



STUDENT NEWSLETTER

Scoil an Leighis Tréidliachta UCD | UCD School of Veterinary Medicine

WELCOME

Welcome to Issue 2 of our newsletter! We were delighted with the feedback on Issue 1.

Thank you for reading and staying in touch with us this summer. In this packed issue, Bridget gives us an update on the Vet Community Garden (page 2). It's Pride Month (Happy Pride!), and Shauna, one of our alumni, shares some lockdown reflections (page 3). Read our Postgrad Corner to find out about the upcoming Postgrad Peer Mentor Awards Ceremony (page 3). Finally, check out the stories from Jade and Jaime on their gull rescues (page 4).

As always, we'd love to hear from you and what you're up to. Read on for ways you can get involved.



School News

Monday, June 15th was one of the most important dates in the School's calendar this year - Conferring! This year, we hosted the event online, and it was wonderful to see so many students graduate. We wish we could have been together in O'Reilly Hall for the ceremony and out by the lake for some photos, but we're looking forward to a time when we can celebrate in person. For now, if you'd like to watch the ceremony back, check it out [here](#). Big congrats to everyone. Your hard work has paid off in spades. In other news, on June 22nd, provisional results were released for all students. If you have any questions about this, please don't hesitate to [get in touch with us](#). Finally, check out the article on page 3 about our upcoming awards ceremony for our first-ever group of postgraduate peer mentors. This is a big day for us, and we are delighted with how successful the programme has been. Huge kudos to all who got this off the ground and worked so hard to make it the success it has been.

Tips for Wellbeing

If you're feeling stressed or worried, don't forget that [Silvercloud](#) is available to all UCD students. Also, a new national crisis textline launched on June 16th. It's called [50808](#) and is a HSE-funded, free, 24/7 text service, a first of its kind for Ireland. It provides everything from a calming chat to immediate support for people going through a mental health or emotional crisis.



Student Support

UCD Access & Lifelong Learning (UCD ALL), offers supports to students with disabilities, mature students, students from low-income households, and students who are refugees or asylum seekers. Supports available include: Financial supports, academic supports and social supports. All students linked with UCD ALL can avail of one-to-one support from a dedicated staff member. Supports available to students with disabilities specifically include: Assistive technology, occupational therapy, learning support and exam supports (extra time, alternative location, etc.). Everyone is welcome to enrol in the UCD ALL Student Supports Brightspace Module where you'll find lots of resources on the skills you need to succeed as a student in UCD. For more information, please email all@ucd.ie.

The Importance of Empathy

Brené Brown always talks a lot of sense and is one of the wisest humans around. She has this cool [video on the difference between empathy and sympathy](#). She says that empathy fuels connection and she goes on to talk about the four qualities of empathy. As we're all about connection here and the importance of it for staying well, we highly recommend this video (and anything by [Brené](#) to be honest!)

Vet Community Garden: No Lockdown Could Stop the Spuds!

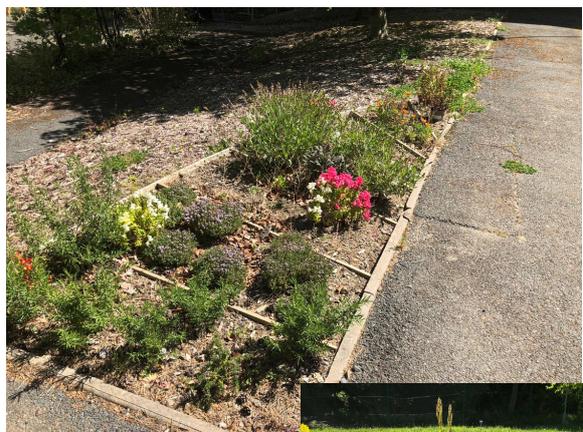
Bridget Hogg, Vet School Technical Officer

Fear not, there will be floury potatoes! Seed potatoes saved from last year were put out to chit just before the lockdown began. Ten weeks later, just after the start of 'Phase One', several dried-out lumps of potato with a few miserable green shoots were rescued from the windowsill in the Vet building. They were thrown into the raised bed in the Vet vegetable garden on the off-chance something might just grow. Three weeks later, with the good Irish weather of all four seasons in one week, they are flour-ishing!

What about the rest of the garden, you may ask? Thanks to the efforts of our keen gardeners last year (students and staff), it was seeded with cover crops of Phacelia and white and red clover. These crops have not only returned nitrogen back to the soil with the help of their bacterial symbionts, but they've put on a magnificent display of flowers. This, along with the herb wheel, was very much appreciated by the bees and other pollinators. Having given the garden a year to rest, look out for a bumper crop next year!



Potatoes (not really socially-distancing!) happily making their home in the Vet Community Garden and looking forward to students' return.



To your left, some gorgeous photos from our lovely Vet Community Garden. On the far left, you can see our herb wheel, featuring rosemary, thyme, and other heavenly scents (with some flowers, too). In the two other photos, you can see our winter cover crops.

If you'd like to know more about the garden and/or get involved, please contact: bridget.hogg@ucd.ie or niamh.nestor@ucd.ie.

Our garden is by the community for the community. You don't need any experience to get involved. We'll help you learn, and you'll discover the joy of growing your own veggies. Who could resist?!!

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

Reflections during Pride Month

Shauna Gavin, Class of 2019, UCD Alumna

June is usually a fun month, the weather is (mostly) nice enough to get out and about, evenings are long and ideal for spending time with friends and family, and holidays are on everyone's mind. This June, however, things have been very different. As the world reels from a global pandemic and the issue of racial injustice comes to the forefront of everyone's mind, now is the perfect time for the Veterinary profession to look at its current diversity levels and ask ourselves, "What can we do better?"

In the UCD Vet School, there is an amazing group of people working continuously to improve things for both underrepresented and undervalued groups in the vet community. They should be so proud of the wonderful changes they've made so far. I know they will continue to strive for equality and amplify the voices of those of us who need it most. Racism and homophobia have no place in Veterinary.

I, personally, have found myself in a very reflective mood this month. I've graduated a year, working as a real-life vet for a year, living away from home for a year now. It's also Pride Month, and the first time since coming out that I won't get to celebrate with all my friends in a big queer parade. I'm lucky, though. I'm supported by a wonderful practice, family and group of friends. Life in the real world has been an absolute rollercoaster, but I've loved every minute of it.

Look after yourselves this month, check in with your LGBTQ+ friends and your friends of colour. Listen to their experiences and work consistently to dismantle discrimination of any kind. I have no doubt that we are moving towards a more open, equal and diverse profession.

Happy Pride!



Above is a photo of Shauna (2nd from left) with her work colleagues, celebrating Pride with a difference this year!



Shauna is pictured above with the Dean Prof. Michael Doherty and Prof. Torres Sweeney, Chair of the Vet Athena SWAN Committee. Shauna won the inaugural Dean's Inclusion Award in 2019.

Postgrad Corner: Peer Mentor Awards Ceremony

Annetta Zintl, Lecturer in Veterinary Parasitology and Immunology

Friday, June 26th, will mark the completion of the first round of our new postgraduate Peer Mentor programme which was set up in August 2019 and closely modelled on the highly successful undergraduate Peer Mentor programme in the Vet School. The primary aim of the scheme is to help build a supportive community amongst research students and postdocs and to assist new students with the transition to postgraduate research which can, at times, be a lonely endeavour, while providing continuing students with the opportunity to develop leadership, communication, organisation, and teamwork skills. We were delighted by the very enthusiastic response of our postdocs and postgraduate students, many of whom came forward to take new students under their wing during the first year of their study.

A social pizza event in November 2019, which featured everything from vegan to halal to full carnivore food options, was well-attended and received. Unfortunately, a second event planned for earlier this year had to be cancelled due to the lockdown. However, mentors and mentees will be invited to a virtual coffee and cake event on Friday, June 26th where the Dean will award certificates in recognition of their effort and support. We look forward to welcoming our new crop of mentors in September, some of which may be mentees-turned-mentors, ready to continue the 'new tradition'. For further information on postgrad peer mentoring, please email Annetta.Zintl@ucd.ie.



Raising a Seagull – The First Weeks

Jamison Kass, 4th Year Grad Entry Student

Here in the coastal city of Aberdeen, Scotland, innumerable gulls of various types are nesting on the rooftops. Whether due to wind, a bigger sibling, or trying to follow its parents, a chick fell from his or her rooftop, and was discovered by my neighbor's golden retrievers, Pink and Floyd, while we were out walking. Of course, I immediately scooped the chick up and rushed it home, leaving it to rest in a cozy (but well-ventilated!) box so that handling it would not be too stressful. I later checked the chick, now dubbed Luca, for injuries, and found it was in fine form, if a bit subdued. I tried feeding it, then left it be for another few hours while I did further research; it is my first gull chick. I found out that returning a chick to a nest or nearby roof, even a shed roof, is enough to get the parents to still feed it. However, there were many warnings not to place the chick in or too close to the wrong nest, as gulls will kill a chick who is not their own. Even if I could get on the rooftops, I have no idea which nest Luca fell from. I also confirmed that soaked cat food is an adequate diet for this chick. Now, Luca is eating happily from chopsticks, which will theoretically spare my fingers when it is bigger! The poor thing also tries to answer the calls of other gulls outside, but for the most part rests or plays in the water dish. I hope to move it into the back garden when it begins to get feathers, and will keep it in the shed at night for safety. Wish us luck!



Luca Day 1



Luca Day 2



Above and below:
Lucky



The Luck of the Irish...Gull?

Jade Mariano, 2nd Year Veterinary Nursing Student

Introducing the adorable "Lucky", a gull chick currently in rehabilitation. Lucky was rescued from a cat attack by a lovely gentleman named Joe. Like most babies, his hobbies include napping, screeching for food, and projectile pooping! Lucky is now housed with six other baby gulls, making him Lucky number seven. The chicks will be released back into the wild when they are able to fly and fend for themselves. Seagulls are often met with disdain due to their adaptation to urban living, and it has even been suggested that they be culled, but most people are not aware that their numbers have been in major decline over the last few years. [BirdWatch Ireland](#) list herring gulls as a status red, meaning that they are of high conservation concern. Common gulls are listed as a status amber, meaning that they are of medium conservation concern. Perhaps it is time to examine the human impact on local wildlife and seek solutions that inspire kindness toward all forms of life.

To rescue, or not to rescue?

Jade Mariano, 2nd Year Veterinary Nursing Student

New life is awakening all around us every day. Feisty fox cubs are learning to forage, soaring swallows have returned from Africa, and busy butterflies are sipping sweet nectar. Our spring and summer months welcome new wildlife every year, and perhaps the most frequently spotted are baby birds. During these times, it is helpful to know when intervention is required. Most fledglings spend some time on the ground learning to fly, and mum and dad are usually keeping a watchful eye. If feathers are present and it is not in danger - leave it be! A nestling will not have feathers and should be gently placed back in its rightful nest. If the nest cannot be found or in case a bird is injured or in danger, rescue is necessary. Place inside in a warm, quiet, dark space with minimal interaction from humans and pets. Further advice can be obtained from [Irish Wildlife Matters](#), including information on wildlife training. As future veterinary professionals, our compassion and skills are gravely needed to help protect Ireland's wildlife.



Nestling



Fledgling

**Editors' note: In addition to [BirdWatch Ireland](#) and [Irish Wildlife Matters](#) mentioned in the above articles, [the ISPCA](#) can also be contacted. [The ISPCA](#) is Ireland's largest national animal welfare charity. Together with its members, it helps, rescues, treats and responsibly rehomes tens of thousands of animals of all different species.*

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, your gardening gems, any cookery tips, short stories, thoughts, etc. for our next issue! Please email margaret.macdonagh@ucd.ie by July 6th, 2020.