

AUTUMN 2023

# UCD Veterinary Community News

*Nuacht Phobal Tréidliachta UCD*



## Our Flourishing Community



The Newsletter of the  
UCD School of Veterinary Medicine

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## About the UCD School of Veterinary Medicine

The UCD School of Veterinary Medicine is the only school of Veterinary Medicine on the island of Ireland. Accredited by the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS), the European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education (EAEVE), the Australasian Veterinary Boards Council (AVBC) and the Veterinary Council of Ireland (VCI), our MVB degree programme is one of only seven in Europe fully accredited by the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA). Our BSc in Veterinary Nursing is accredited by the Accreditation Committee for Veterinary Nurse Education (ACOVENE). We have a track record in education that is second to none and our excellence in teaching & learning, research and clinical endeavour is internationally recognised.

## Contributors

Kate Acton, Eimear Burkley, Michael Doherty, Emma Golding, Stephen Gordon, Eamonn Gormley, Alison Hanlon, Vincent Hoban, Alison Lee, Finola Leonard, Conor McAloon, Josephine McDonnell, Katherine McSharry, Kieran Meade, Carmel Mooney, Simon More, Siobhan Mullan, Niamh Nestor, Emma O'Neill, Mary Sekiya. Many thanks also to the members of our Young Alumni Ambassadors Group for their profile pieces.



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# Dean's Welcome



Dear Colleagues and Friends,

It is my great pleasure to welcome you all to the latest edition of UCD Veterinary Community News, and from a personal point of view, a huge honour for me to do so in my role as the new Dean and Head of the UCD School of Veterinary Medicine. The School has just welcomed back our new and existing student cohorts in both Veterinary Medicine and Veterinary Nursing, and whilst our Veterinary Hospital never sleeps, it is still hugely rewarding to embrace the noise, vibrancy and enthusiasm of future colleagues as they return to campus.

Developments all around UCD continue apace with new academic and support facilities that will ensure we maximise the student and staff experience; at School level, the formal ministerial opening of the new UCD Bimeda Herd Health Hub on the Lyons Farm campus on 25 October represents a huge stride forward in farm animal service provision, whilst the small animal hospital expansion has now entered the tender award phase.

The addition of new staff, including those recruited through the university's Ad Astra programme, has allowed us to recruit future clinical specialists and research-intensive colleagues who will add significant strategic value to our School.

The impact of our ongoing research continues to inform both national and international policy, whilst the sporting and cultural achievements of our student body and alumni have never been stronger. Our continued success in terms of our accreditation status and QS World Ranking is entirely down to the tireless efforts of all colleagues who show endless commitment to our core vision and mission. Whilst the future of veterinary education on the island of Ireland continues to be debated, we are focused on fostering an inclusive veterinary community that promotes professional well-being and serves all societal needs.

Finally, I wish to pay a very warm tribute to all my predecessors in the role I currently fill; it is often stated that "we stand on the shoulders of those who went before," and this has never been more pertinent than in my case. I also wish to express my deep gratitude for all the kind words and messages of support I've received and I hope everyone enjoys reading all the latest updates our School has to offer.

With my very best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rory Breathnach'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

**Rory Breathnach**  
Dean & Head of School

Follow the Dean on Twitter: [@RoryUCDVetDean](https://twitter.com/RoryUCDVetDean)

Message from the

# Communications Manager



Welcome to the fifth edition of UCD Veterinary Community News, the Newsletter of the UCD School of Veterinary Medicine. In his inaugural address to the Royal Veterinary College of Ireland in 1900, Professor Albert Mettam spoke of 'a Veterinary School to flourish' and in this edition of our Newsletter we're celebrating a community that is well and truly flourishing. Featured are some of the people who make up our wonderful community and the initiatives they've undertaken to make our School and wider University a better place to work and study. Our Veterinary Medicine and Veterinary Nursing students have been focusing their energies on projects that support their fellow students whilst also helping to make our community more sustainable. Dr Mary Sekiya, Chair of the Sustainable Research Initiative, tells us about ongoing activities to address sustainability at UCD. Our Veterinary Library was recently refurbished as part of a collaborative project with UCD Library and UCD Estates, the results of which have provided a significantly enhanced experience for all users. In this edition we're also highlighting just a few of the

many achievements from across our School over the past year - Fellowships of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons for Professor Carmel Mooney and Associate Professor Emma O'Neill, Dr Alison Lee the first vet to be awarded a Fellowship under the Irish Clinical Academic Training Programme, and Emma Golding competing at the FEI Para Driving World Championships with her horse, Mossy. In School developments, the UCD Centre for Veterinary Education launches this Autumn and our Vet Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Team are working hard on our Athena SWAN Silver Award submission. We've also launched a Young Alumni Ambassadors Group to promote engagement with our recent graduates and you can meet some of the members of this group inside. Finally, we say Slán agus Go Raibh Maith Agat / Goodbye and Thank You to Professor Michael Doherty who completed his term as Dean & Head of School at the end of August. Professor Doherty leaves us with a flourishing Veterinary School which will continue to thrive with Professor Rory Breathnach as our new Dean & Head of School. It has certainly been a busy 12 months in the UCD School of Veterinary Medicine - I hope you enjoy reading our Newsletter.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Helen Graham'.

**Dr Helen Graham**  
Communications Manager

Email: [helen.a.graham@ucd.ie](mailto:helen.a.graham@ucd.ie)

# News In Brief

## → Students Supporting Students



### The UN Sustainable Development Goals underpin these initiatives

Our Veterinary Medicine and Veterinary Nursing students organise a number of community initiatives each year focused on supporting each other whilst also helping to raise money for a range of good causes. Since 2018, in the spirit of reducing, reusing, and recycling, students across our community have donated various useful items to their classmates and to new students. Many of the items, for example academic books, are raffled off to students in an effort to raise funds for designated charities. In 2022, proceeds from the academic book raffle went to the Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ISPICA) and One in Four, an organisation that supports people who have experienced childhood sexual abuse. The students' efforts also focus on furthering the aims of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs); there are ongoing efforts across UCD to embed the UN SDGs across the University's education, research, governance and engagement activities.

Items donated by students include:

- > 500 academic books
- > 400 sets of scrubs
- > 400 white coats
- > 300 overalls
- > 300 pairs of wellies
- > Stationery galore
- > Boxes of household items

- > Tonnes of toiletries
- > Lots and lots of food
- > And ...this year, an electric scooter!

This wonderful community initiative has gone from strength to strength since 2018, and we hope it will continue for many years to come.



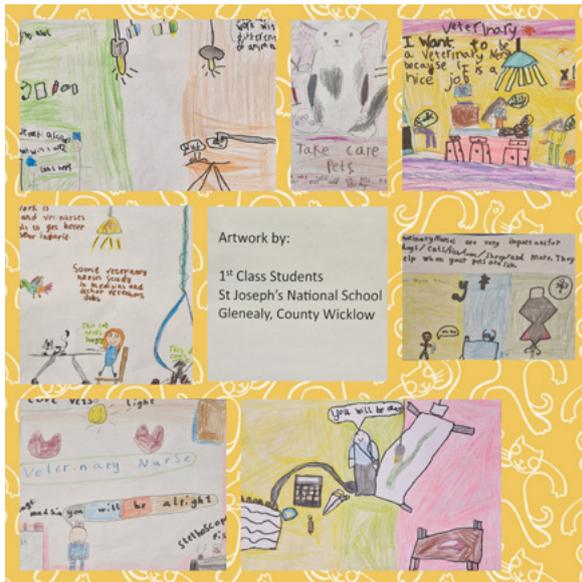
### Just some of the many books donated by students for our annual academic book raffle

## → Veterinary Nursing Awareness Month

Every year during the month of May, the veterinary profession celebrates Veterinary Nursing Awareness Month (VNAM). VNAM is an important initiative which focuses on highlighting and celebrating the hard work of Veterinary Nurses; it is also important in raising awareness and understanding of the profession amongst the public and pet owners, thus improving recognition of the vital role of the Veterinary Nurse.

This year, UCD Veterinary Nursing students and staff organised a bake sale to help raise awareness of our programme and the profession and to raise funds for a charity chosen by the students - the Dublin Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (DSPCA). As part of the event, artwork depicting 'What a Veterinary Nurse Does,' drawn by the First Class students of St Joseph's National School in Glenealy, Co Wicklow, was displayed in the foyer of the School.

Special thanks go to Kate Acton, Robin Farrell, Pamela Gillick, Mark McCorry and Tracey Murphy from our Veterinary Nursing Programme team and all of the very hardworking nurses in the UCD Veterinary Hospital.



Artwork depicting 'What a Veterinary Nurse Does,' drawn by the First Class students of St Joseph's National School in Glenealy, Co Wicklow

### → UCD Veterinary Nursing Podcast Celebrates International Women's Day

Launched in May 2022, the UCD Veterinary Nursing Podcast highlights veterinary nurses who work in practice and in other fields, uncovering what led them to choose Veterinary Nursing as a career, their most memorable cases, and some top tips for Registered Veterinary Nurses (RVNs) and Student Veterinary Nurses (SVNs).

To mark International Women's Day 2023, a special episode of the podcast was recorded, with host Kate Acton in conversation with School alumnus Samantha Feighery, RVN, BSc VN, BS. Samantha is featured on the School's Alumni Wall which was installed in 2022 to mark 20 years of Veterinary Science on UCD's Belfield Campus and to celebrate 20 of our most exceptional alumni. Samantha graduated from our BSc in Veterinary Nursing in 2013 and is now Lead Clinical Nurse at Rosssdales Equine Practice, with responsibility for a team of 11 equine nurses and 6 equine technicians. Her particular areas of interest are Neonatal and Intensive Care Nursing along with Infection Control and Biosecurity and to date she has published six articles in leading veterinary publications on these areas.

You can listen to all episodes of the UCD Veterinary Nursing Podcast on Spotify or wherever you get your podcasts!



The International Women's Day 2023 edition of the UCD Veterinary Nursing Podcast

### → UCD Centre for Veterinary Education

In March this year, following approval from UCD's Academic Council Executive Committee, the School of Veterinary Medicine announced the establishment of the UCD Centre for Veterinary Education (CVE). The UCD CVE will function as a combined research and CPD centre under the Directorship of Associate Professor Sue Rackard.

The Centre has a number of core objectives:

- › Conduct and disseminate research on topics in veterinary medical education to inform and enhance veterinary medical educational curriculum design practice
- › Collaborate and undertake educational research projects with local, national and international partners
- › Provide pedagogical, assessment and evaluation support for educators of veterinary medicine to implement research-based teaching

This is a hugely significant development for the School and one which will facilitate educational research as well as enhancing curriculum development in our Veterinary Medicine and Veterinary Nursing programmes.

The UCD CVE is due to officially launch in Autumn 2023 - further information and updates on the launch will be available on our website: [www.ucd.ie/vetmed](http://www.ucd.ie/vetmed)

# Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons Fellowships

Awarded to Professor Carmel Mooney & Associate Professor Emma O'Neill

Professor Carmel Mooney and Associate Professor Emma O'Neill from our Small Animal Clinical Studies Section have been awarded Fellowships of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) - Carmel for Meritorious Contributions to Knowledge and Emma for Meritorious Contributions to Clinical Practice. Since 2016, the RCVS Fellowship has been awarded in recognition of outstanding contributions to the veterinary profession. The purpose of the Fellowship is to advance veterinary standards by providing a resource of independent knowledge for the benefit of the veterinary profession. Dr Chris Tufnell, current Chair of the RCVS Fellowship and former RCVS President, congratulated the 34 new Fellows, stating that 'each one of them is an example of veterinary excellence, whether they came into the Fellowship through their contribution to clinical practice, through their advancement of veterinary knowledge, or through their contribution to the veterinary professions and wider society.' An award ceremony will be held in London on 27 November, at which the former UK Chief Medical Officer, Professor Dame Sally Davies, will be the guest speaker. Her talk, entitled 'One Health, One High-Level Meeting: the global movement on AMR,' will be delivered to the Fellowship to coincide with World Antimicrobial Awareness (AMR) Week.



→ Professor Carmel T Mooney  
MVB MPhil PhD DipECVIM-CA  
MRCVS

**EBVS European Veterinary Specialist in Small Animal Internal Medicine, RCVS Specialist in Small Animal Medicine (Endocrinology)**

Carmel graduated from University College Dublin in 1986 and spent the next 12 years working at both Edinburgh and Glasgow Veterinary Schools. She has completed

MPhil and PhD theses on feline hyperthyroidism and has gained RCVS Specialist Status in Small Animal Medicine (Endocrinology). Since 1998, she has worked at University College Dublin where she is currently Professor of Small Animal Internal Medicine. Her major research and teaching areas are in endocrine disorders of dogs and cats. She has lectured widely both nationally and internationally and has published many research articles in small animal endocrinology. Carmel has been President of the British Small Animal Veterinary Association and the European College of Veterinary Internal Medicine – Companion Animals.



→ **Associate Professor Emma O'Neill BSc BVSc PhD DSAM ECVIM-CA PGDipUTL PGDipEE**  
**EBVS European Specialist in Small Animal Medicine**

Emma graduated from the University of Bristol with a BSc (Hons) in Physiology (1992) and a BVSc (1994), completing a residency in Small Animal Medicine there in 1998. She was awarded a Wellcome Trust Veterinary PhD Studentship to study at Bristol Medical School, gaining a PhD in Immunology in 2003. In 2002, Emma joined UCD as a Lecturer in Small Animal Medicine, becoming Associate Professor in 2018, having gained both the RCVS and European College Diplomas in Small

Animal Medicine. Emma holds two Post Graduate Diplomas in Teaching and Learning and gained a UCD Fellowship in Teaching and Academic Development (2019-21), completing an institution-wide research project that explored student metacognitive skills development.

Emma designed, developed and directs the UCD Graduate Certificate in Small Animal Medicine, a distance education programme for veterinarians. A recipient of a 2021-22 University Teaching Excellence Award, Emma is passionate about teaching and equipping students with the appropriate skills to help them realise their full potential. Her teaching spans the undergraduate Veterinary Medicine and Veterinary Nursing programmes, the Doctor of Veterinary Medical Specialisation programme and ECVIM residency training, with extensive experiential clinical teaching within UCD's Veterinary Hospital. Emma has had substantial involvement with ECVIM specialist examinations and her primary areas of interest are canine liver disease, veterinary education and evidence based practice.

# The UCD School of Veterinary Medicine Young Alumni Ambassadors Group

The UCD School of Veterinary Medicine recently launched a new initiative for our Veterinary Medicine and Veterinary Nursing alumni - the Young Alumni Ambassadors Group (YAAG). The YAAG was established following discussions with current students and recent graduates around how the School can engage with and support new graduates in the years after they leave UCD. The YAAG will help to foster interaction and communication between the School and its recent graduates through establishing a shared sense of community - cultivating and encouraging a continuing affiliation among young alumni and the institution.

The Group will promote and support the School's programmes and activities through outreach and engagement with recent graduates and the wider UCD Veterinary Community, including current and prospective students. The work of the Group will support

the School's mission to be an inclusive community, delivering excellence in education, research and clinical endeavour. The School hopes that through the YAAG, it can tap into constructive feedback from recent graduates, and that the Group will act as a peer-to-peer network through which alumni can be assured feedback and suggestions are brought to the attention of the School. It will also serve as a sounding board for new ideas and will support ongoing efforts to improve academic, social and career experiences and create continued engagement opportunities for all members of our community.

We look forward to working with our YAAG members and to continuing to develop this important initiative in the coming years.

## → Young Alumni Ambassadors Group - Member Profiles

Alaina Bush



Born in Minnesota and raised in Kansas (USA), Alaina earned a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology with minors in Biological Sciences & Chemistry from Wichita State University in 2014. For the next 4 years, she worked full-time in a small animal veterinary practice as a veterinary technician and receptionist while trying to get into Veterinary School and was pleased to accept a place in the 5-year MVB programme at UCD in 2018. Following her graduation from UCD in June 2023, Alaina became licensed to practice in the state of Kansas. In August this year, she began work as an Associate Veterinarian in Small Animal General Practice at El Paso Animal Hospital in Derby, Kansas.

Alice Walsh



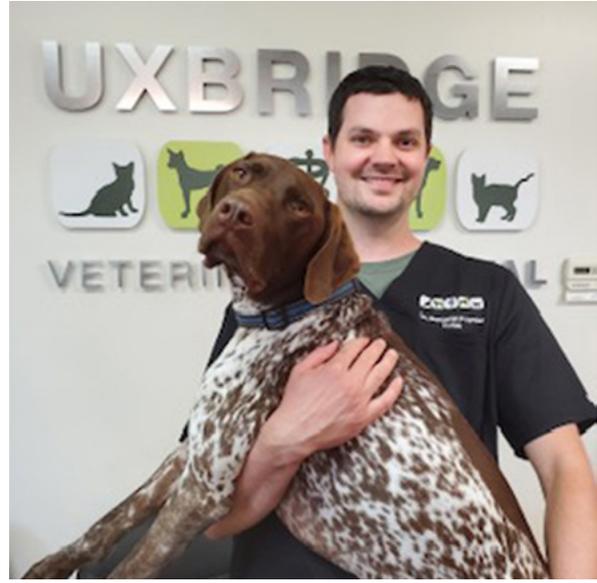
Alice is a 2021 UCD Veterinary Medicine graduate. Having conducted research during the course of her degree on the factors influencing the efficiency of the gamma interferon blood test for bovine tuberculosis, she decided to follow her interests in further education post-graduation. She secured a Teagasc PhD Walsh Scholarship in October 2021 and is currently researching the effects of milking management factors on dairy cow udder health with a particular focus on parlour technologies. She is set to graduate with her PhD in 2025. Alice joined the Young Alumni Ambassadors Group to inspire and support students who may wish to explore career options outside of traditional clinical practice and to give back to the UCD School of Veterinary Medicine who provided such support and opportunities for her.

### Audrey Saint-Marc



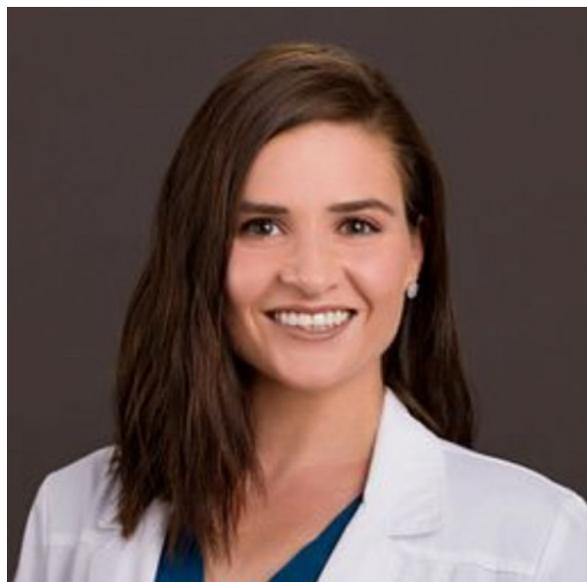
Audrey graduated in June 2023 from the 4-year Veterinary Medicine Graduate Entry programme. She is currently working in the south of France at a small animal clinic that sees exotics and the occasional goat and sheep. Originally from Fort Lauderdale, Florida, Audrey decided to get involved in the Young Alumni Ambassadors Group as she thoroughly appreciated her time in Dublin and at UCD and would like to stay in contact with UCD and aid potential applicants or current students attending the UCD School of Veterinary Medicine.

### Ben Poynter



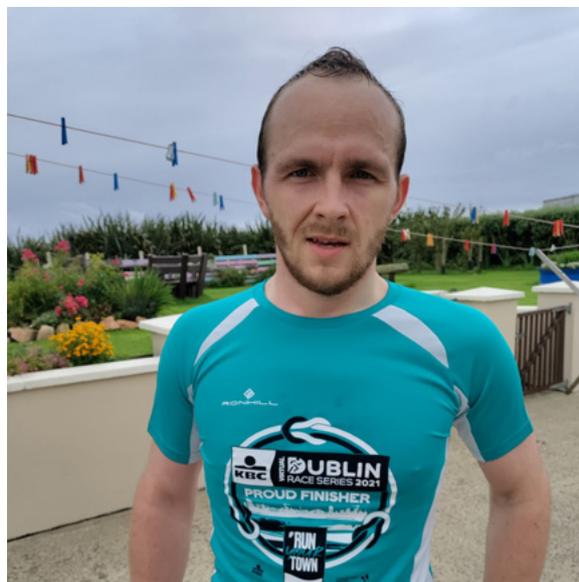
Benjamin Poynter is an Honours Bachelor of Science graduate from the University of Guelph. He subsequently completed a Bachelor of Veterinary Medicine in 2017 at UCD. Ben is a small animal veterinarian, with special interests in surgery and orthopaedic conditions. He maintains a membership with the College of Veterinarians of Ontario and Ontario Veterinary Medical Association. Ben, his wife, Alyssa, and their daughter live with their many animals - they have two dogs, Wally and Hadley, and three cats, Josie, Mitzy, and Minnie. When not at work, he enjoys spending time with his family and pets, playing hockey, fishing, and woodworking.

## Brianna Creighton



As an 'Army Brat,' Brianna moved constantly growing up but through all the changes, her love for animals remained constant. She cultivated her love for animals and healing through riding horses, caring for her family dog and volunteering at wildlife centers and zoos. In 2010, Brianna graduated from Virginia Tech with a Bachelors in Biology and then continued to work in cancer research for 4 years. After being accepted on to the Veterinary Medicine programme at UCD, she graduated in 2018 and continued to Alvarado, Texas for a mixed animal internship working on cattle, goats, sheep, horses, cats, dogs and small exotics. She spent a year in Northern Virginia expanding her small animal practice skills and knowledge before joining the team at Anicura veterinary practice. Brianna lives with her husband in Middleburg with their dog Luna and three cats, Troiste, Mumbo and Bixby. In her free time, she likes to garden, practice yoga, hike and relax.

## Bryan Deane



Originally from Belmullet in Co Mayo, Bryan graduated from the UCD School of Veterinary Medicine in 2018. He then moved to the UK, where he completed a Postgraduate Diploma in Veterinary Clinical Practice with the Royal Veterinary College while working in a large farm animal practice in Dorset. Bryan has since returned to Ireland and spent the last few years in mixed (predominantly farm animal) practice in various areas around the country. He also worked as a Clinical Fellow in the UCD Veterinary Hospital for a brief period, managing referral cases and teaching final year students. Bryan is currently working as a Veterinary Officer with the Health Products Regulatory Authority, where he is responsible for the assessment of safety and efficacy of veterinary medicinal products. Outside of work his interests include running, cooking and being active in general.

### Danielle Guglielmo



Danielle started her veterinary journey in 2016 working as a Veterinary Technician at her local practice in Brooklyn, New York. She quickly realised that she wanted to become a veterinarian and upon graduating high school, she left New York to study Veterinary Medicine at UCD. Danielle graduated from UCD in June 2023. She has a special interest in ultrasonography and anaesthesiology and hopes to gain certifications in these areas in the future. She's currently working as a small animal veterinarian at her local practice where it all started: Marine Park Veterinary Group.

### Fiona Sahyoun



Fiona graduated from UCD in 2021, having completed the Veterinary Medicine Graduate Entry programme. Fiona is from Toronto, Canada where she completed her BSc in the Biological Sciences with a focus on Wildlife Conservation at the University of Guelph in 2016. During her time at UCD, she was an auditor of the European Veterinary Business Alliance (EVBA) and the One Health Society. She was also an active member of the Peer Mentor group for incoming students and is excited to extend this role as an alumna. Fiona works as a small animal veterinarian at Palmerstown Veterinary Hospital in Dublin where she is fear-free certified. She has a keen interest in exotic medicine and continues to develop her skills set in this area. Furthermore, she also enjoys internal medicine and ultrasonography. In her free time, Fiona can be found along the coast of Dublin bird watching and sea swimming.

## Julie Edmondson



Julie grew up in County Wicklow, Ireland, and began horse-riding at the age of 4. She moved to Dublin for senior school where she developed a keen interest in Agricultural Science. At third level, she studied Agricultural Science at UCD, from 2015 to 2019, graduating with a degree majoring in Animal Science. Following in the footsteps of previous Edmondson family members, she subsequently went on to study Veterinary Medicine at UCD from 2019 to 2023. Julie chose to pursue the graduate entry route to the Veterinary Medicine course as she did not achieve the points for the programme the first time around, owing to her Dyslexia. Out of 200 Irish based applicants, she was one of only 6 students to get a place on the 4-year programme that year. All of Julie's academic studies to date have been fuelled by a love of horses and riding in every form - show jumping, hunting and playing polocrosse for the college team. She completed an externship with B.W Furlong and Associates in New Jersey, USA in the summer of 2022, and returned for an internship in 2023. Her specialist professional interests are sports medicine and surgery. She values personal fitness and enjoys cycling, running and competing in CrossFit. She is a keen baker as most in the practice already know and lives for travel! She also has a passion for art, in particular Equestrian painting and drawing. Julie decided to join the YAAG as she loved every part of her time in UCD and wanted to stay connected to both UCD and the Vet School. She hopes to pass on

the message to potential students that despite taking a longer and circuitous route to studying Veterinary Medicine, it can be done, and you can achieve your dreams if you so wish.

## Katie Walsh



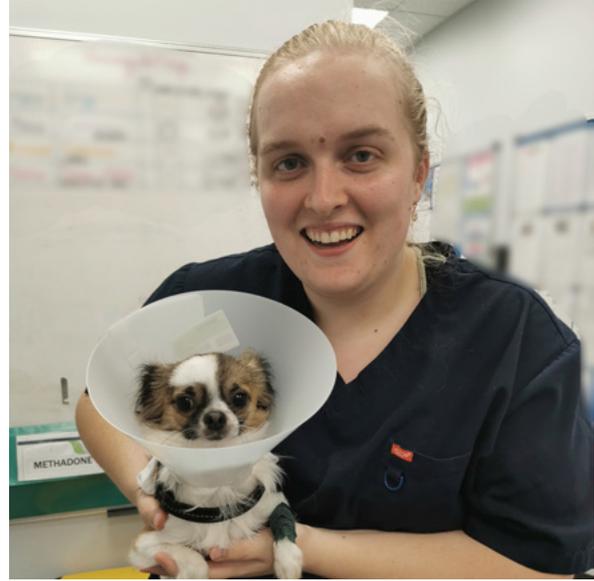
Katie graduated from the Veterinary Medicine programme in UCD in June of this year. She has a keen interest in Emergency & Critical Care and Anaesthesia and hopes to further develop her skills in these areas in the coming years. She is taking up a position as a Small Animal Rotating Intern in the UK this September. Katie joined the Young Alumni Ambassadors Group as she would like to support new graduates as they transition from student to the veterinary profession.

### Lauren Curran



Lauren graduated with a first class honours degree in Veterinary Nursing from UCD in June 2023. She is thrilled to have the opportunity to be currently completing an internship in the UCD Veterinary Hospital. She is also the new student representative for the Irish Veterinary Nursing Association (IVNA). Lauren joined the Young Alumni Ambassadors Group to connect with other recent graduates and to share her experience of transitioning from student to new grad with future colleagues coming through the UCD School of Veterinary Medicine and she is looking forward to embarking on this new venture as she starts her Veterinary Nursing career.

### Sarah Barry



Sarah is a 2021 Veterinary Medicine graduate. After graduating from UCD, she spent a year in small animal practice in Ireland before jumping the Irish Sea and she is currently working in a small animal clinic in the North West of England. She has an interest in clinical pathology, surgery and ophthalmology. Sarah also really enjoys being able to support and mentor new graduates and undergraduate student vets and vet nurses and this is why she joined the Young Alumni Ambassadors Group. Outside of work, Sarah enjoys exploring the British countryside, playing music and writing.

### Shauna O'Brien



Shauna is from Co Kildare, and she graduated from UCD's Veterinary Medicine programme in 2017. She has worked in mixed practice in both Ireland and Canada since leaving UCD. She currently lives in Ontario with her two cats (who travel to work with her), where she sees a diverse range of patients from the littlest sugar glider to the tall Canadian Holstein. She enjoys helping students and other vets in the equally important ways of sharing information and drinking tea with them. When not working, she likes hiking, canoeing, and attempting to survive riding her horse.

### Taylor Fisher



Taylor is a graduate of the UCD Veterinary Medicine Class of 2018. She is originally from the US, but always wanted to study abroad; her time in Ireland was unforgettable and she still misses it! Taylor enjoyed exploring the beautiful island of Ireland and also found it easy to travel around the rest of Europe from Dublin. After graduation, she initially started working in a split small mammal, small ruminant, and exotic private practice for a couple of years. She switched over to shelter medicine shortly thereafter, providing relief work for local shelters and working full time with a high volume-high quality spay neuter clinic. While Taylor learned a lot from her clinical experience, she really wanted to enter the field of wildlife population health as a veterinarian so she is currently pursuing a master's degree with the University of Georgia where she will be studying pathogens associated with feral pig habitats. This is one of the many reasons Taylor loves her chosen field - there are so many different career options once you graduate!

**For more information on the Young Alumni Ambassadors Group, please contact Dr Helen Graham, Communications Manager: [helen.a.graham@ucd.ie](mailto:helen.a.graham@ucd.ie)**

# Emma & Mossy

## Emma Golding Features in the International Federation for Equestrian Sports (FEI) Para Equestrian Digest



*Emma Golding has been Section Administrator for the UCD School of Veterinary Medicine's Equine Clinical Studies, Anaesthesia & Diagnostic Imaging Section for the last five years. She is also a part-time student, currently undertaking a PhD within UCD's Equine Medicine Research Group, studying Equine Metabolic Syndrome with a focus on modifiable risk factors, awareness of the condition and owner behaviour. In her spare time, Emma is an accomplished Para Equestrian driver who has represented Ireland in six Para World Championships for Singles. The International Federation for Equestrian Sports (FEI) Para Sport Magazine, Para Equestrian Digest, recently spoke to Emma about her Para Driving career and her unique relationship with her one-eyed gelding, Mossy.*

My pony Mossy is a quirky 13-year-old Lipizzaner gelding from Hungary. Initially, he suffered from recurrent inflammation in one eye, which hindered his ability to live a normal life tremendously. The decision to remove the eye was a turning point for Mossy and has greatly improved his comfort and quality of life; the surgery was performed by colleagues in the UCD Veterinary Hospital.

Mossy's limited vision has meant that he is more reliant on me, but this has led to strengthened trust in each other. Initially, while driving on the road or navigating a competition course, Mossy would rely on me for guidance, checking in with me every few seconds. But as we have progressed, he has started to press ahead with his ears forward, only occasionally looking back to check in with me. Working with Mossy has also been a steep learning curve for me as I've had to be more mindful of his limited depth perception. I now give him more time to observe new surroundings, and after

a few snorts and approximately 30 seconds, he just adjusts and moves on. We have certainly come a long way together.

Many people, including members of my own family, wondered if I would get back to riding after my accident. For me there was no doubt that I would. I know that I would not be living a full life if I wasn't with horses, and something would be missing. There's also the adrenaline that comes from working together with the horse, especially when you're training for competition. There are those days where it just seems like Mossy does everything I ask him to do. I know that he's in 'the zone,' receiving and acting on everything that I'm asking of him. And when everything falls into place, it's just right and it is the most freeing, exhilarating, satisfying experience. But you don't always get it. Most days, it's just hard work, but you keep chasing those moments where it all comes together and there's that telepathic connection between you and your horse.

In international Para Driving, the dressage test is the same for both grades of para drivers but the maximum number of obstacles for Para drivers in FEI events is six, whereas able-bodied drivers may have up to eight, depending on their level. The cones course for para and able-bodied classes in international competitions are usually similar, but speeds differ with para drivers having more time to complete the course. At the national level in Ireland, I'm currently the only para driver competing in the full marathon. There are para drivers with miniature horses but they complete a shorter version of the course as the horses are below the height requirement for an FEI competition. Due to the limited number of para drivers in Ireland and the UK, we do not have separate competition classes. Consequently, I compete against able-bodied drivers, which challenges and improves my skills as a competitor.



**Emma and Mossy in action**

Initially, walking the cones and obstacles posed significant challenges for me as a para driver. With only a manual wheelchair, I attempted to navigate the cones but found it difficult. For the obstacles, I resorted to watching my groom walk them while I sat in the car, which was not effective. However, when I met other para drivers from different countries, I discovered Swiss track, which is a small device that attaches to the wheelchair and tows it. It now allows me to go over cross-country terrain and various surfaces myself.

In my setup for Para Driving, I use a Bennington XL carriage with a modification. So instead of a regular carriage seat, I have a go-kart seat, which offers better support and stability. This suggestion came from another para driver when I initially started. Additionally, the carriage is equipped with a handbrake and a foot brake for convenience. To ensure proper positioning, I use quick-release harness bits that secure my feet and shoulders in place along with belts. Apart from these modifications, the carriage remains regular in its design and functionality.

As a para driver, my backsteppers Jasmine and Ciara play a vital role, holding my belts since I lack core muscle control. This helps maintain proper alignment of my shoulders, so I can drive effectively. During the marathon, they are indispensable in providing

directions and reminding me of time limits. Each driver and backstepper combination have their own unique approach. Ciara, who joined me for the FEI Para Driving World Championships in Exloo (NED) in August, also rides Mossy on my behalf as part of his training. While we already have a strong foundation for our partnership, it's through real-life competition situations that we truly refine our teamwork.

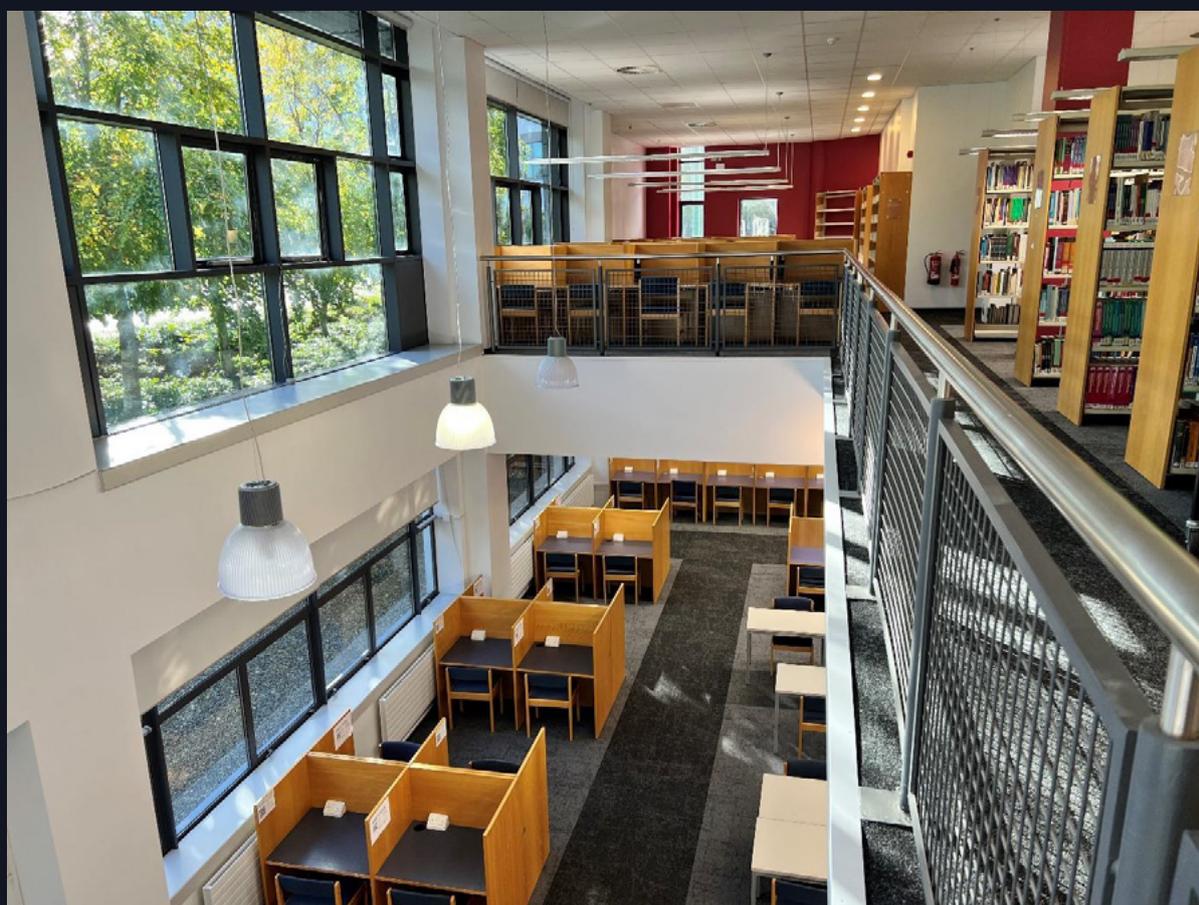
In the driving community, para drivers are accepted and supported, unlike in other areas of daily life where ableism can be prevalent. Despite, or maybe because of, being a small FEI discipline in Ireland, everyone knows each other, and the community is inclusive and helpful to each other. The driving community treats me as an equal driver which stands in contrast to non-equestrian life, where assumptions are often made about my abilities due to my disability. In driving, there is no discrimination, and the support I receive enables me to drive as anybody else.

*This article originally featured in the International Federation for Equestrian Sports (FEI) Para Equestrian Digest (24 July 2023). The full piece can be accessed here: [www.fei.org/stories/para-equestrian-digest/para-equestrian-digest-emma-golding](http://www.fei.org/stories/para-equestrian-digest/para-equestrian-digest-emma-golding)*

# Official Reopening of Refurbished Veterinary Medicine Library



Prof Michael Doherty, former Dean & Head of the School of Veterinary Medicine; Ursula Byrne, UCD Library; Dr Sandra Collins, University Librarian; Lorna Dodd, Deputy University Librarian; Prof Barbara Dooley, Acting Registrar & Deputy President; Cormac Reynolds & Brendan Allen, UCD Estates



The interior of the newly refurbished Veterinary Library



**Prof Michael Doherty, Lorna Dodd, Prof Barbara Dooley & Dr Sandra Collins**

The Veterinary Medicine Library at University College Dublin, one of the five sites which are part of UCD Library, is the only academic veterinary medicine library in the Republic of Ireland. Located in the Veterinary Sciences Centre in Belfield, the library supports the teaching and research activities of the Veterinary Medicine and Veterinary Nursing programmes and is an extremely important part of the student experience in the School of Veterinary Medicine. Alongside current students and faculty, members of the Irish veterinary profession may also use the Veterinary Medicine Library and its resources.

2022/2023 saw the completion of the first upgrade of the Vet Library since it was opened at the beginning of this century, giving it a fresh new look and feel and providing significantly enhanced services for all its users. UCD Library, the School of Veterinary Medicine and UCD Estates Services all worked together on this very substantial project, which has been welcomed by everyone who uses the building.

The initiative was made possible by a curation project that has been taking place across UCD Library's modern and teaching print collections. This maintains the quality, currency and relevance of these collections, so that students and faculty have seamless access to the most suitable resources, both print and digital, to support their work. In the Vet Library, this included the removal of print journals from the open floor, which created room to provide additional and upgraded study spaces, together with new services.

The library was freshly painted and newly carpeted, and two additional group study rooms were created.

Students regularly identify group study spaces as crucial for their work, and value having these spaces alongside zones for individual study, so they can move easily between the two. The refurbishment project also provided new loose seating and more desks, all equipped with power and plugs to support charging of multiple devices at once. Old chairs were reupholstered, and in total nearly 20% more spaces for students were made available.

In order to get this work completed, the Veterinary Medicine Library was closed for September and October 2022, with all the books and journals moved temporarily to the James Joyce Library, and then returned for the re-opening in November. Students had dedicated study spaces reserved in the Health Sciences Library and the James Joyce Library and were delighted to get back into their newly refurbished space before Christmas 2022.

Users of the Vet Library found a range of enhancements to services including upgraded facilities such as a new printing area, together with an automated Smart Return chute which makes it very easy to return borrowed books. They also benefitted during the year from an overall UCD Library pilot to remove the charging of fines on overdue books.

Designer Ger Garland created new graphics and signage for the space, producing attractive panels with photographs showing the work of the School of Veterinary Medicine today, and using quotes from students to highlight the importance of the physical space of the library and the building. As one example puts it: 'The genuine sense of community that exists among classes, across year groups and between staff and students alike... gives the feeling that we are one massive faculty family and every day as I walk into the vet building, I feel like I'm at home.' Other panels reveal the rich history and traditions of the School, drawing on historic photographs and visuals from UCD Library's cultural heritage collections.

At an event in March to mark the success of the project, University Librarian, Dr Sandra Collins, said 'We were delighted to work with the UCD School of Veterinary Medicine and UCD Estates on the Veterinary Medicine Library. The refurbishment was a major piece of work, which shows what can be achieved by working with partners across the University.'

# UCD Vet Equality, Diversity & Inclusion and Athena SWAN: Activities, Initiatives and Upcoming Plans

Having been awarded an Athena SWAN Bronze Departmental Award in 2019, the UCD School of Veterinary Medicine is applying for a Silver Award in November 2023. As part of the award application, the UCD Vet Equality, Diversity & Inclusion and Athena SWAN (VetEDIAS) committee, led by Co-Chairs Professor Stephen Gordon and Associate Professor Cliona Skelly, have been reflecting on the hard work put in since the Bronze action plan was established. The Silver Award application includes an impact assessment of the current action plan, learnings from consultation with staff and students, and sets out a new action plan for the next four years.

An integral part of the action plan is to foster and deliver an inclusive and supportive environment for all staff and students in the School of Veterinary Medicine and Veterinary Hospital. By applying for the Silver Award, the School reconfirms its commitment to welcome everyone into our community irrespective of gender (including gender identity), age, race, disability, ethnic origin, religion, sexual orientation, civil status, family status, or membership of the travelling community.

In addition to working on the Athena SWAN Silver Award application, the VetEDIAS Committee has been busy with lots of initiatives and activities over the past year. You can read about some of the highlights below and find out more about VetEDIAS initiatives on the School's website: [www.ucd.ie/vetmed/about/athenaswan/](http://www.ucd.ie/vetmed/about/athenaswan/)

## → Building Accessibility

Following a review of accessibility and signage in the UCD Veterinary Sciences Centre and UCD Veterinary Hospital, several immediate changes were actioned. Improvements were made to access routes in the Veterinary Sciences Centre, such as entrance door functionality and door-stops along corridors. Signage has been rationalised, and there has been an increase in the provision of gender-neutral bathroom facilities. More medium and long-term actions, identified during the review process, have been factored into the Silver Athena SWAN Action Plan for the next four years.



**Stephen Gordon, Cliona Skelly, Michael Doherty, Róisín Walsh, Marijke Beltman, Niamh Nestor, Eimear Burkley & Colin Scott at the School's annual Pride event**

### → School of Veterinary Medicine Dean's Inclusion Award



**Stephen Gordon, Lorna Murphy and Michael Doherty at the presentation of the Dean's Inclusion Award**

The Dean's Inclusion Award is awarded on an annual basis to individuals, clubs or teams that have demonstrated outstanding behaviours in the areas of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) during the previous academic year. Professor Michael Doherty, Dean and Head of School, accepted nominations from staff and students and was delighted to select Stage IV Graduate Entry Veterinary Medicine student Lorna Murphy as the winner for 2022. Lorna has demonstrated passion and drive for EDI in our School and the wider UCD Veterinary Community. The award was presented to Lorna by Professor Doherty and VetEDIAS co-chair Professor Stephen Gordon at a lecture with her fellow Stage IV students in February this year.

### → Pride

On 20 April, the School hosted our annual flagship Pride event, supported by the UCD College of Health and Agricultural Sciences (CHAS). This year we held the event a little earlier than usual, timed to coincide with the run-up to undergraduate students' exams. The event kicked off with an address from Professor Michael Doherty, followed by inspirational and moving speeches from Róisín Walsh (Student LGBTQ+ UCD Veterinary Society Representative) and Associate Professor Marijke Beltman, on what Pride means to them. VetEDIAS co-chairs, Associate Professor Cliona Skelly and Professor Stephen Gordon, provided closing remarks on the importance of recognising Pride in our community.

### → Looking Ahead to 2023/2024

The coming academic year will be another busy year in EDI. The focus will remain on submitting the School's Athena SWAN Silver Award application and the transition from the Bronze to Silver action plans. Early 2024 will see the implementation of planned short to medium-term actions and the continuation of events and activities to ensure that the UCD School of Veterinary Medicine is an inclusive and supportive place to work and study.

# Sustainability in the School of Veterinary Medicine and the UCD College of Health and Agricultural Sciences

*Dr Mary Sekiya, Chief Technical Officer at the UCD School of Veterinary Medicine, tells us about efforts to become more sustainable in our School and the recently launched Sustainable Research Initiative in the UCD College of Health & Agricultural Sciences.*

## → Why be more sustainable?

As we are living in a time of unprecedented global climate change, members of the UCD community recognise the importance of bringing improved sustainability measures to their work. University-level research is vital to the development of beneficial new knowledge, but it can also be a resource intensive endeavour. For example, laboratory spaces use 10x as much water and 4x as much energy as office spaces. To close the gap between current research practices and more sustainable options, several groups are engaging with programmes designed to improve lab research sustainability.

Here are some of the ongoing activities in the School of Veterinary Medicine and the College of Health and

Agricultural Sciences (CHAS) to address sustainability at UCD:

## Sustainability in the School of Veterinary Medicine

The School's Microbiology and Parasitology research lab (Pathobiology section) was accredited with My Green Lab (MGL) certification at gold level in March 2023. My Green Lab is a not-for-profit organisation based in the US with the goal of promoting environmental sustainability in laboratories ([www.mygreenlab.org](http://www.mygreenlab.org)). Accreditation requires that members of the lab complete a questionnaire to establish a baseline score for environmental awareness and good practice in 14 different areas, including waste management, water use and electrical use. The questionnaire is evaluated by MGL, who respond with advice on how to improve sustainability in the laboratory. The questionnaire is retaken after a period of about 6-8 months and the certification is based on improvement in the baseline score.



#### Dr Mary Sekiya addresses a mini-symposium on the Sustainable Research Initiative

The easiest ways to improve energy efficiency in the laboratory were the simplest: turn out lights in rooms that are not being used, turn off the power on equipment and computers that are not being used and lower the sash on the fume hoods to conserve energy.

A focus on cold storage energy efficiency has seen the Veterinary Anatomy Dissection Lab awarded the 'Top Biorepository Award - Academic Award' in the My Green Labs Freezer Challenge 2023. Second only to fume hoods, a lab's cold storage (refrigerators, freezers, cold rooms) is likely the next biggest category of energy consumers. The challenge encourages participants to learn how to be more energy efficient with their lab's cold storage, improve sample accessibility, reduce risk, and save costs for their institutions.

On the topic of waste management, using supplier take-back programmes helps to reduce unnecessary landfill waste. One of our suppliers, Cruinn Diagnostics, takes back plastic tip box waste. Collection of styrofoam boxes has also been implemented. The styrofoam is recycled for building materials by Rehab, with collection facilitated by UCD Estates.

One of the more labour-intensive projects was the development of an online database, using the website Quartyz. This allows researchers to check if unused chemicals or equipment are available in the School, thus avoiding unnecessary duplication and waste.

Research and sustainability efforts go beyond the lab, of course, and the recent installation of separate bins for general, dry recyclable and compostable waste has been a great boost to the recycling effort across the School.

The Clinical Skills Centre staff are true sustainability champions: Tracey Murphy and Mark McCorry are always looking for materials to reuse and recycle, for model making and construction of practice stations where students can hone their skills. "Leftover" consumables that can be put to good use include out of date needles and syringes, and drape cloths (clean).

The School's community garden is also a wonderful showcase of our sustainability efforts, located between the Veterinary Sciences Centre and Woodview House, where the CHAS Central Office is located. Both students and staff members are actively engaged in this initiative.

## Sustainable Research Initiative – CHAS Pilot

In 2022, Ana Vale and I requested funding from the School's Research, Innovation & Impact Committee to complete the MGL programme. Prof Simon More, Chair of the Committee agreed to the funding and, in turn, challenged us to bring the sustainability effort to a higher level within UCD. Simon facilitated meetings between us and members of UCD Research and the idea of the Sustainable Research Initiative (SRI) was hatched.

The SRI launched as a pilot project in CHAS in October 2022. The first objective of the SRI was to learn about sustainability in research and apply these measures to laboratory, field, and farm work, to name only a few areas. A second goal was to collate and share this knowledge, potentially leveraging the power of our numbers as staff and students of UCD, Ireland's global university. An equally important third goal was to develop a UCD-wide network where we could continue to share knowledge and best practices.

The SRI is a team effort, including Steering Group members from UCD Research, UCD Estates, and academic, post-doctoral, research fellow and technical staff. The Steering Group is a contact point for the Irish Green Labs network, a nationwide network of laboratory workers dedicated to improving sustainability. The Steering Group also organises an annual symposium on Sustainability in Research with UCD Green Campus.

When we issued a call for expressions of interest in the SRI, we noted that there were many technical officers and laboratory managers who were keen to come on board. We decided to organise a separate group, the Wet Labs Forum, to address the need for sustainability in the laboratory setting. This group meets monthly and is open to anyone interested in lab-based issues.

Activities that have come out of the Wet Labs Forum include the styrofoam recycling programme for Rehab and also, a nitrile glove recycling programme that we are looking to implement in the School and across

campus. We have also learned more about sustainability activities of other research groups at UCD, as there are currently five labs with MGL certification, with another two with certification underway.

The SRI was initially positioned under the remit of CHAS, to run as an 18-month pilot. During this time, by happy coincidence, a Vice-President for Sustainability was appointed in UCD, Prof Tasman Crowe. We look forward to liaising with the UCD Office for Sustainability and continuing to expand sustainability efforts across the UCD Community.

To find out more about the SRI please email: [greenlabs@ucd.ie](mailto:greenlabs@ucd.ie)



**Celebrating Christmas with a Sustainabili-tree!**

# UCD Festival



→ Renagh Kelly, Avril McGinn, Mark McCorry & Tracey Murphy from our Clinical Skills Centre Team



→ A future Veterinary Scientist!



→ Soudeh Ziapour Razlighi, Catherine McCarney, Amanda Lawlor, Antonella Puggioni, Marc Farrelly, Estela & Dario Bini and Bridget Hogg



→ One of the skulls on display



→ New puppies!



→ The 'Vet for a Day' event in our Clinical Skills Centre



The UCD Festival, a unique multi-disciplinary showcase of UCD's innovation, creativity and research presented in a festival atmosphere, took place on Saturday 10 June 2023. With more than 18,000 visitors to campus for the event in 2022, the UCD Festival offers a great opportunity to engage with alumni, the university community and the wider community. Staff and students in the UCD School of Veterinary Medicine organised several events to showcase our work to Festival attendees - we were delighted to see so many people come along to the Vet School to take part in these events and learn more about what we do.

Our **'Vet for a Day'** event in the Veterinary Clinical Skills Centre, gave visitors a chance to meet our amazing animal models and to see demonstrations of Clinical Skills techniques such as IV catheter placement, suturing and blood collection. Attendees also had the opportunity to get involved in surgery preparation, milk Nóra the Cow and deliver new puppies into the world! Our Clinical Skills Centre Team also gave an entertaining and informative talk on **'Simulation Model Making Insights'** where they discussed and demonstrated model making and explained how materials and procedures to train Vets and Vet Nurses are developed with support from the UCD Veterinary Hospital team.

**'Skulls, Specimens & Slides - Exploring Veterinary Science'** offered a range of interactive activities to Festival guests - they had the opportunity to learn how to use a microscope and identify specimens from our Veterinary Labs, to find out how we test samples and what they can tell us about our pet's health and visitors could also have a go at identifying skulls and specimens used in anatomy and pathology teaching.

We finished up the day with an **'Ask the Vet'** talk from our Veterinary Blood Donor Clinic Team on the lifesaving blood donations carried out in the UCD Veterinary Hospital. The Team also offered some top tips on the key aspects for ensuring your dog's health and wellbeing.

A huge thank you to all our amazing staff and students who organised the events and helped to make the day such a success.

# School Research

## → Research at a glance

### School Research Income

#### Over the last 5 years

- > **131** new externally funded research awards, valued at **€19.1 million**
- > Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Science Foundation Ireland, Teagasc and the European Commission have been the main external funding sources

#### During 2022-23

- > **23** new externally funded research projects, valued at **€2.8 million**

#### School Research Output

- > **266** scientific publications in 2022, including **214** journal articles
- > A field-weighted citation impact of 1.55 during 2018-22, compared with a world average of 1.0

## → Research Highlights

### Update from Professor Simon More, Associate Dean for Research, Innovation & Impact



Research across a broad range of scientific disciplines is undertaken within the UCD School of Veterinary Medicine, seeking an increased understanding across a

broad range of issues aligned to the School focus on One Health, One Welfare. These research endeavours are supported centrally through UCD Research. In addition, the School is enacting a comprehensive programme to assist staff with their research, including the provision of seed funding and a consultancy in support of study design and statistical support, as well as supports specific for undergraduate researchers, postgraduate research students, and in the area of clinical research.

Two new appointments will further extend the research support that is available within the School. Dr Niamh McLoughlin is the new School Research Support Officer, providing one-on-one assistance to all School staff in the preparation of research funding applications (pre-award support) and subsequently (post-award support). Maeve Louise Farrell is our new Clinical Research Veterinary Nurse. This position is integral to a broader School initiative to build sustainable infrastructure to support clinical research, which is being conducted in close collaboration with non-clinical disciplines. As part of her role, Maeve will provide expert nursing experience in support of a range of clinical research projects.



# 131

SCHOOL RESEARCH PROJECTS EXTERNALLY FUNDED OVER THE LAST 5 YEARS



# €19.1M

RESEARCH FUNDING OVER THE LAST 5 YEARS



# 266

SCIENTIFIC PUBLICATIONS IN 2022, INCLUDING 214 JOURNAL ARTICLES



# 23

NEW EXTERNALLY FUNDED RESEARCH PROJECTS DURING 2022-23



The School provides scientific evidence that underpins much of the national strategy to eradicate Bovine Tuberculosis



The OneWelPig project is undertaking a 'One Welfare' assessment of alternative pig production systems in Ireland

### **Research at the UCD School of Veterinary Medicine: Advancing National Animal Health and Welfare Policy**

The UCD School of Veterinary Medicine has a broad research agenda covering areas such as veterinary public health, epidemiology and national disease control, herd health management, drug delivery, pharmacology, parasitology and One Health research. We work with national and international collaborators, and with the support of Zoetis, have a longstanding 'UCD Squared' partnership with the University of California, Davis which has established an ambitious programme of research, drawing on expertise from a diverse community of veterinary and medical scientists and clinicians.

Our School occupies a unique position in terms of its relationship with national government with its ability to conduct research in support of national animal health and welfare policy in the following areas:

#### **Bovine Tuberculosis**

The School provides scientific evidence that underpins much of the national strategy to eradicate Bovine Tuberculosis. The Tuberculosis Diagnostics and Immunology Research Laboratory engages in IFN- $\gamma$  diagnostic testing of blood samples with a focus on analysing the data to gauge test performance and improve its accuracy. The laboratory also supports the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) badger vaccine programme and provided scientific direction to the County Kilkenny badger vaccine field trial, the largest wildlife TB vaccine trial ever conducted worldwide. School research also supports DAFM activities through whole genome sequencing (WGS) and analysis of pathogen genomes. This is proving transformational in our ability to understand pathogen evolution and track pathogen transmission. A collaboration with the Central Veterinary Research Laboratory has revealed the power of such research to provide new insight into transmission dynamics and persistence of infection within livestock and wildlife populations.

#### **One Welfare**

The OneWelPig project is undertaking a 'One Welfare' assessment of alternative pig production systems in Ireland, from the perspectives of the pigs, farmers and

society. The project aligns with Ireland's Animal Welfare Strategy, with UCD responsible for Task 1 'Promoting Real World Change: Implementation of the Knowledge Transfer Plan,' which brings together key industry stakeholders in a participatory policy-making approach to develop a roadmap towards One Welfare pig farming.

#### **Irish Clinical Academic Training Programme**

The Irish Clinical Academic Training Programme is an integrated pathway for clinical academic training in human medicine, veterinary medicine and dentistry. It is an all-Ireland partnership comprising six universities, training authorities and health services, the Health Research Board and DAFM. The programme provides a structured inclusive infrastructure for training the next generation of clinical academic leaders and aims to recruit veterinarians who have completed residency training to undertake a PhD in the areas of One Health, Comparative Medicine and animal-sparing research.

#### **Antimicrobial Resistance**

The School makes a substantial contribution to research on antimicrobial resistance in the farm animal and environmental sectors. The recently completed collaborative project on Antimicrobial Use and Resistance in Animal Production generated representative data on antimicrobial use in the Irish pig and poultry industries for the first time. This has been invaluable to DAFM in building an online database in which farmers and veterinarians can enter antimicrobial use (AMU) and benchmark their farm against the national average, this being an essential tool in helping to reduce AMU and maintain reductions. UCD researchers also played a part in an Environmental Protection Agency funded project looking at sources, drivers and risk management of antimicrobial resistance in the environment.

#### **Animal Health Ireland**

The School is engaged in the provision of technical expertise for national programmes of animal disease eradication and control (with a particular focus on BVD, paratuberculosis and udder health) coordinated by Animal Health Ireland. These programmes are underpinned by international best practice and ongoing research to inform decision making and enhance

programme effectiveness. In practical terms, this takes the form of studies optimising diagnostic testing strategies, filling specific local and international knowledge gaps, investigation of disease and control impacts on animal health and welfare, and using sociological means to explore barriers and facilitators of farmer adoption.

Further information on research in the UCD School of Veterinary Medicine is available on our website: [www.ucd.ie/vetmed/research/](http://www.ucd.ie/vetmed/research/)

*This article was originally published as a 'Spotlight' feature in the American Journal of Veterinary Research (Volume 83: Issue 12)*

### Research Focus in the Veterinary Ireland Journal



Keep up to date with research taking place in the UCD School of Veterinary Medicine with the Veterinary Ireland Journal's (VIJ) Research Focus. Each month, the VIJ highlights a different aspect of research from colleagues in the School. Over the past year, highlights have included:

- > The faecal microbiome: a reservoir of antimicrobial resistance in dogs - Monica Augusto
- > 'One Health' Comparative Oncology Research - Stephanie Bollard et al
- > Transition cow management and cattle fertility - Mark Crowe
- > Buccal-PEP: A patch for buccal (cheek) administration of peptides - Sahil Malhotra et al
- > Intramammary antimicrobial sales in Ireland - Catherine McAloon
- > UCD and LMU Veterinary CSCs share simulation model-making insights - Mark McCorry
- > Diagnoses of Canine Cancer by Cytology in Ireland - Peter James O'Brien
- > Veterinary Biosciences Student Summer Research Projects - Alison Reynolds et al

VIJ Research Focus articles can be accessed on our website: <https://www.ucd.ie/vetmed/research/connectwithus/veterinaryirelandjournal-researchfocus/>

### European Veterinary Immunology Workshop 2024 to Take Place in Dublin



The European Veterinary Immunology Workshop (EVIW) will take place in University College Dublin in August 2024; this is the first in-person workshop since the event was held in Utrecht in 2018. The

theme of the conference is 'working together,' across continents, across specialties, across infectious agents and across species. Organisers are expecting to welcome 250 veterinarians and animal scientists from across Europe to the event and an impressive line-up of keynote speakers has been announced - Professor Philip Griebel (Vaccine Formulation & Delivery Group, The Vaccine and Infectious Disease Organisation (VIDO) Canada), Professor Cliona O'Farrelly (Professor of Comparative Immunology, Trinity College Dublin), Professor Bary T. Rouse (Lindsay Young Distinguished Professor of Veterinary Medicine, University of Tennessee) and Professor Christoph Scheiermann (Associate Professor of Medicine, University of Geneva) to name but a few.

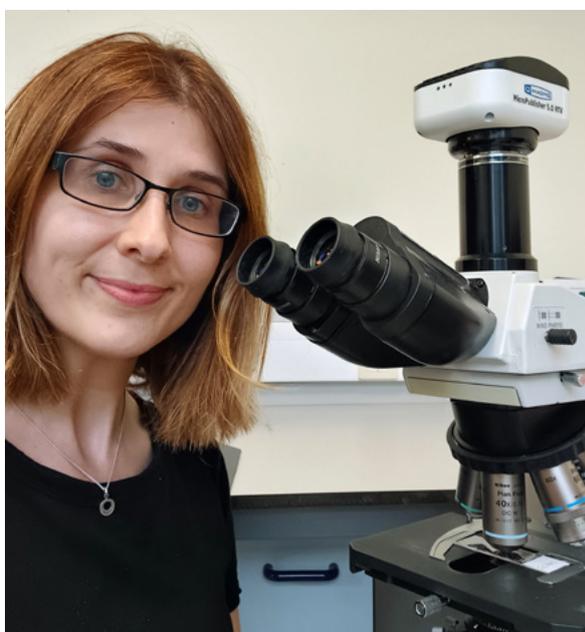
The European Veterinary Immunology Workshop is a triennial event organised by the European Veterinary Immunology Group (EVIG), the veterinary specialist group under the auspices of the European Federation of Immunological Societies (EFIS). Since 2001, EVIG has been a platform for communication and exchange between veterinary immunology researchers from all corners of Europe. The first EVIW was held in 2003 and it was planned that further EVIW should be held every three years, alternating with the International Veterinary Immunology Symposium (IVIS). EVIW is an international meeting that provides an optimal opportunity for intensive scientific exchange in veterinary immunology, strengthening contacts between veterinary immunologists - students, PhDs and senior scientists, particularly in Europe.

Please see: <https://eviw2024.org/> for further details

## → The Irish Clinical Academic Training Programme



*Alison Lee is the first vet to take part in the Irish Clinical Academic Training Programme. The programme aims to forge stronger links between human medicine, dentistry and veterinary medicine and provides a structured inclusive infrastructure for clinical academic training. Here, she tells us more about the ICAT Programme, her veterinary and research career to date and what she hopes to achieve as an ICAT Fellow.*



**Dr Alison Lee**

The Irish Clinical Academic Training (ICAT) programme is a PhD programme run across six Irish universities (University College Dublin, Trinity College Dublin, Royal College of Surgeons Ireland, National University of Ireland Galway, University College Cork and Queens University Belfast). An all-Ireland partnership which brings together various training authorities and health services, the Health Research Board and the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, it also aims to encourage doctors, vets and dentists to build careers in academia. Up until now, the programme has accepted medical doctors undertaking their higher specialist training and provided them with funding and support to conceive and complete a PhD over a four-year period. More recently, dentists and vets have been

included in the ICAT programme; the inclusion of vets has been made possible due to funding provided by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine. Last year, I applied for the ICAT programme and was greatly honoured to be accepted as the first vet to take part.

I completed my Anatomic Pathology Residency in UCD and passed the board exams of the American College of Veterinary Pathology in 2019. After this, I spent several years in the UK, working for a commercial diagnostic laboratory (NationWide Laboratories). During this time, my role mainly involved reading and reporting biopsies for veterinary clients across the UK and abroad. I decided to apply for the ICAT programme for a number of reasons. While I enjoyed my work as a diagnostic pathologist, I missed the variety that an academic career brings, with the opportunity to become involved in research and teaching as well as diagnostic work. However, a PhD is important for progression in academia, and I knew that the ICAT programme represented a great opportunity for me to achieve this qualification. On a personal level, I also wanted to return to live and work in Ireland and be part of the community at UCD.

One of the main aims of the programme is for ICAT fellows to undertake research which is cross-disciplinary and cross-institutional and we are therefore given access to a large pool of potential supervisors across Ireland and Northern Ireland. If our research requires expertise in a particular field outside our own areas of specialisation, ICAT can provide us with useful contacts and also encourages training and placements abroad. As a vet, this was a huge draw for me, as it is really exciting to have the opportunity to work with researchers outside of the veterinary field and make connections with medical researchers across Ireland and in other countries.

I am currently in the early stages of developing my PhD project, and I plan to focus on feline oral squamous cell carcinoma (FOSCC) and the influence of the oral microbiome on tumour development and progression. I chose this topic as I believe naturally-occurring diseases in companion animals can act as useful models of similar diseases in humans, and FOSCC has many similarities to human oral squamous cell carcinoma (HOSCC). I wish to promote this concept within ICAT in order to foster future research links

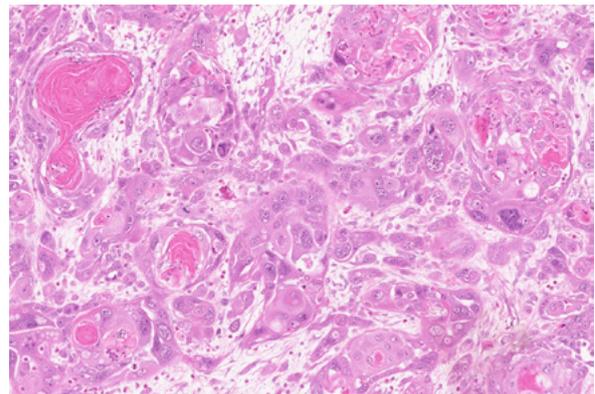
between our Vet School in UCD and medical and dental schools in Ireland. In addition, FOSCC is a devastating disease in cats and has been the subject of relatively little research; thus more information is essential for us to prevent, diagnose and treat this condition in our feline patients.



**Alison is planning to focus her research on feline oral squamous cell carcinoma (FOSCC)**

I was interested to read that, in humans, it is thought that certain oral bacteria may promote HOSCC development. This aspect of the pathogenesis has not been well-studied in cats, and could represent an interesting and fruitful area of research. I am currently discussing the possibility of collaboration with the School of Dental Science at Trinity College Dublin and the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, as well as IDEXX, a large veterinary diagnostic laboratory based in the UK.

For anyone interested in applying - vets who wish to take part in the ICAT programme must have already completed specialist training in their discipline of choice, and have been, or are about to be, awarded board certification. They will spend the majority of the first year in clinical endeavour, with time dedicated to preparing and planning their PhD project, and the subsequent three years undertaking their research. Applications are usually submitted in August/September each year, and the programme commences the following summer. In 2023, the application window opened from 24 August to 28 September. Professor Carmel Mooney at the UCD School of Veterinary Medicine is one of the Associate Directors of ICAT - please do not hesitate to reach out to her or myself if you would like any more information on the ICAT Programme.



**Squamous cell carcinomas**

# Go Raibh Maith Agat!

The School of Veterinary Medicine hosted a reception on 30 August to mark the end of Professor Michael Doherty's term as Dean & Head of School. Staff from the School of Veterinary Medicine and the wider University were joined by colleagues from the Department of Agriculture, Food & the Marine, the Veterinary Council of Ireland, Veterinary Ireland and guests from across the UCD Veterinary Community. The School is incredibly grateful to Professor Doherty for the outstanding leadership he has shown over the last seven years and colleagues were delighted to have the opportunity to celebrate his time as Dean and to wish Professor Doherty well in his future endeavours.



→ Professor Michael Doherty, Professor Cecily Kelleher and Professor Rory Breathnach - Professor Kelleher is holding a red brick from the old Vet College in Ballsbridge which Professor Doherty presented to Professor Breathnach



→ Attendees at the reception for Professor Michael Doherty in UCD's O'Reilly Hall



→ Professor Cecily Kelleher, College Principal, UCD College of Health & Agricultural Sciences, speaks to guests



→ Professor Michael Doherty reflects on his time as Dean & Head of School

Thank you  
Go raibh maith agat

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