's Hospital. The report was funded by Atlantic Philanthropies.

In another report from the ICSG, it was found that while growing old in rural areas can be a positive experience, there are also a number of factors which may lead to older people experiencing social exclusion.



Minister Lynch, Minister O'Neill and President Browne at the launch of Social Exclusion and Ageing in Diverse Rural Communities Report.

The report, 'Social Exclusion and Ageing in Diverse Rural Communities', is the first of its kind on the island of Ireland. It takes an in-depth look at exclusion for older people living in rural settings across Ireland and Northern Ireland. It was written by the ICSG's Dr Kieran Walsh, Professor Eamon O'Shea and Professor Tom Scharf.

Ireland's Minister of State for Disability, Equality, Mental Health and Older People, Kathleen Lynch TD, and Northern Ireland's Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development, Michelle O'Neill MLA visited NUI Galway to officially launch the report.

Clinicians and Scientists Gather to Advance Multiple Myeloma Expertise

Ireland has one of the highest incidences in the world of a blood cancer known as multiple myeloma, a gathering of clinicians and scientists heard. The event was a workshop hosted by NUI Galway, on behalf of the Myeloma Ireland Consortium (MIC), with the support of Science Foundation Ireland.

MIC was established within the past year with the aim of increasing collaboration between 'like-minded' researchers from different academic institutions and hospitals in a co-ordinated approach to maximise research potential and improve patient outcomes in multiple myeloma.

Multiple myeloma is a type of cancer that arises from plasma cells, the white blood cells that produce antibodies. In effect, the cancer causes overproduction of antibody producing plasma cells leading to problems such as anaemia, bone damage, kidney failure and elevated calcium levels.

Professor Frank Giles, who leads the HRB Clinical Research Facility in Galway and is Professor of Cancer Therapeutics at NUI Galway and Trinity College Dublin discussed Irish early-phase studies in myeloma in the context of the National Clinical Research Framework. An update on current multiple myeloma trials being conducted by the all-Ireland Cooperative Clinical Oncology Research Group (ICORG) was given by Dr Peter O'Gorman, Chair of the ICORG Haematology study group.

Professor Micheal O'Dwyer, Professor of Haematology at NUI Galway and Consultant Haematologist, University Hospital Galway, who convened the event stated: "While treatments have improved over the last decade, and most patients are living longer, multiple myeloma remains an incurable disease. It is vital that scientists across the entire Irish research spectrum work together to find new treatment approaches and improve patient outcomes."

OLLSCÉALA

Cainéal iTunes U de chuid COGG le seoladh beo ar RTÉ Raidió na Gaeltachta



Dónall Ó Braonáin, Príomhshfeidhmeannach, Acadamh na hOllscolaíochta Gaeilge; Séamas Ó Concheanainn, Riarthóir, Acadamh na hOllscolaíochta Gaeilge, Carna agus Edel Ní Chuireáin, Ceannaire RTÉ Raidió na Gaeltachta le linn seoladh Chainéal iTunes U – COGG in Áras Shorchá Ní Ghuairim, Carna.

Sheol Ceannaire RTÉ Raidió na Gaeltachta Edel Ní Chuireáin áis fhoghlama úrnua atá forbartha ag Acadamh na hOllscolaíochta Gaeilge, OÉ Gaillimh do bhunscoileanna Gaeltachta agus lán-Ghaeilge, le déanaí. Chraoladh an seoladh beo ar an gclár Ardtráthnóna ar RTÉ Raidió na Gaeltachta.

Is éard atá sa Chainéal nua iTunes U - COGG (An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta & Gaelscolaíochta) ná cnuasach saibhir d'acmhainní fise agus fuaimne a roghnaíodh go cúramach ó Chartlann RTÉ Raidió na Gaeltachta agus ó Chartlanna Ollscoil na hÉireann, Gaillimh féin, mar chuid de thionscadal taighde atá curtha i gcrích ag Acadamh na hOllscolaíochta Gaeilge. Áiríonn an Cainéal 300 mír fhoghlama ina bhfuil amhráin a gcasadh, dánta á n-aithris, scéalta spráúla á n-insint, eolas á roinnt agus míreanna staire á gcur i láthair i gcanúintí éagsúla. Tá na míreanna dírithe ar shealbhú agus ar shuibhriú na Gaeilge i measc daltaí i mbunscoileanna Gaeltachta agus lán-Ghaeilge, go háirithe daltaí Rang 5 agus 6. In éineacht leis na hacmhainní féin, tá plean foghlama deartha a bheidh mar áis sa seomra ranga ag múinteoirí bunscóile agus iad ag úsáid na míreanna foghlama. Tá acmhainní foghlama atá feiliúnach do spriocghrúpaí eile ar fáil ar an gCainéal freisin.

Thar ceann fhoireann an tionscadail in OÉ Gaillimh deir Riarthóir Ionad na hAcadaimh, Carna, Séamas Ó Concheanainn: “Tionscnamh eiseamláireach é seo a dhainníonn tábhacht an taighde ar an gceathrú leibhéal le freastal ar riachtanais chomhaimseartha múinteoirí bunscóileanna trí acmhainní digiteacha teagaisc den scoth a chur ar fáil don seomra ranga. Cuireadh an togra i gcrích a bhíochas den saineolas sna daonnachtaí digiteacha atá á saothrú in Acadamh na hOllscolaíochta Gaeilge trí chéile ach go háirithe in Ionad na hOllscoile anseo i gCarna. Cothaíonn saothrú an léinn nua-aoisigh agus an chultúr traidisiúnta in éineacht deiseanna ar leith don sealbhú teanga agus tacaíonn an tionscadal taighde seo go láidir mar sin le ceann de phríomh chuspóirí an Ionaid, sé sin an Ghaeilge a bhuanú agus a threisíú sa Ghaeltacht agus ar fud na tíre.”

Researchers Win Wounds Award

Researchers at NUI Galway have recently been awarded a prestigious Wounds UK Award for a presentation given at the 2010 Annual Wounds UK Conference, on a new electronic medical technique which aims to assist in the restoration of sensory function lost, due to aging and disease, particularly due to diabetes. The Wounds UK awards “recognise the outstanding achievements of those in who are improving standards in wound prevention and management, through research, clinical audit and practice development”.

The NUI Galway team have observed that lost sensation in the feet (which is known to lead to loss of balance, foot ulceration and ultimately to amputation), may be partially restored by applying low voltage electrical noise to the affected nerves, through the skin, via electrodes.

The new technique relies on the principle that the nervous system is in fact an electrically noisy transmission system. The team have

found that applying a ‘noisy’ electrical signal to the affected nerves, resulted in the enhancement of the associated nerve signals and their transmission.

If the transmission characteristics of nerve signals can be enhanced through the use of a wearable electrical device, then there is the potential to treat a wide range of medical conditions.

Currently there is no treatment available to restore neural function lost due to aging and diabetes. With the current dramatic rise in both of these populations, the need for such treatments is greater than ever.

This work, funded by the Health Research Board, brings together a multidisciplinary research team including Dr Paul Breen and Professor Gearóid Ó Laighin (Electrical & Electronic Engineering), Dr Caroline McIntosh (Podiatry), Dr Sean Dinneen (Diabetes & Endocrinology, UHG & School of Medicine), Dr Leo Quinlan (Physiology) and Professor Jorge Serrador (Dept. of Veterans Affairs, NJ, USA and Neurology, Harvard Medical School).

According to Professor Gearóid Ó Laighin: “This work which is funded by the HRB and which was facilitated by an SFI Walton Fellowship, shows the potential for producing highly innovative, medical solutions, when a team of researchers from such diverse disciplines as Engineering, Medicine, Podiatry and Physiology, pool their expertise to solve complex medical problems.”



From left to right Dr Paul Breen, Dr Caroline McIntosh, Professor Gearóid Ó Laighin, Dr Leo Quinlan, Claire O' Tuathail

Taoiseach launches medical academy programme at Mayo General Hospital

Mayo General Hospital, in a unique partnership with NUI Galway and GMIT in Castlebar, has launched a new medical academy for the training of doctors at the Castlebar site. The programme was officially launched by An Taoiseach Enda Kenny. The academy received its first intake of 20 student doctors in January, and a further 20 students will arrive in September. These 20 students will spend a total period of 20 weeks at Mayo General.

The majority of the medical students rotated from NUI Galway and the hospital also developed considerable linkages with universities

in Germany. The arrangements, as such, were generally informal and contact was usually initiated by students to individual consultants.

The content of the teaching programme is laid down by the School of Medicine NUI Galway. The plan is to reproduce the exact teaching programme at Mayo General in order to ensure consistency and preparation for student examinations. All clinical specialties at Mayo General will become involved in the teaching programme over time as the teaching programme is rolled out gradually and in a coordinated manner.

OLLSCÉALA



Focal ón Uachtarán

A Chairde,

The year has got off to a very encouraging start with NUI Galway awarded a 5 star rating from the latest QS Stars rating system. Our

University recorded top marks in this new international rating, designed as an alternative to university rankings.

Three Irish universities were rated in the first ever global university rating system and NUI Galway joins UCC in securing the overall 5 star rating. NUI Galway was rated five out of five overall, receiving maximum ratings in areas including research, teaching, internationalisation, facilities, engagement and innovation.

This excellent news acknowledges the developments that have taken place at our University in recent years. The 5 Star rating represents a validation of our performance in teaching, research and other activities, and positions us well alongside other international universities on a global stage. It rewards the vision by the University to prioritise capital development and highlights the strength of our industrial partnerships and commercialisation activity. Our achievement in community and civic engagement is also recognised. In a growing competitive market, I am especially happy about our 5 star rating in internationalisation as this again reaffirms our position within higher education globally.

The first international assessment of its kind, QS Stars has been devised by the research team behind the annual QS World University Rankings. The opt-in scheme assesses an unlimited number of universities in a greater range of areas than any existing international ranking. Unlike rankings, QS Stars measure universities against preset international standards, drawing on 30 criteria. As well as an overall rating of zero to five stars, universities that take part are rated in up to eight areas including research, teaching, graduate employability, access and innovation.

Designed to cover areas currently beyond the scope of university league tables, experts regard the QS stars as an important new development in the business of higher education. "QS Stars has the potential to revolutionise the way we measure university performance", says John O'Leary, editor of The Times Good University Guide. "It covers areas that have proved to be beyond the scope of international rankings, such as teaching, employment rates and access, as well as strength in specialist disciplines."



Pictured from left Vice-Chancellor of NUI and President of NUI Galway, Dr Jim Browne; President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins; and Chancellor of NUI, Dr Maurice Manning. At a ceremony in Dublin Castle, the Chancellor of the National University of Ireland, Dr Maurice Manning conferred the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws (LLD) on the President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins.

Honouring President Higgins – 'Fear ón Iarthar taghta chun chinn'

On 25 January, at a ceremony in Dublin Castle, I had the privilege of giving the introductory citation for the conferring of an honorary degree on the President of Ireland, His Excellency, Michael D. Higgins. It was an honour to mark the historic achievement of 'one our own'. As a graduate, a highly respected lecturer and an adjunct professor of this University, we share an institutional pride in his assuming the office of First Citizen.

Following the conferring, President Higgins addressed the gathering on The Role of the University in a Time of Intellectual Crisis. The large attendance in St Patrick's Hall included representatives from Government, the Council of State, the judiciary, the diplomatic corps, in addition to members of the four NUI constituent universities and other Irish universities. Notable amongst the attendance were many former colleagues of President Higgins from NUI Galway, where he lectured in the School of Political Science & Sociology for over thirty years.

It is a longstanding tradition of the National University of Ireland to confer an honorary degree on the President following his or her inauguration. Dr Douglas Hyde received an honorary degree from the Royal University of Ireland in 1906. NUI has honoured all Presidents since 1952 with the exception of Eamon de Valera, who was Chancellor of the University while in office.

The NUI will publish the text of the Introductory Citation and President Higgins' Speech which can also be found at www.nuigalway.ie/president

Almost a month later, on 24 February, President and Mrs Higgins made their first official visit to the University when President Higgins formally launched the Irish Centre for Autism and Neurodevelopmental Research (see p.1 cover story). Marking the occasion, which also co-incided with the 50th anniversary of his entering the University as a mature student in 1962, I presented the President with a specially commissioned limited edition print of The Quadrangle.

Focal scoir

In recent months we have seen many colleagues retire due to Government measures allowing public service staff to retire on pre-cut salary pensions before end of February 2012. In bidding farewell to many colleagues, I'm conscious that we also say goodbye to valuable knowledge, experience and institutional memory, as well as some wonderful co-workers. I wish those colleagues who have retired recently every happiness, health and fulfillment in the years ahead and I hope that they will continue to remain vitally connected to the life of this campus community.

Gabhaim buíochas leo siúd uilig a chuaigh ar scor le déanaí mar chomhaltai foirne de chuid OÉ Gaillimh, de bharr an tseirbhís dhílis atá tugtha acu don Ollscoil. Guím saol fada, sona, sásta orthu.

Le gach dea-ghuí
James J. Browne PhD, DSc, MRIA, C.Eng
Uachtarán – President

Tá Focal ón Uachtarán le fáil ar line agus go dátheangach: www.nuigalway.ie/president/reports

OLLSCÉALA

Staff and Student Awards

Major US Research Award for Professor Frank Barry



One of Ireland's leading scientists working in the field of stem cell therapy received the 2012 Marshall R. Urist Award for Excellence in Tissue Regeneration Research. Professor Frank Barry, Director of the NCBES was given the award by the Orthopaedic Research Society. This is the first time the award will go to a scientist working outside of the US.

The Marshall R. Urist, MD Award was created in 1996 and is sponsored by John Wiley & Sons, Inc. This prestigious award honours an investigator who has established him/herself as a cutting-edge researcher in tissue regeneration research, and has done so with a sustained ongoing body of focused research in the area of tissue regeneration as it relates to the musculoskeletal system.

Harry A. McKellop, Chair of the Awards and Recognition Committee of the Orthopaedic Research Society, said: "The Urist Award honours investigators who have made significant contributions to research in tissue regeneration. It is presented to Professor Barry in recognition of his outstanding achievements in the field of cell mediated therapies in bone and joint repair, and the impact of his research on improving the understanding of tissue regeneration and joint metabolism."

Commenting on the announcement, Professor Barry said: "It is an extraordinary honour for me personally to receive this award and I am very grateful to the Orthopaedic Research Society for recognising the research I have been involved in over the last number of years. I am fully aware that research of this nature involves teams of scientists and I have been very fortunate to work with many talented and innovative researchers in the US and especially now at NUI Galway."

Students Scoop Watts Medal

Four NUI Galway Medical students were recently presented with prizes from the Health Research Board (HRB). The overall winner of the Watts Medal was fourth-year medical student Dympna O'Dwyer from Mullagh, Co. Clare, with second place going to Sarah Cormican from Oranmore, Co. Galway, a third-year medical student at the University.

Fourth-year medical student Urszula Donigiewicz from Carrigtwohill, Co. Sligo was presented with first place in the Watts Poster competition and third place was awarded to third-year medical student Maria Duignan from Boyle, Co. Roscommon.

The Watts Medal is an annual prize awarded for the best presentation of scientific work to a lay audience. Undergraduate students who win a HRB Summer Scholarship are entitled to enter. Their entries are reviewed by scientists, and the best entries are selected for entry into the Watts Poster competition, with the top projects from that selected to compete for the Watts Medal proper.

Professor Fidelma Dunne, Head of the School of Medicine, hopes to build further on this outcome by encouraging clinical and biomedical research as an integral part of undergraduate medical education. She said: "Research is an extremely important component of disease specific knowledge and treatment but also contributes significantly to population health and health services research. The awards have occurred as a result of the commitment of undergraduate students to research, the supervision and mentoring of students by staff within the school, and the high calibre of the research being conducted."

NFB Researchers Receive Prestigious Travel Awards in Distinguished Laboratories

Four researchers at the Network of Excellence for Functional Biomaterials (NFB), have been awarded Short-Term Travel Fellowships by Science Foundation Ireland (SFI). Bill Daly, Mohammad Abu-Rub, Dr Xuejun Hu and Shane

Browne will travel to prestigious research institutes in the US and China to progressing NFB ambitions in the cardiac, neural and wound-healing fields.

International Medical Geology Association

Dr Chaosheng Zhang, Head of the newly established geographic information system (GIS) Centre at Ryan Institute has recently been elected as a new councillor of International Medical Geology Association (IMGA). IMGA was established in January of 2006 like a "policy neutral" organization that looks for facilitating interactions between geoscientists and biomedical / public health researchers in addressing human and animal health problems caused by geologic materials or geologic processes. The association currently has nearly 500 members from 73 countries worldwide. Dr Zhang is also Councillor of SEGH (Society for Environmental Geochemistry and Health) and a Member of the Editorial Board of *The Science of the Total Environment*; as well as Coordinating Editor of *Environmental Geochemistry and Health*.

HSA Award



A team of engineering students won second place in the Health and Safety Authority's (HSA) 'Safety in Design and Construction' third-level competition. The NUI Galway team consisted of: Kevin Carney, a fourth year BSc in Project and Construction student from Frenchpark, Co. Roscommon; fourth year BE in Civil Engineering student Grant Deeney from Ballaghaderreen, Co. Roscommon; Conor Higgins a fourth year BE in Civil Engineering student from Wicklow Town; and Joanne Harmon, Education Manager, HSA.

OLLSCÉALA

New Courses



Theatre and Performance

Pictured is Dr Patrick Lonergan with students at the launch of the new BA degree in Drama, Theatre and Performance Studies, which is designed for students with a keen interest in all aspects of drama and performance. It is a world-class programme, providing a unique opportunity to study drama, theatre and performance from a practical, theoretical and historical perspective. The first intake of students for the new BA in Drama, Theatre and Performance Studies will be in September 2012.

“Our students benefit from the University’s unique combination of groundbreaking academic expertise, professional practice and access to some of Ireland’s leading artists. This new course is a wonderful opportunity for students to explore all aspects of performance from theatre to film, storytelling and new media”, commented the programme director, Patrick Lonergan.

In the Cloud

A new Master of Science degree in Cloud Computing Research, in collaboration with Hewlett-Packard, has been announced. The MSc in Cloud Computing Research is a one-year fulltime or a two-year part-time research-based course, commencing in September 2012. Entry to the course will be based on persons already working in the ICT sector or within a technology-related role in other sectors with a qualifying degree or related experience, or persons with an undergraduate degree containing information systems, technology management or equivalent.

Information Technology

For those looking to transfer into the IT sector, NUI Galway also offers an innovative industry-focused Higher Diploma in Software Design and Development. This goal of this one-year postgraduate conversion course, co-designed with industry experts, is to increase the supply of skilled graduates to meet the needs of Ireland’s high-growth software industry. It will provide graduates with a fast-track, focused computing qualification, and presents them with an opportunity to obtain valuable industry work experience.

Léann Teanga & Cumarsáid

NUI Galway has also just announced two new MA courses through Acadamh na hOllscolaíochta Gaelige, MA/Diplóma Iarchéime (Léann Teanga) and MA Cumarsáid www.nuigalway.ie/acadamh

Biomedical Science

A new one year MSc course in Cancer Research will commence in September 2012. Designed to equip participants with extensive knowledge and the most advanced technologies to meet this challenge, this modular course consists of 30% taught material and a 70% research element.

100 Good Reasons to Choose NUI Galway for Postgraduate Studies

NUI Galway has recently announced a new scholarships scheme for Postgraduate Students. This is the first scheme of its kind in Ireland, in which 100 new scholarships will be awarded at €2,000 per student. The new initiative is open to postgraduate students, applying for a fulltime Taught Masters programme due to commence in autumn 2012.

This scholarship scheme is completely unique to NUI Galway, with no other university offering this level of support to prospective postgraduate students. **Dr Jim Browne, President of NUI Galway**, has said the new scholarships were developed in direct response to the recent cuts in maintenance funding for postgraduate students, “We know that more and more students are looking to postgraduate study as a means of enhancing their skills and their employability, but financial constraints are a big problem. We believe that these scholarships will enable more of the brightest and most committed students to progress to postgraduate study.”

The scholarships will be awarded to students who fulfil the criteria as outlined by the University.

Mature Students to Benefit from €60,000 in Scholarships

The University has also announced details of new scholarships scheme for mature students. In total, 30 new scholarships will be awarded, consisting of €2,000 per student for every year of their study. Dr Martina Ní Chúlain, Admissions Officer at NUI Galway, explains: “The new Scholarships for Mature Students are an incentive to attract more of the brightest and most committed students, and to support their return to full-time education. Mature students bring so much to the campus and to their classmates, and we hope to offer the scholarship as a support in making the transition into third-level education easier.”

Minister Bruton launches Ennis Innovate

Mr Richard Bruton TD, Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, officially launched *Ennis Innovate*, Regional Innovation Centre earlier this year. The Innovation Centre, an NUI Galway supported initiative, provides support to start-up companies as they progress from business idea stage to commercialisation. Based in Ennis, Co. Clare, the Centre will support and guide companies through the start-up process and provide companies with introductions and linkages to relevant support bodies and processes, ultimately improving their chance of success.



Séamus O’Grady, Gearóid Ó Conluain, Jerry Maloney, President Browne, Minister Bruton, Finbar Brougham and Professor Terry Smith.

Ennis Innovate will be a resource for all start-up companies providing entrepreneurs with business skills, networks, facilities and supports necessary to navigate the business start-up process. The centre will provide participants with business acumen, concept desk space, mentoring, networking and facilities required to run a new business. Participants should have a business idea with growth potential or be a small business requiring assistance in commercialisation.

President Browne, said: “Universities have a major role to play in developing entrepreneurship and innovation in the Irish economy. NUI Galway is delighted to join with our Alliance partner, the University of Limerick, to support Ennis Innovate. This initiative will enable entrepreneurs in the West and Mid-West regions to gain access to the support and skills they need to bring their businesses to the next level.”

OLLSCÉALA

Older Women Lose out in Pension Provision

Fewer than one in three female pensioners in Ireland receive the maximum contributory pension and two-thirds rely on the non-contributory pension, leaving many women disadvantaged in later life, says a new report from NUI Galway. The report 'Older Women Workers' Access to Pensions: Vulnerabilities, Perspectives and Strategies' was written by Dr Nata Duvvury, Dr Áine Ní Léime and Aoife Callan of NUI Galway, in conjunction with colleagues in Queens University Belfast and with funding from the Centre for Ageing Research and Development in Ireland.

The research highlights the issue of gender inequality in pension provision in Ireland, north and south. It underlines the vulnerability of older women and examines the factors that contribute to lower pension incomes among women, including level of labour force participation and time spent caring for dependants. The report also looks at strategies used by older women and finds many depend on partners' or husbands' incomes for a secure future, even though they may well outlive them as women tend to have longer life expectancies.

Dr Nata Duvvury, co-Director of the Global Women's Studies Programme at NUI Galway, one of the lead investigators of the report commented:

"Women are often the holders of low pay and part-time jobs which will dramatically affect their ability to build pensions. With the economic crisis, this particular group in society is being put under even more financial pressure and the long-term result looks set to be financial insecurity in older age."

Dr Áine Ní Léime, co-principal investigator at the Irish Centre for Social Gerontology at NUI Galway, added: "While pension policy in Ireland, north and south, has begun to address some of the obstacles to women's access to pensions, there is a clear need for a coherent approach across the policy areas of employment, taxation and social welfare, as well as pensions to ensure that women have an adequate income in later life."

Another Bright Idea – The NUI Galway Youth Academy

Following the call from the Vice-President for Performance and Innovative a proposal to develop the Youth Academy at NUI Galway was successful. The Youth Academy will aim to work with high ability primary school children in the local community to support their learning and academic development. The programme aims to inspire entry into university by introducing children and their families to university life and by creating positive perceptions of the university and its' academic programmes. It will also make efforts to engage young people who may not have a history of third-level education in their family such as children from more disadvantaged backgrounds. The Youth Academy is a collaboration between Dr Mary Dempsey (School of Engineering & Informatics), Dr Caroline Heary (School of Psychology), Lorraine McIlrath (Community Knowledge Initiative) and Dr Colm O' Reilly (Centre for Talented Youth, Ireland, DCU).

The roll-out of this proposed programme will be multi-disciplinary in nature and will take place on campus during April and May 2012 on Saturday mornings. For further information on the project please e-mail youthacademy@nuigalway.ie

Launch of First Women's Network



Pictured is Professor Susan Vinnicombe, OBE

A new University Women's Network has been launched within NUI Galway. The network seeks to support professional development and networking among its members towards achieving individual career goals and contributing to the development of vibrant research, teaching and supporting service communities. Renowned author and researcher Professor Susan Vinnicombe (OBE) delivered the keynote address at the launch which took place in The View. Recognised for her work on women's leadership styles, and the issues involved in women developing their managerial careers, her keynote address focussed on the 'Benefits of Networking in the University'.

The chair of the Women's Network, Professor Kathy Murphy, School of Nursing and Midwifery commented: "We are very excited about the Launch of the Women's Network. The Network will provide a forum to discuss debate and propose solutions to some of the issues that impact on the professional development and career progression of women. The network will seek to promote a better gender balance in leadership positions in both academic and administration communities in the University, through various mechanisms including networking opportunities, relevant seminars, and mentoring."

Postgraduate Fair showcases over 400 Programmes



Pictured l-r, President Jim Browne; Valerie Leahy, Postgraduate Admissions Officer; and John Hannon, Head of Career Development Centre.

The annual NUI Galway Postgraduate Open Day took place in February and showcased over 400 of NUI Galway's full-time and part-time postgraduate programmes, including taught and research masters, and doctoral research options. With in excess of 1,500 attendees, including current students and visitors, 84 exhibition stands highlighted NUI Galway's postgraduate programmes, information sessions ran throughout the day, and a CV Clinic was also a feature.

In Brief

Commissioner Quinn hosts CDLP DREAM Meeting

EU Commissioner for Research, Innovation and Science, Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, met researchers from the Centre for Disability Law and Policy (CDLP) at a meeting in Brussels arranged by the CDLP as part of its EU FP7 DREAM (Disability Rights Expanding Accessible Markets) Initial Training Network. Professor Quinn and the DREAM consortium offered the Commissioner an overview of their project and the Commissioner spoke to the group about research funding in the EU and, in particular, the incoming Horizon 2020 funding phase.

Fionnula Flanagan Inspires Film Students



Acclaimed actress Fionnula Flanagan held an acting workshop and a public interview about her filmmaking career at the Huston School of Film & Digital Media in February after being honoured with the Irish Film and Television Academy (IFTA) Lifetime Achievement Award at the 9th Annual IFTA Awards in Dublin. The *Guard*, in which she stars, was nominated for a BAFTA award in London. She has had a long career, nationally and internationally, in theatre, film and television and received an honorary degree from NUI Galway in 2008.

EXPLORE

NUI Galway and the Students' Union have joined forces to introduce a new model for students and university staff to work in equal partnership to deliver innovation on campus. The first scheme of its kind in the Irish third-level sector, the EXPLORE Innovation Initiative takes student engagement to a new level. Students and staff team

up, devise an innovative, sustainable project, apply for €1,000 funding and, where successful, deliver this project within a six-month time frame.

EXPLORE is inspired by successful student engagement initiatives at a number of UK universities. Whereas the UK focus has mainly been around strengthening learning and teaching, EXPLORE firmly emphasises innovation and turning ideas into reality. The scheme is currently being piloted but the hope is that it will be rolled out and become a permanent feature of university life, subject to interest and availability of funding.

Irish Syllabus

The third and final year of the national syllabus project for Irish was recently launched. The project is led by Dr John Walsh, Irish, School of Languages, Literatures and Cultures in association with Professor Máirín Nic Eoin of St. Patrick's College in Dublin. 17 third level institutions both north and south are involved in the project, which was supported by the national language body Foras na Gaeilge. €200,000 was provided by Foras over three years to employ a project manager who was based at St. Patrick's College. As well as syllabi for the three years of the BA or BEd in Irish, a wide selection of audiovisual and text resources was also created and is available at www.teagascnagaeilge.ie. The syllabus is being implemented in the Departments of Irish in several institutions throughout Ireland.

Saothar

The current edition of *Saothar*, Journal of the Irish Labour History Society, is edited by NUI Galway lecturers, John Cunningham, History, and Mary Clancy, Global Women's Studies. *Saothar* 36, a special edition on women, shows the potential of women and labour as a research category.

The articles cover a range of experience, including women war workers, early trade unionism and socialism, working conditions and the politics of keeping house. *Saothar* is an INT2 level journal in the European Reference Index for the Humanities, and has scholarly significance and visibility at international level.

Reception for Eleven US Fulbright Scholars

President Jim Browne and GMT President, Michael Carmody, welcomed eleven US Fulbright Awardees at a reception held recently to mark the commencement of *Inter-changes: an Orientation Programme for 2011 – 2012* hosted by NUI Galway.

This academic year (2011-2012), 14 Fulbright Awardees from the US are based in Higher Education Institutions around Ireland studying, researching and lecturing in disciplines ranging from American History and animation to journalism and civil engineering. Two of the Fulbright awardees are based in Galway, Dr Kathryn Laity in NUI Galway and Professor Gurram Gopal in GMT.



Pictured, back row (l-r): Dr Kathryn Laity, Michael Murphy, Dr Mark Shaurette, Michael Falk, Dr William F. McComas and Vanessa B. Cruz. Front Row (l-r): Michael Carmody, President GMT; Mayor of Galway City, Hildegard Naughton; Dr Timothy Meagher; Dr Gurram Gopal; Dominique Brooke Dodge; Dr Jill Simone Gross; Suzanne McBride; Colleen Dube, Executive Director, Fulbright Commission; and President Browne.

Library Charter



Pictured l-r at the recent launch of the Library Customer Charter are an tOllamh Nollaig MacCongáil, Registrar; Emmett Connolly, SU President; and John Cox, University Librarian. The James Hardiman Library is committed to achieving the highest standards in the provision of information resources and services to advance teaching, learning and research, and to foster lifelong learning. The Charter, launched recently outlines these commitments and is available to consult on the Library website: <http://www.library.nuigalway.ie/charter/>

OLLSCÉALA

Teddy Bear Hospital

The 7th annual Teddy Bear Hospital took place again this January. The event saw over 1,300 sick teddy bears admitted to the hospital, accompanied by their minders, 1,300 primary school children. The event is organised by the Sláinte Society, the NUI Galway branch of the International Federation of Medical Students Associations, and up to 200 medical and science students will diagnose and treat the teddy bears. In the process, they helped children, ranging in age from 3-8, feel more comfortable around doctors and hospitals. Over the years, children have come along with teddy bears suffering from an imaginative range of sore ears, sick tummies and all kinds of others weird and wonderful ailments.



Pictured are Tara Ní Fhloinn, Seaic Ó Mainnín and Seán Ó Coistealbha, Naíonra Iognáid (Jes).

UNI 4 U

The NUI Galway Access Programme has re-launched its Uni 4 U programme. The Uni 4 U programme brings pupils from two local primary schools and NUI Galway students together in a fun and relaxed environment. The primary schools that are taking part in the programme are Scoil Bhríde in Shantalla, St. Michael's Boys School Mervue and Holy Trinity Girls School in Mervue. Sixty children from 4th, 5th and 6th class in each school have been specially selected to participate on the programme.

Uni 4 U began in February and it will run for six weeks. The programme runs for three days each week in February taking in 40 primary school pupils per day. Each week the children meet with their mentors to get help and guidance with school work as well as taking part in a wide range of sporting activities delivered by the staff of the Kingfisher Sports Centre. The pupils have the same mentor each week in order to develop positive relationships as well as forming a sense of routine.

The Access Programme and the Uni 4 U programme focuses on continuity, working with the same group of students over several years to break the mentality that University is not accessible to everyone. The main aim of the Uni 4 U programme is to help primary school children develop personally by building their self-esteem, confidence, communication skills and social behaviour through team games and sport activities in addition to their educational attainment, especially in improvement in numeric and literacy skills.

Twelfth Annual Arts Festival



Múscailt, NUI Galway's week-long Spring Arts Festival, took place in February and was a great success. Revolving around the theme of Illumination/Soiliú, this year Múscailt hosts a superb line-up of art, music, performance and sculpture. Pictured is James Fleming of Colour Street Theatre, Poet Rita Ann Higgins, and Fionnuala Gallagher, Arts Officer.

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