



STUDENT NEWSLETTER

UCD School of Veterinary Medicine

WELCOME

Welcome to the first edition of our newsletter, a way for us to stay in touch with all of our students this summer. In this newsletter, our aim is to update you on some happenings in the School (page 1), to share advice and support for wellbeing (page 2), and to hear from some of the members of our community (page 3). We'd also love to hear from you! Read on for ways you can get involved.



School News

All of us at the Vet School are really looking forward to the Conferring Ceremony for our student graduands which takes place on Monday, June 15th. Why are conferring students called 'graduands'? Well, this is the term for a student who is about to receive an academic degree. When they are awarded with that degree, they are called a 'graduate'. This year, the ceremony is virtual because large gatherings are not permitted at the moment, but the day will still be a celebration of the momentous achievement of all of our students. Congratulations in advance. We are so very proud of you all.

In other news, when students' exams finish, you might think that things go quiet on the School side but quite the opposite happens, in fact! We are very busy with what's called the Grade Approvals Process (GAP). During this time period, all grades are reviewed in advance of the publication of results. As you can imagine, this means that things are pretty busy!

Tips for Learning

Exams are over - cue sigh of relief from everyone! It's been a trimester with a difference, to say the least, so take this time now to put some order on your notes, make sure you've downloaded any files you need from Brightspace, and take in some well-deserved rest when you can.



Student Support

Student supports continue to be available to you throughout this time. Your student adviser is available right throughout the summer ([niamh.nestor@ucd.ie/0871095589](mailto:niamh.nestor@ucd.ie)). [UCD Student Health and Counselling](#) continues to be available to all students.

Wellbeing Tips

[Mental Health Ireland](#) gives [lots of examples of how to work on the five ways to wellbeing during tough times](#): Be active, take notice, keep learning, connect and give. Mindfully focusing on even one of these during the day can be helpful.

What to Do When You Can't Get Out

While we've all heard the recent stories about people who've learned twelve new languages or curated their lawns to look like the Botanic Gardens, we're a little more realistic here! We want to focus on easily achieved, positive activities that you can do at home to take care of yourself and your mental health at the moment. Why not find a little zen with [the National Gallery of Ireland](#)? Perhaps cook [something you may not have tried before](#), or, if you're feeling a little more adventurous, a [free online Ivy League course](#) might interest you? Regardless of what you do, remember to keep mentally active and to keep connected with people you care about. Who knows what great things we'll learn because of this lockdown...?



Postgrad Notices: Introducing Ciara

Ciara is a DVMS student and the postgraduate representative on the School's Athena SWAN Committee. As part of that role, she is involved with organising virtual coffee mornings for the postgrads in the Vet School. The next meeting is on June 12th, 12noon. The theme is baking and all are welcome! If you'd like to come along and haven't received the link from Ciara, please drop her an email at: ciara.j.hayes@ucdconnect.ie.



Call for Content

Would you like to contribute to our School Newsletter? We plan to publish an issue every fortnight so we'd love it if you'd send us photos of your pets, gardening gems, cookery tips, short stories, thoughts, etc. for our next edition.

Please email your content to margaret.macdonagh@ucd.ie by June 22nd, 2020.

FAQs on UCD's COVID-19 special arrangements can be found on: <http://www.ucd.ie/covid-19/faqs/faqsforstudents/>

COVID arrived... but the world didn't stop, it just changed.

Marijke Beltman, Assoc. Prof. in Clinical Reproduction and Final-year MVB Coordinator



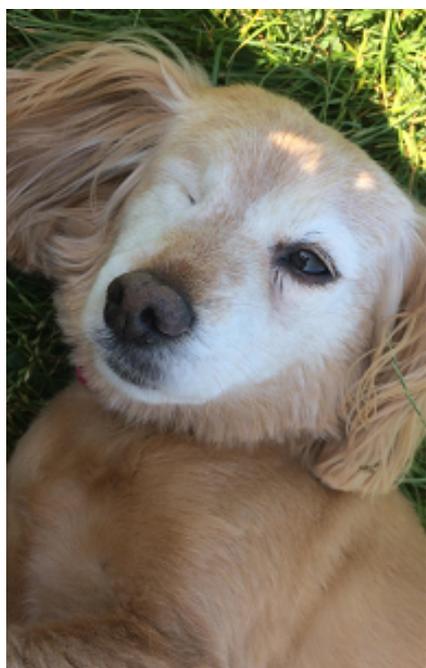
On Thursday, March 12th, all clinical disciplines had just come out of a meeting about the hospital and a potential shut down (and how we would manage) when our phones pinged: Leo had to talk to us about COVID-19. That was the start of a weird day, which turned into a weird end-of-the-week and the start of adjusting to a totally new situation. Rotations in the hospital finished a day early and lectures stopped. The hospital, however, remained open on an emergency basis only (with teams that were not in contact with each other in order to be able to continue to provide a service to the public and animals). This meant a lot of phone calls to clients to inform them of the changed situation, while also brainstorming on how to deliver not only the last weeks of normal teaching but also the last 6 weeks of rotations for final-year vet students. The latter moved online overnight. It was a huge adjustment and effort from all involved but it worked. If anything, vets are well known for having to be inventive when dealing with cases in odd situations and that is usually clinical but the same applied here! Rotations finished out with WhatsApp case discussions and Zoom meetings.

Fast forward a few months and we are now past the normal and final-year exams. Graduation on June 15th will be virtual - different but still a huge celebration. The hospital has continued to work on an emergency basis but now is also taking more elective cases that have become urgent. We're still working with a team structure to reduce footfall and decrease potential exposure. Face masks have become part of our normal work attire as distancing when working with animals is just not always possible. We have a new plan for the rotations of the incoming final years and we are working on preparing teaching for all other students. Have things changed? Oh, definitely. Are we adapting? We have no choice, so we are. Challenging? Definitely, but we are trying hard to rise to the challenge. Nothing is the same, yet a lot is the same. Animals still get sick and need care. Students still need to be taught how to become vets and vet nurses. We will get through this - together but apart.

Some of you who know me may wonder: What about my other life? What about my training? The 2km and 5km radii have given me ample running opportunities. Cycling moved back to the turbo which I'd also used over the winter. Zoom turbo sessions became a good way to see clubmates, with yoga and pilates thrown in to keep everything moving, as it should.

And in case you're tempted, the current sea temperature is 13 degrees - lovely and very doable, even without a wetsuit. Stay safe and healthy everybody!

A Taste of Honey



Tough dog story? Here's one. Gorgeous Honey had a wickedly bad start in life. I first met her as an emergency stray dog vet clinic admission. She was emaciated and had multiple severe injuries so it was touch-and-go that she would survive. An awful puncture injury to her right eye meant it had to be removed surgically. Following surgery, she was "temporarily" housed with me for recovery. For all future graduates, recognise that once you bring pets home, especially the ones you have operated on, there is a high risk that they will become permanent inhabitants. It is an established occupational hazard! Admittedly, a hazard that invariably turns out to be a joyous one because why else do we become vets/vet nurses but to marvel at the wondrous resilience of these beautiful creatures with whom we are privileged to share our lives? Honey is shy, timid, naughty, clever, loyal and great fun. Over the past 11 years, she has flown in airplanes, swam in seas, lakes and rivers, and climbed mountains in many countries. She has permitted hundreds of students to examine her - on the strict instruction that there is a chew bone at the end of it. She is the ultimate companion. She proves irrefutably that beyond hardship there lies joy. ❤️

Renagh Kelly, UCD Vet Hospital