Welcome to our latest edition of the Elixir Newsletter.

We kick off this edition with the excellent news that we are now in the top 50 worldwide in the QS World University Subject Rankings for Pharmacy and Pharmacology. This is a fantastic achievement and reflects the quality of our staff, students, graduates, teaching and research. Let’s hope we can climb even further in the rankings in the coming years!

As always, the last year has been a busy one and we’ve seen a number of significant changes in our School. We bade a fond farewell to two of our longest serving colleagues - Assistant Professor John Quigley and Mr. Joe Reilly, both of whom retired in September. I’ve no doubt that many of our alumni will remember both John and Joe from their time here. We wish them both all the very best in their retirement.

By perusing the Elixir newsletter, you will get a snapshot of some of what we’ve been up to over the course of the year.

However, I’d encourage you to connect with us on social media (Facebook and Twitter @TCDPharmacy) and to browse the School website every now and again to keep updated on all our news and activities as they happen.

We are always keen to hear from our alumni and welcome your ideas and contributions. If you would like to become more involved with the School please do get in touch!

With very best wishes for the remainder of 2019.

Professor Anne Marie Healy
Head of School
School News

QS Subject Rankings for 2019

The School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences has been confirmed as a Top 50 School of Pharmacy & Pharmacology in the newly published QS Subject Rankings for 2019, an acknowledgement of the School’s position at the forefront of international pharmacy research and teaching.

These subject rankings are compiled based on global reputation surveys of academics and employers, and research impact indicators such as citations.

The School’s strong performance is an indication of the high esteem in which our researchers and the work they conduct is held on the global stage, and a testament to our dedication and endeavour.

Gradireland Postgraduate Course of the Year Awards

On Friday 23 November 2018, gradireland hosted their annual Higher Education Symposium & Awards at the Crowne Plaza Northwood Hotel in Santry, Dublin. This event, sponsored by the Higher Education Authority, AbbVie and PwC, was attended by over 200 higher education professionals and stakeholders. The Symposium was focused on discussing the future of Higher Education in Ireland, exploring current international best practice, Irish and international research findings and expert discussions. Following the Symposium, the winners of the Higher Education Awards were revealed at a gala ceremony, where our School’s MSc in Hospital Pharmacy was awarded the gradireland Postgraduate Course of the Year in Health Sciences 2019. Congratulations to Niamh McMahon and the MSc Hospital Pharmacy staff on this achievement!

Visual & Performing Arts Fund

Congratulations to our colleague Elizabeth O’Shaughnessy who was awarded a grant towards her photography project ‘Faces of Trinity Photo Series: Who We Are’ from the Visual & Performing Arts fund.

The fund is designed to promote events taking place on campus. Elizabeth’s project which featured portraits of colleagues from different departments in Trinity, was exhibited in College last Summer.
Professor Lorraine O’Driscoll has been appointed to the Board of Directors of the International Society for Extracellular Vesicles (ISEV). ISEV is the global professional society for researchers from academia, clinical settings and industry who are involved in the study of microvesicles and exosomes (collectively termed EVs). Founded in 2012 in Sweden, ISEV has since moved its Headquarters to the United States.

Through its programs and services, ISEV provides essential training and research opportunities for those involved in exosome and microvesicle research, with relevance to both healthy physiological states and multiple conditions and diseases including cancer, neurological, diabetes, but also with potential in regenerative medicine and drug delivery.

The School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences is involved in a €2.3M H2020 student and staff exchange programme ORBIS (Open Research Biopharmaceutical Internships Support). The ORBIS project is aimed at improving the preclinical pathway of medicine development by integrating multidisciplinary research involving academia and industry, as well as raising awareness among the general public of the importance of pharmaceutical research.

The consortium is led by the Poznan University of Medical Sciences (Poland) and, in addition to Trinity College, the other partners are: Pharmaceutical Research Institute (Poland), University of Helsinki (Finland), Rutgers University (US), APC Ltd. (Ireland), Zentiva Group, a.s. (Czechia), Physiolution GmbH (Germany) and Farmak JSC. The ORBIS project is supported in Trinity College by Assoc. Prof. Lidia Tajber, Prof. Anne Marie Healy, Assoc. Prof. Deirdre D’Arcy and Assoc. Prof. Astrid Sasse.

Assoc. Prof. Lidia Tajber attended the kick-off meeting for the ORBIS project held in Poznan, Poland on 12-13th April 2018. She is Director of the Steering Committee for the project and also leads Work Package 1 (Drug Substances and Pharmaceutical Preformulation).

The School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences is involved in a €2.3M H2020 student and staff exchange programme ORBIS (Open Research Biopharmaceutical Internships Support). The ORBIS project is aimed at improving the preclinical pathway of medicine development by integrating multidisciplinary research involving academia and industry, as well as raising awareness among the general public of the importance of pharmaceutical research.

The consortium is led by the Poznan University of Medical Sciences (Poland) and, in addition to Trinity College, the other partners are: Pharmaceutical Research Institute (Poland), University of Helsinki (Finland), Rutgers University (US), APC Ltd. (Ireland), Zentiva Group, a.s. (Czechia), Physiolution GmbH (Germany) and Farmak JSC. The ORBIS project is supported in Trinity College by Assoc. Prof. Lidia Tajber, Prof. Anne Marie Healy, Assoc. Prof. Deirdre D’Arcy and Assoc. Prof. Astrid Sasse.

Assoc. Prof. Lidia Tajber attended the kick-off meeting for the ORBIS project held in Poznan, Poland on 12-13th April 2018. She is Director of the Steering Committee for the project and also leads Work Package 1 (Drug Substances and Pharmaceutical Preformulation).

Carsten Ehrhardt has been appointed as Section Editor of the European Journal of Pharmaceutical Sciences - Official Journal of the European Federation for Pharmaceutical Sciences (EUFEPS). With a 5-year Impact Factor of 3.866, the European Journal of Pharmaceutical Sciences is one of the leading journals in the field. The journal publishes research articles, review articles and scientific commentaries on all aspects of the pharmaceutical sciences with emphasis on conceptual novelty and scientific quality.
School Research Highlights

School of Pharmacy & Pharmaceutical Sciences hosts inaugural meeting of H2020 Consortium Training in Extracellular Vesicles

TRAIN-EV brings together leading European researchers studying exosomes and microvesicles (collectively termed extracellular vesicles [EVs]) in health and disease. Exosomes and microvesicles/ectosomes, collectively termed extracellular vesicles (EV), have attracted much recent interest because of their potential functions, use as disease biomarkers and potential for therapeutic exploitation. Due to their enormous relevance, this relatively new field of research is quickly expanding. However, there are still many gaps in knowledge that need to be addressed to ensure optimal exploitation of EVs from societal and economic benefit. TRAIN-EV’s main objective is to provide excellent and integrated multi-disciplinary and inter-sectoral training of a critical mass of ESRs of outstanding potential in the academic, clinical, and industry/business components of exploiting EV, while performing novel cutting-edge research to address these gaps and generate new knowledge.

Professor Lorraine O’Driscoll is lead P.I. and Director of TRAIN-EV. TRAIN-EV’s other academic, clinical and industry partners are from France, Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, Hungary, Italy, Estonia and Portugal.

It is funded by the EU Commission’s H2020 Marie Skłodowska Curie Innovative Training Network (MSCA-ITN) programme by almost €4 million.

Congratulations to Atif Madi who was awarded a grant from Science Foundation Ireland (SFI).

Dr Atif Madi, who worked as a Research Fellow within the Oral Formulations Group of Professor Anne Marie Healy for the past two years, has secured a fund and was awarded a SFI Industry Fellowship. Dr Madi’s work will help in increasing the level of collaboration between Academia and the Pharma industry. This project is supported by both SFI and APC Ltd.

Eduardo Ruiz-Hernandez awarded a prestigious ERC start up grant

Eduardo Ruiz-Hernandez will grow a team in the School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences and AMBER, after securing funding for REACT, a project that aims to dramatically impact the targeted release of diagnostic agents and drugs with nanomedicines that respond to biological cues or changing pathophysiological conditions. This would enable ultrasensitive diagnoses and highly precise therapy selectivity, with significant implications for early in vitro diagnosis of deadly tumours, such as neuroblastoma and glioblastoma.

Asst. Prof. Ruiz-Hernandez said: “I feel hugely privileged to have secured an ERC Award and to be able to explore how nanomedicines can help us tackle the most challenging diseases. This exceptional funding represents an amazing opportunity to bring my research in smart biomaterials to the next level and connect with other European initiatives to maximise the impact of our ideas on the design of novel and more effective therapies.”

Asst. Prof. Ruiz-Hernandez’s award was granted from the 2017 ERC Starting Grant awards call, was only announced in 2018.
School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences receive funding to support its Summer Research Placement Programme

The School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences would like to thank Perrigo for their kind and generous sponsorship of its Summer Research Placement Programme (SRPP).

Perrigo’s sponsorship of this School activity made a significant contribution towards Ms Rachel-Jane McGuinness’ research project carried out over the summer months of 2018 in the University of Hiroshima, Japan, with Dr Mikihisa Takano.

“During my time there, I was able to view other experiments in the lab and became familiar with basic research techniques, such as media changes, sub-culturing cell lines and experiments such as uptake studies, Polymerase chain reaction (PCR) studies or Western blotting.

Aside from this, I also undertook research under the supervision of Dr. Takano, alongside another student of the lab, Syuhei Higa, to investigate the role of HIF-1α in the expression of P-glycoprotein (P-gp). This efflux protein, common in many cells, plays a role in chemoresistance in many cancer cell lines and we investigated the link between hypoxia-like conditions and the expression of this protein in a lung cancer cell line, A549/P-gp cells. During this research, we performed uptake experiments and PCR, and from this, determined that more research is needed to fully understand the role of HIF-1α in P-gp expression in these cells.

Overall, I found my experience in Japan rewarding and I would highly recommend all Pharmacy students considering the summer research project to go if they can. Not only did I discover my love of research, but I also broadened my worldview, and experienced a culture very different to my own. Therefore, I’d like to thank Perrigo for sponsoring me and allowing me to have this wonderful experience.”

Trinity launches 40 fully funded Provost’s PhD Project Awards

Trinity has launched 40 fully funded PhD positions across a wide variety of disciplines. The 40 Provost’s PhD Project Awards are open to EU and Non-EU candidates and include an annual stipend of €16,000 for four years. These doctoral awards are generously funded through alumni donations and profits derived from Trinity’s Commercial Revenue Unit.

Commenting on the significance of the Awards at the launch, the Provost, Dr Patrick Prendergast said: “Research is the heart of what we do; it’s what drives this great institution, connected directly into our teaching mission. And, to stick with the metaphor, the heart needs to be constantly regenerated and pumped with new blood. Therefore a decision was taken last year to put money into PhD research projects; to offer 40 funded projects to Principal Investigators – or PIs – across all faculties, via a highly competitive application process.”
Hadiah Almutairi wins best poster at FIP 2018 Congress

Hadiah Almutairi, a Practice of Pharmacy PhD student in the School, won the prize for the best poster in Medicines and Health at the FIP 2018 Congress in Glasgow in September. Hadiah, who is from Saudi Arabia and is sponsored by the Ministry of Education, received the prize for her work examining the use of proton pump inhibitors (PPIs) in older people with Intellectual Disability. Hadiah is part of the multidisciplinary team of researchers who are carrying out the cohort study, Intellectual Disability Supplement to the Irish Longitudinal Study of Ageing (IDS – TILDA), which is led by Professor Mary McCarron, Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences in Trinity.

Hadiah explained that her study showed that the usage of PPIs was greater than in the general elderly population and also while some use appeared to be sub-optimal, there were also cases in which a PPI might be needed but was not being used. The detailed results of Hadiah’s work has been published in an open access journal at: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsps.2018.05.009. Hadiah’s PhD supervisors in the School are Assoc. Professor Martin Henman and Asst. Professor Maire O’Dwyer.
Sitting in the College Pavilion at lunch time on a sunny September day, John Quigley orders a substantial offering from the Menu. There is a sense of a recent hurling victory buzz in the Pavilion and on the cricket pitch as we look out at, not cricketers, but hurlers displaying skilful block, hook and side pull for the sliotar. An unusual but pleasant setting for this ancient Gaelic game. After reminiscing on humorous College experiences that came to mind, I asked John about his career to date.

Do you have a particular moment in your Academic career that stands out?

Gleefully and with a great big smile John replies “Oh I suppose the moment I realised that I had survived the academic milieu could be a moment?” He laughed and continued in humorous context “Seriously though, I think the move from Shrewsbury Road to Trinity College campus was a monumental moment for me. It was life changing as well as interesting.” John explains that his original background was Physical Chemistry and Mathematics. He began lecturing in Quantum Mechanics/Chemistry in UCD. He describes his fond memory of being the recipient of the Hugh Ryan Gold medal (1976). As John speaks about his academic life and how it has changed over the years to its present manifestation, I am struck by the broadness of his academic experience. “I have been a tutor since 1997 and there have been many stand out moments”. John was a particularly active student tutor and over the years there were many students that benefited from his empathetic yet realistic approach when issues arose. Student issues are often complex and time consuming. He always made time and had the patience to help resolve and facilitate a pathway in the student’s best interest. He held the Directorship of Undergraduate Teaching and Learning from (2005 – 2008) and oversaw the inception of the revised BSc Pharm degree course in 2007. He also taught elements of the MSc / Post Graduate Diploma in Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Technology and the MSc in Pharmaceutical Analysis.

After many years in Academia what impresses you?

John pauses “Academia is a discipline in itself; I suppose I am impressed with how it evolves and integrates with life as it changes. Academic life has the ability to re-enforce your alertness as well as increase your strength and tolerance. It also helps not to take yourself too seriously” he says with an infectious grin.

Throughout your career did your outside hobbies and interests compliment your Academic life?

“Yes, I think so. I am a Secular Carmelite (Discalced) since the early 80’s. I have an online MA in Carmelite Spirituality from York St. John’s University UK. I have always been an avid reader and enjoy a significant interest in Russian History. I speak French and have an interest in linguistics.” John was nominated for the Provosts Teaching Award Scheme in (2007).

Do you have a personal map for the future in your back pocket?

John laughed heartily as he recalled a plan he made in the 1960s. “I have been interested in Astronomy since I was a child and when I was in Secondary School I knew that there was going to be a Solar Eclipse in 1999. So thirty something years later I made it to Plymouth for the August 1999 full Solar Eclipse)! I have chosen to retire a year earlier and hope to expand my personal interests in a constructive chilled out manner! I have had a number of flying lessons. I also hope to get more involved with some charity work particularly with the homeless. I would also like to pursue my writing interest”.

What are you looking forward to when you retire?

“Travelling, I will be visiting Vietnam with my wife Trish and hope to spend more time with my two sons David and Niall. Also I look forward to catching up with friends.”

As I walked back towards the Hamilton Building after chatting with John I thought about all the students that he had taught and tutored through challenging times of change and transition and he had done so with empathetic humour and academic candour. He is not a person who enjoys speaking about himself or his academic and tutoring skills, however I know that there are many other academics and students alike that could speak at length regarding his natural gifts.

By Catherine Muldowney
Farewell to Joe Reilly Senior Technical Officer in the Pharmacognosy subject area for 49 years

Joe joined the School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences in 1969 and has given us 49 years of sterling service. During this time, he has worked alongside many colleagues in Pharmacognosy including; Maureen Brunt, Pauline Mc Glue, Caroline Lowry, Ingrid Hook, Helen Sheridan, Christy O'Connor, Des Corrigan, Sandy Gray, John Walsh, and Fabio Boylan.

Indeed, he has played a very significant role in the education of, it is estimated, some 2,500 pharmacists who studied Pharmacy in TCD in his time and is a named author on several teaching-related publications.

Joe was a brilliant colleague to have worked with over many years. He was always very professional in the way he did his work and took pride in ensuring that all Pharmacognosy practicals ran smoothly. Joe was much appreciated by the undergraduate students and played an essential role as their go to man for many of their SS projects. His depth of technical knowledge in the study of medicinal drugs derived from plants or other natural sources will be sorely missed.

He was also hugely popular with the postgraduate students, from the intimate surroundings of Shrewsbury Road with the likes of Ann McGee and Ciaran Meegan, to the modern setting of the Panoz Institute with contemporary postgraduates like Denise and Zeeshan.

The School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences would like to thank Joe for the enormous contribution he has made to the School over the last half Century and wish him a wonderful retirement.

By Ray Keaveny

---

Trinity Alumni Online

As a Trinity graduate, we’d like to help you make the most of being part of a community of over 115,000 Trinity graduates around the world. We know how important it is for our alumni to stay connected and how valuable networking and mentoring opportunities can be for career advancement. With this in mind, we would like to invite you to join our new platform, Trinity Alumni Online. This platform will help you to connect with fellow alumni as well as current Trinity students, allowing you to give and receive career advice. It’s easy to use and a great way to stay connected to Trinity. To register go to www.trinity.aluminate.net

---

Get Involved

Trinity has a long tradition of outreach and community engagement. To find out about the numerous ways you can get involved with Trinity both at home and abroad, please visit www.tcd.ie/alumni/volunteer

Upcoming Events

Please visit www.tcd.ie/alumni/events

Class Notes

Do you have any news or updates that you would like to share with your fellow alumni? Submit your news with an image, subject of study and year of graduation to alumni@tcd.ie

For more information please visit www.tcd.ie/alumni/news-events/publications

---

www.pharmacy.tcd.ie