



STUDENT NEWSLETTER

Scoil an Leighis Tréidliachta UCD | UCD School of Veterinary Medicine

WELCOME

Welcome to Issue 3 of our newsletter! Thank you all for your positive feedback on the fantastic contributions we've read in Issues 1 and 2. Our main aim is to stay in touch with you over this summer, and we are delighted to be able to share stories from and with our brilliant School community. In this issue, Krista, Shauna, Eileen and Dáire tell us about some of the things they've been busy with during lockdown. Nikki gives us a sneak peak at the adventures of Fantastic Mr Fox Jr, and Catherine fills us in on graduating during a pandemic. Finally, check out the section on student supports which focuses on the challenges of remote learning and the supports available to you. 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

Provisional results were released on June 22nd and final results will be released on July 14th. Don't hesitate to get in touch with us if you have any questions. We are all here to help and support you. You can [contact your module coordinators, the Programme Office and your Student Adviser](#). No query is too big or too small!

As we prepare for both returning and new students to arrive on campus for the Autumn Trimester, [you might find this website helpful](#). You'll be able to navigate what facilities, services and supports are currently open and accessible on campus as well as those that are available by phone or virtually. The website will be updated regularly as more facilities, services and supports reopen their doors.

Tips for Wellbeing

RTÉ has a podcast series, hosted by Jan Ní Fhlanagáin, called '[You OK?](#)' which is definitely well worth a listen. The last episode focuses on [3 exercises for mental wellbeing](#). The guest speakers talk about managing anxiety using breathing techniques, Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) skills, and meditation. The podcast ends with a gorgeous gratitude-focused meditation. Look after yourself and take care this summer. Remember (as one of the speakers says): "You can't pour from an empty jug".

Graduating During a Pandemic

Catherine Hearne, Veterinary Nursing Alumna

My name is Catherine and I graduated during a pandemic which wasn't expected to say the least! My last day of rotations was on March 12th. It was such an abrupt end to an amazing four years of studying veterinary nursing and living the college life. As final years, we were faced with finishing our project and the big final exam, away from familiar surroundings and our college support system. We got through it together, yet apart. I am not the biggest fan of video chatting, and, if you know me, you know I have a tendency to forget to text back, so the biggest challenge for me wasn't studying but staying in contact with friends. It was very strange not being able to see my classmates, but I had some of the funniest chats, and new memories were made during this time.

It really resonated with me that in college you meet some amazing people and make lifetime friends. We all supported each other with both college work and also personally because being away from friends and family isn't natural to us. We all knew that everyone will have a sad day now and again, and it was made so normal to talk about it openly. I hope this is something we take into the future with us.

Since finishing and graduating over the TV (!), I have started a fantastic job as an RVN. And even though I am back to my 'new normal', I still find myself video-chatting friends and I have even gotten better at remembering to text back! If I had any advice, it is to enjoy every second of your college life because you never know when a pandemic will hit!



The photo on the left is of Catherine and her classmate Pamela Collie during the 2019 White Coat Ceremony.



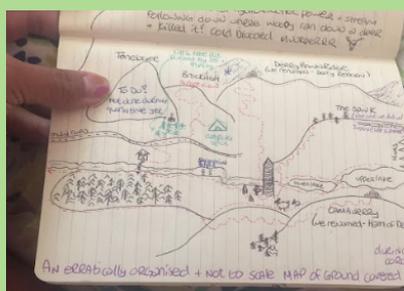
During her time at UCD, Catherine was heavily involved in campus life through UCD Clubs and Societies. She established the UCD Veterinary Nursing Society in 2018 together with Veterinary Nursing students Eimear Bruton, Pamela Collie, Matthew Davidson, Jessie Duignan, Sarah Glynn, Dearbhla Gower, Paul Hughes, Emma-Jane Leggett, Ross McDonnell, Rachael Murphy, and Niamh Stapleton, and Radiography student Ciara McPhilomy. In addition, Catherine was Auditor of UCD Chess Soc in 2017/18. This committee supported UCD in setting up one of the Student Newsletter Editorial Team's favourite features on campus - UCD's giant chessboard! Chess Soc chose some of the chess pieces and provided other help and support for this wonderful project.

The Sisterhood of the Travelling Diary

Shauna O'Halloran, 4th year Grad Entry Student



Our gang of grads have been trying to stay connected during the lockdown. This great idea came from the mind of Brittany Rampersad. Currently in Hamburg, Germany, she started a diary in March, and since then it has travelled here to Ireland. It was with Lieve and Alex in Glendalough where they added maps of their hikes and lovely recipes for tasty carrot cake. It then came to me on the Northside of Dublin.



I added patterns from my newfound interest in knitting. The diary almost made it all the way to UCD, to Lucy's house. I imagine that she filled it full of stories about chunky cats! We are hoping to send our diary to the girls in the States once international posting comes back.

It's been a very fun project. Summing up our days into diary entries helped us all appreciate the little things in our day that were exciting. I imagine it will be entertaining to look back on in a few years' time.

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 17th, 2020.



Student Support

Having an effective study/work routine

Eithne Coleman and Kim Lombard, UCD Access and Lifelong Learning

Are you finding it difficult to engage in a routine at home that supports you socially, personally, and academically? Do you feel that your bedroom/kitchen/sitting room space is not set up for study, exams or relaxation? In UCD Access and Lifelong Learning (UCD ALL), we understand that remote learning has its challenges and we will continue to support students with their return to college next trimester.

UCD Occupational Therapists, in collaboration with Occupational Therapists in TCD and TUD, have made available some resources for students returning to college or those continuing to engage over the summer months. These resources can be found on our [YouTube channel 'Occupational Therapy Resources'](#), including videos on designing your routine and managing your study, exam and relaxation environment while studying from home. Keep an eye on the [UCD Access and Lifelong Learning website](#) for further resources that are available to all UCD students at this time. For more information on UCD ALL supports, please email disability@ucd.ie.

Summer Softball Coach

Krista Morrison, 4th Year Grad Entry Student

My dad is an assistant softball coach for the local high school here in Ohio, but due to COVID the school was not able to have their regular softball season. I had been working with the team over winter break as well, and when the state began opening up (on May 1st but sports weren't cleared until June), the summer softball league started up so my dad and the head coach asked if I would be willing to help out again. There's no league championship the players are working towards right now although we have been told there will be playoffs in the league we are in. This is more about having fun because they didn't get to have a regular season in high school.

I have mainly been working with the players on their batting (as this was my specialty in high school and I had an amazing hitting coach), and it has been so rewarding seeing how far they have all come and how well they are all doing. A lot of what I'm doing is setting up the different tees and hitting exercises as well as watching their swings, advising on what they could be doing better, and what they need to work on. I've also been helping out with the fielding drills, especially in the outfield. (Fielding drills include: drop step drills, star drill, practising staying down on grounders, and practising fielding and where the ball goes with a person already on base.)



In the photos on the left and right, you can see Krista at batting practice



Coaching has been a great stress relief, and I hope to be able to keep it up in some capacity after I graduate. What are my top tips for batting? Always keep your eye on the ball, drive through the ball and don't roll your wrists over early; don't swing for the fence because it will mess up the mechanics of your swing; and finally, always swing at a third strike.

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

DIY Adventures During Lockdown

Eileen Pfeffel, Stage 5 MVB Student

Finding free time as a veterinary student can be a difficult thing. Faced with five years of gruelling work, study, and practical placements, I knew that I likely wouldn't have time to work on any of the many projects I had floating around in my mind, and accepted that, knowing that applying myself in college would be important for my future career as a vet. So when the world was rocked by our current circumstances and all my carefully-planned placements fell through, I decided to try and find the good in all the mountains of bad we're all experiencing at the moment and take this time to put some of my long-awaited projects into action. Redecorating my room was definitely top of that list, and the first step was to convince my father that making six metres of floating shelves shaped like tree branches was a worthwhile use of our time and his decades worth of carpentry experience. My dad is a brilliant man who need only look at a thing before he could tell you how it works, how to take it apart, and how he could replicate it, so the practical side of things was no problem to him.



We proceeded to spend the next week constructing, while he repeatedly wondered which of us was more mad - me for coming up with the idea or him for helping me to actually make it! To accompany my beautiful new shelves, my room needed painting, which took another three days before dad could help me mount the shelves, a nerve-wracking operation as I had hand-mixed most of the paint for the walls from old leftover paints, and, as I let him know, there was no do-over option if we damaged the wall, as if he needed any more stress for this project! However, thanks mostly to his experience and skill, we managed to get the shelves up with no disastrous occurrences.

A final touch was fixing my headboard, which was old and discoloured, and, being a typical broke college student, rather than buying a new one, I bought a piece of foam online which I stuck to the headboard and covered with an old velvet curtain we had lying around. I did go slightly mad with power after being allowed to use the hammer stapler but have since recovered*. And now, I get to spend this pandemic in my ideal room, so at least something good has come out of it all.



*no fathers were harmed in the making of this project

Fantastic Mr Fox Jr

Nikki Walshe, Lecturer Equine Clinical Studies

Over the last month, a young family in Kilkenny have had a frequent visitor – aptly named Fantastic Mister Fox Jr. About the size of a 10-week old Labrador pup, this cheeky fellow, with no encouragement, has become very interested in domestic life.



He has already tried to steal multiple wellies and has even managed to find himself a grand soft den to chill out in. The cats have paid little regard to his presence, seeing as there is also a recent addition of a 4th human baby to the family - who could blame them for thinking it was just another family member!

There have been assurances that this little guy is not an orphan and that his mum probably comes to check on him at regular intervals and also, that over time, he will just get on with his life as a fox. For now, though, during times of isolation and boredom, he provides great excitement and delight to the 4 family smallies who are desperate to have a COVID fox puppy.



*Editors' note: For further information on any of the above, [Irish Wildlife Matters](#) and [the ISPCA](#) can 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.

Postgrad Notices

Did you know that Carita Bramhill is UCD's Graduate Research Student Adviser? Carita can assist you to find pathways to deal with personal, social and emotional issues and can provide advice on UCD policies, procedures and services. Carita brings with her training in public health and psychology and hopes to be able to further enhance the student experience through offering support and guidance to students at all stages of their graduate student journey. Find Carita's contact details [here](#).



The next Vet School postgrad/postdoc Zoom coffee morning is on Thursday, 16th July at 12noon. Prof. Annetta Zintl and Dr Niamh Nestor will also attend to answer any questions you might have. During this coffee morning, Ciara our postgrad rep will give some information about upcoming events featuring representatives from [UCD Careers](#) and the [UCD Writing Centre](#). If you have any requests or specific subjects you'd like to see covered during these upcoming events, please come along on the 16th and let us know so that we can prepare the speakers and make sure you get the most out of these events. If you'd like to come along to the coffee morning and haven't received the Zoom link yet, please drop Ciara an email at: ciara.j.hayes@ucdconnect.ie.

Contact Tracing During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Dáire O'Driscoll, Stage 3 MVB Student



I got involved in the UCD Contact Tracing Centre (CTC) after I received an email from the Dean of the Vet School Prof. Michael Doherty in mid-March, shortly after the campus closed, looking for volunteers for the CTC. At first, I was hesitant but upon seeing that Dr Locksley Messam was involved I decided I'd give it a go. I was trained two days later by Locksley himself and noticed from the start that there was a large presence from the Vet School. Dr Niamh Nestor and Sarah Murphy, a student like myself, were trained at the same time as me. As the weeks went by, I got to know lots of researchers, lab assistants and lecturers from the School. There were many of us in and out of the CTC every day, putting in hard hours trying to get through cases. The likes of John Furlong, Eamonn Gormley, Kevina McGill and Niamh Nestor were fierce busy in there. Nicola Fletcher was heavily involved at the beginning before making her own breakthrough in the veterinary laboratory. Dr Gerald Barry was also highly involved before having a Covid scare of his own.

The work was very rewarding and helped me feel purposeful throughout the lockdown – as Fr Philip Eno says, “God bless the work”! As time went by volunteering, I was headhunted by Prof. Mary Codd and Prof. Patrick Wall, both from the School of Public Health, Physiotherapy and Sports Science (SPHPSS) and very heavily involved in running the CTC, and appointed as an Operations Lead. This meant long days and nights, but the cooperation and teamwork by all involved and the knowledge that our work was making a difference kept us all going. We even had a few visits from RTÉ who were interested in shooting some footage about the CTC for the RTÉ News and Primetime.

The craic in there was also decent! Prof. Pat Wall and the Dean of Science Prof. Joe Carthy were always exchanging jibes, and the rivalry between different schools and different callers while trying to work through the HSE backlog made the work all that bit easier. I found it very rewarding working with students, researchers, and postgrads and loved the opportunity to boss around some of my lecturers! I'm happy that I was able to make a contribution to the national COVID-19 effort and proud of the great work done by UCD and especially the Vet School.



** For more information on the CTC at UCD, please see the information on the [UCD website](#) and also [this article from UCD SPHPSS](#). If you are interested in reading more about Ireland's CTCs and what is involved in how they operate, [this Department of Health link](#) will be helpful.