

STUDENT NEWSLETTER

Scoil an Leighis Tréidliachta UCD | UCD School of Veterinary Medicine

WELCOME

Welcome to Issue 8 of our newsletter. Spring is finally in the air, and there is a bit of hope on the horizon with the rollout of vaccines.

Our last issue came out in December, so we'd like to take this chance to wish everyone a happy and healthy 2021! (Never too late!) In this issue, we bring you some brilliant student articles. Sloan writes about her experiences on an Irish farm in lockdown, and Eimear gives us an insight into doing a summer research project. When students go away to college, they often leave beloved pets behind at home, and Carli gives us an insight into this experience as an international student. Lea would like to invite people interested to participate in a weekly Bible study via Zoom, and there is also some information about staying well during the ongoing pandemic, supporting the Irish Cancer Society in March, and a call for you to submit your favourite lockdown photos.

Enjoy!



School News

This is our first issue of 2021! We hope you all enjoyed a restful Christmas break, even though it might like aeons ago at this stage. The Spring Trimester is in full swing, and we can't believe it's already week 4. Chatter about the two-week fieldwork/study period in March is already starting!

Everything is pretty much online right now for most students, and you might be finding it tiring, not to mention de-motivating, to be staring at a screen all day. UCDALL has some excellent resources for supporting your online learning, including support for time management and managing procrastination - check them out [here](#). If you need to get a library book from the libraries (other than the [JLL which is open](#)), you can use the request-and-collect service - check out the information [here](#).

We are all here for support. Reach out if you have any questions or concerns - your [module coordinators](#), the [Programme Office](#), your [Student Adviser](#). We are here to help!

Interested in contributing to the Student Newsletter or getting involved? Drop an email to niamh.nestor@ucd.ie

Lockdown Lambing: Isolating in the West of Ireland

Sloan Massie, Final-year Grad Entry Student

If someone had told my younger self back home in Canada that I would one day be spending Christmas by lambing on a sheep farm in a remote Sligo village called 'Ballygawley', I would never have believed them. But if this past year has taught us one thing, it is that anything can happen!

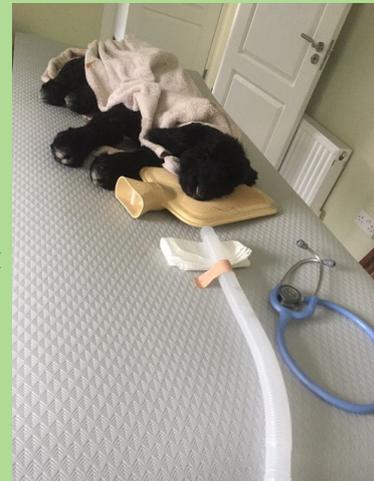


Taking advantage of the nearby Sligo Way, which runs along the farm property

I have had the pleasure of visiting County Sligo many times over the past few years; I first completed my lambing placement up here in the spring of 2018 and have returned to the same farm several times ever since. They have become like family to me, which, as an international student, has truly helped make Ireland my home throughout veterinary school. When I found out I was due back into UCD from Canada for rotations beginning January 4th, it meant that I had to arrive two weeks earlier to satisfy Ireland's quarantine requirements. Pitying the thought of me alone in Dublin for the holidays, the farmers invited me up for Christmas with open arms. Their flock of pedigree Suffolks would also be lambing at the same time, so an extra pair of hands would certainly be welcomed!

My first real 'Irish Christmas experience' was exactly how I imagined it would be – gorging in delicious food, savouring the smell of homemade mulled wine, and watching Irish holiday specials in front of the fire. There was less snow than I was used to back home in Ontario, but far more sheep! Of course, the ewes do not accommodate our holiday schedule, and I was in the shed on Christmas morning, helping the veterinarian with a C-section! With more experience around pedigree sheep like Suffolks, I have come to learn an important lesson about them – if anything can go wrong when they are lambing, it **will** go wrong! Multiple difficult lambings and veterinary callouts have made this season an invaluable teaching experience.

One of my favourite learning moments has been raising a lamb who we have affectionately named 'Betsy'. Following a very difficult lambing with the veterinarian, the lamb was barely breathing and did not seem like she would make it. As she gasped for air, blue in the face, we rushed her to the veterinary clinic so I could put her on oxygen – quite a sight! Slowly but surely, she started to breathe more regularly, her colour improved, and she started to lift her head. Eventually, she let out that familiar newborn lamb 'bah' – music to our ears! However, there was no muscle tone in her legs, and she could not stand. We placed her in a warm straw box with her mother and hoped for the best. She became my project over the coming days; too weak to even suck, I had to tube feed her at the start. Eventually, she learned to take a bottle, but I had to hold her up every time. Following daily 'exercises', she became strong enough to stand. A few days later, she took her first steps! Now, she is absolutely flying; her neck is still a bit weak to lift her head properly, but she is leaping about the place and suckling like a normal lamb! Overall, this was far more TLC than an average lamb would receive, but for a veterinary student starting to get a bit stir crazy from online webinars and virtual lectures, it was a welcome distraction; most importantly, the farmers now have a brilliant ewe lamb that would have otherwise been lost.



'Betsy' at the veterinary clinic receiving oxygen – quite the change from the usual cat or dog!

As COVID cases increased drastically over the holidays, and rotations were postponed, I was very fortunate to remain safe in Sligo. One might have thought I would have been devastated – after all, I could have been back home in Canada this whole time! But to be honest, that disappointment never crossed my mind. Instead, I thought of our overworked health care staff who may not have had a holiday to celebrate; the mental health of individuals isolating on their own; essential staff continuing to work amidst a global pandemic. My family was grateful to know I was safe in Sligo, and I was relieved to know they were all well back in Canada. To me, that is what matters most!



Sloan and Betsy!
Betsy has become a fine ewe lamb!
Still needs help holding her head up high though...

My Experience with Research

Eimear Bruton, Final-year Veterinary Nursing Student



Eimear in the lab during her summer research project

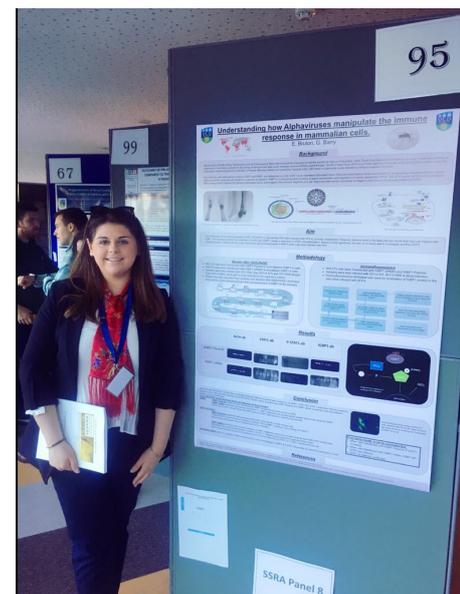
I never really saw research as something I would be interested in, and when I applied to carry out research, I saw it as an opportunity to rule out another avenue that a VN could follow. I was proven wrong; research was a fantastic experience that got me hooked on a career as a researcher.

I first became interested in research after attending a talk given by Dr Alison Reynolds on the topic of “Student Research Opportunities”. At the time, I was finishing up my first semester of 2nd year, and the prospect of spending my summer exploring another possible career path as a Vet Nurse was very appealing. I reached out to Alison who was more than delighted to help me explore this further. There are many researchers within the Vet School who take on students to assist them over the summer. The hardest part of the process is choosing where to work. My advice... choose something you are passionate about; you will have to do plenty of work before you start to familiarise yourself with the topic, so naturally you want to learn about something that interests you. For me this was a relatively easy decision as I had a keen interest in virology, something I discovered during my second-year modules. From there, Alison put me in touch with Dr Gerald Barry, and my research journey began.

My research with Gerald was focused on understanding how alphaviruses manipulate the innate immune response in mammalian cells. It was 12 weeks of hands-on laboratory experience that flew by! I learned a lot from my time in the lab. The level of responsibility was high and, although challenging, it was extremely rewarding. Most days were spent in the lab cultivating, transfecting, and infecting cells to test protein interactions of the virus. While waiting for results, I would spend my spare time in the office reading up on current material to aid my work. I have such respect for research as I now understand the long hours and hard work that goes into achieving just one small result. The feeling of seeing a particular protein band appear on a western blot after weeks of hard work is unbelievable; even better is realising that you are the one that did it!! For me, my proudest moment was finally getting a STAT-1 protein band to appear after 4 HARD weeks!! Hahaha.

There were so many benefits that came from this experience from an academic point of view I was exposed to amazing work and given the opportunity to contribute to this, something that always stands out on my CV! To say you have laboratory experience as a “research intern” will really stand to you! The great exposure to techniques such as Western Blot and Immunofluorescence were incredible. By the end of week 4, I was performing all these protocols by myself and producing results. I learned to write and present my work in an analytical and scientific manner, a trait that has helped me complete my Literature Review this year (final-year veterinary nurses have to complete a literature review, a large piece of academic writing, to complete the requirements for the year). During my research, I participated in the Student Summer Research Awards (SSRAs), where I had the opportunity to present my work in poster format to both students participating and UCD researchers. I met so many amazing researchers not only within the Vet School, but thanks to the SSRAs, I was also exposed to some ground-breaking work within UCD. I have made many dear friends from my few weeks in the lab!

For those unsure or thinking that research isn't for them, please give it a go. I never considered myself a “researcher”, and now it's all I want to do! I think this experience really demonstrates the variety of career options available to a Vet Nurse. My advice is: Don't hesitate, just do it! My summer spent researching is one of my fondest memories of this course. Although short, my time in the lab was brilliant, and I am beyond grateful to all those who helped me.



Eimear presenting her poster at the SSRAs

It's Not Goodbye...It's I'll See You Later

Carli Gentile, Stage 2 Grad Entry Student

Just before the start of every trimester, I find myself whispering those very words with tears in my eyes as I shut the door behind me. As a college student, and now as a veterinary student, I always found the hardest part of going back to school was leaving behind my beloved pets, Ollie, Fiona, and Timeless. Of course, it is also hard to leave your family behind, but somehow it just seems different. Between face-timing my parents and siblings and exchanging texts within the family group chat, it never feels like my human family is that far away.



Ollie and Fiona

Unfortunately, the line of communication between the animal counterparts of our families does not have the same cross-continental flexibility. My sister could send me adorable pictures of Ollie and Fiona all day long, but pictures can never replace what it would feel like to have two little sweater-clad shih tzus curl up next to you on the couch after another brutal pathobiology exam instead. Then, there is Timeless. It is easy enough to entrust your family to take excellent care of your dogs, but leaving behind a horse comes with an entirely different support system.



When I was sixteen, I found myself the proud owner of a seven-year-old Irish sport horse named Timeless. He came into my life shortly after I lost my mare, Aggie, when it still felt like the ground had been ripped out from under me. We had mixed feelings about each other at first, but over the years keeping him in my life became a high priority, no matter how irrational or expensive it may have seemed to everyone else. We have been together through the many highs and lows of our lives so far, and through it all he has been the constant that has kept me grounded in our rapidly-changing world, even while he is an ocean away. UCD is a bit farther away than Drew University was to home, so naturally Timeless knows our school year routine by heart. During the trimesters here at UCD, he is loved and kept busy by his aunties at Dapple Hill Farm. Then I come home every few months to give him endless amounts of cookies and a few good rides.

Carli and Timeless in January 2021

His reaction to my return was particularly special on my last trip home for the holidays. We had moved to a new barn after his rider of three years decided to break our lease agreement a month before break. His usual routine was broken, but luckily, he still had his aunties. As I walked to his new stall, Timeless heard the sound of my voice talking on the phone and rammed his head right through his open window in excitement. He threw his head up and down, snickered, and swayed back and forth with each step I took closer. Without fail we picked up right where we left off the last time, and I knew with a reaction like that I made the right choice to stand by him all these years.

Every day we make it through each semester takes us one day closer to the happiest reunions with our furry friends when we step through those doors wherever home is. Being away from home is always hard, but studying to be a veterinarian has always been my dream. The sacrifice of moving away from my loved ones, two legged and four legged alike, will be worth it knowing that someday soon I will be able to give owners and their pets more "I'll see you later."



Carli at home with Timeless in December 2020

Interested in Weekly Bible Study?

Inviting all veterinary and veterinary nursing students for a weekly Bible study on Zoom! A Bible study is a chance for people to get together, read God's word, discuss it, and pray together. We will be going through the teachings of the Gospel - the good news of Jesus Christ. The Gospel is made up of four books of the Bible: Matthew Mark, Luke, and John. We can live in freedom and peace because of Jesus, and it is available for everyone.

A single Bible study session will include discussion questions related to the week's topic, reading Bible verses, and reflecting. There is no extra work outside of the Bible study; you only need to show up with an open heart! It is no problem if you cannot attend every meeting. Please feel free to drop in on any session.



There will be an introductory Zoom meeting to meet each other, followed by six weekly Bible study sessions. The first meeting will be on Wednesday, 10th February 2021 at 7pm. Please email me, Lea Rice (4th stage vet grad entry) at lea.rice@ucdconnect.ie to sign up or for more information! I am looking forward to meeting all of you!

Hitting Your Pandemic Wall



Lockdown 3.0 has been tough going, even though there is light at the end of the tunnel with vaccines on the horizon. If you're feeling tired and de-motivated, you are *absolutely not alone*. Here at the Student Newsletter, we're hearing that from lots of people. Indeed, we're all feeling it.

"[Hitting Your Pandemic Wall?](#)" is an interesting article to read. It says that some of us are feeling something akin to burnout, and that this has (partly) to do with the fact that there is no clear endpoint to the pandemic right now (on top of all of the other stuff we're dealing with). The article lists 11 helpful ideas to combat the feeling of burnout and regain a sense of control.

Remember that there is always support at UCD for both students and staff. Just reach out.

JJL Opening Hours

Students have been asking recently about the Library opening hours and study spaces. For all information on the Libraries at UCD, please go to: <https://www.ucd.ie/library/>

Extended Opening Hours
James Joyce Library
from
08 Feb 2021



Monday – Wednesday
08.30 – 20.00



Thursday & Friday
09.00 – 17.00



Keep an eye on our Library Homepage for updates
<http://www.ucd.ie/library>



See our range of forthcoming Training Workshops
https://sisweb.ucd.ie/isis/W_HU_MENU.P_PUBUSH?p_tag=L1_BTRN

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

Support the Irish Cancer Society in March

Daffodil Day and the Relay for Life are huge national events we all love to get behind at UCD. Both are in aid of the Irish Cancer Society and both take place this year in March! This year, of course, things will be online.

We're *all* struggling a bit with motivation at the moment. No one is immune to this unfortunately. One of our recommended five-a-day for mental health is *to give*, and what better way to boost wellbeing than getting involved and helping others? Offering your time and support can help to boost your own sense of wellness, connection, and belonging. We're all about volunteering and participating here at the Student Newsletter, so we encourage you to read on below for two ways you can get involved to help support the Irish Cancer Society in March!



#UCDDigitalDaffodilDay on March 4th!

Daffodil Day, in aid of the Irish Cancer Society, is coming up on March 4th!

Given the way the world is, UCD is marking the day digitally this year, so keep an eye out on social media (ucdrugby, #UCDDigitalDaffodilDay) for announcements.

Over the next few weeks, UCD Rugby will be releasing information on how to donate, how to raise awareness, and even on how to win some prizes!

Attention All First Years! Relay For Life

The UCD Relay for Life Committee is currently organising its annual fundraising for the Irish Cancer Society. Due to the current Covid-19 restrictions, the usual in-person event cannot go ahead. Instead, a walking/running challenge is planned for the month of March where participants sign up in teams. There'll be lots of exciting events along the way as well as prizes up for grabs.

Relay for Life brings communities together to celebrate the lives of those who have battled and those who are battling cancer, to remember loved ones lost, and to fight back against this terrible disease. Relay For Life is a fun-filled empowering celebration that commemorates, celebrates and supports people fighting cancer and raises money to support the services provided by the Irish Cancer Society.

Anyone can take part, but UCD Relay for Life would especially like to invite first years to come along and take part! You can sign up (see link below) in teams of three or individually and be put into a team. Sounds like a brilliant way to get to know others!

There is a first-year event called "Minute to Win It" coming up on Zoom at 7pm on Feb. 16th where you can find out more. Here's the link to sign up: <https://forms.gle/5QXwoiSWueCHfTSC8>

P.S. The UCD Relay for Life is open to everyone, but the above Zoom sign-up event is specifically to encourage first years to get involved as they might not know as many people as the rest of us. For anyone else from upper years interested in getting involved, please contact them at Insta @relayucd or by email: secretary.ucdrelayforlife@gmail.com.



Lockdown Photos Sought!



You might be feeling a bit like you're in Groundhog Day at the moment. Motivation is a bit (just a bit?!) low, and every day is starting to feel like one long Tuesday. That all said, there is a little length in the days, and loads of us are continuing to get out and about, exploring the beauty of what's on our doorsteps. Spring is in the air and the world is bursting back into life.

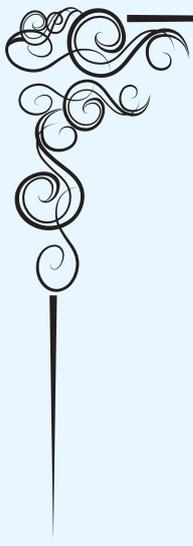
If you've been taking your cam with you and have managed to take some lockdown photos, we'd love to publish them in the Student Newsletter! Drop niamh.nestor@ucd.ie an email to find out more.

To get us started, here are two of Niamh's current favourite lockdown shots. Make sure to check out the next page for Ellen's epic shot of a cormorant drying its wings. Wildlife Photographer of 2021 definitely coming Ellen's way!



Bowling and Market on Middle Street in the beautiful Galway. A friend sent this to me recently. I love the hopeful message on their window: "I get locked down, but I get up again".

Snowdrops at Farnleigh, Phoenix Park this past weekend. The hundreds of daffodils there are just about to burst open.



Basking - Cormorant drying its wings in the spring sunshine, taken at the Dodder river
(Ellen Nugent, Stage 3 Grad Entry Student)

