

Archive of President's Bulletin

Email Message



University College Dublin
An Coláiste Ollscoile, Baile Átha Cliath

President's Bulletin
Professor Andrew Deeks

President's Bulletin #274 – 5 May 2020

Dear Colleagues

I hope you had a chance to enjoy the beautiful weather of the long weekend, and to get a bit of time off. I know that many of you are finding this time to be busier than ever, and that the lack of separation between home and work can contribute to fatigue. Following the Taoiseach's announcement on Friday evening, which set out a roadmap for reopening Irish society and business potentially starting on May 18 with a first phase, the UMT and I decided there was no need to issue a Special Bulletin over the long weekend.

We have now considered the roadmap document in detail. The headlines from an education perspective are that college buildings will open in the first phase for access by teachers to facilitate remote learning, and that colleges will be open for face-to-face teaching at the beginning of the academic year 2020/21 with social distancing requirements likely to remain for some time. The over-arching message is that everyone who can work effectively from home should continue to do so, at least until the end of phase 4 (August 10).

From the commencement of the first phase (May 18), employees who have a need to access UCD buildings for the purposes of preparing or distributing teaching material may do so. If you need to access a UCD building for this purpose, please seek permission from your Head of School or Head of Unit, who will be able to issue you with an email indicating you have permission to travel to the campus. You will need to complete a sign in/out form, and follow the Estates Services protocol. Note that no social interaction should take place on campus during this time, and common rooms will not be open. Catering will be limited to takeaway provision. Hand sanitisers will be provided at building entries, and an enhanced cleaning regime will be put in place. Social distancing must be observed at all times.

As research is an essential service, we have been allowing some experimental research to continue on campus, particularly that associated with addressing the COVID-19 crisis. I am aware that other researchers have been working productively from home, but that there is now an increasing need for access to experimental facilities and the Library by some researchers and research groups to allow research to proceed. Heads of School and Directors of Research institutes have been asked to work with their academics to identify these needs. Permission can now be sought from your College Principal through your Head of School, or from our Vice-President for Research, Innovation and Impact, Professor Orla Feely through the Director of your Research Institute. Permission will only be granted where public health guidance can be complied with. We will issue guidance concerning working in shared laboratory spaces shortly.

In line with the Roadmap for Reopening, from phase 2 (nominally commencing on June 8), employees who are generally solitary workers and need to access the campus to work effectively, and who can do so while maintaining the 2m social distance constantly (e.g. working in an individual office), will be able to do so. In phase 3, this will be extended to employees who have low levels of daily interaction with people.

All UCD business and social meetings will continue to take place virtually until at least August 10. We remain aware that employees who have childcare responsibilities will continue to face particular challenges until schools, crèches and childminding services reopen.

I will bring you further details of the campus reopening process in due course, but in the meantime encourage you to discuss your own situation with your line manager or Head of School. The Government document that I referred to, 'Roadmap for Reopening Society & Business' can be accessed [here](#).

Once again, I thank you for your contribution and perseverance during this challenging time, and look forward to us working together as a community to successfully navigate this difficult reopening process.

Medicine Virtual Conferring

I was very pleased to participate in the UCD School of Medicine virtual conferring ceremony on Friday, the first of its type in our history. Graduates were addressed by the Minister for Health, Simon Harris TD, and our Chief Medical Officer and UCD Alumni Award winner, Dr Tony Holohan. Congratulations to everyone involved in making this occasion possible. For those of you who missed it, the ceremony can be viewed [here](#).

National Covid-19 Rapid Response Call

Congratulations to our researchers behind the UCD projects funded under the national Covid-19 Rapid Response call, announced last week from Government Buildings. The five UCD-led projects have been awarded just under €1.1 million and are among 26 projects awarded a total of €5 million, which were announced by Minister Heather Humphreys TD. These projects are:

Developing and supplying reagents and materials for SARS-CoV-2 testing (€540,000, highest funded project of the 26). Led by Dr Virginie Gautier, Centre for Research in Infectious Diseases and UCD School of Medicine; Professor Patrick Mallon, UCD Centre for Experimental Pathogen Host Research and UCD School of Medicine; and Professor Gil Lee, UCD School of Chemistry to deliver reagents for hospitals in the Ireland East Hospital Group.

COVID-19: The North Dublin Cohort Study (€199,000). Led by Professor John Lambert, UCD School of Medicine and Consultant at Mater Misericordiae University Hospital to determine baseline characteristics and outcomes of patients with COVID-19 under the care of the Infectious Diseases Department at the Mater.

Screening for antiviral compounds active against SARS-CoV-2 (€190,000). Led by Dr Virginie Gautier, UCD Centre for Experimental Pathogen Host Research and UCD School of Medicine to identify effective antiviral drugs to be included as part of new therapeutic interventions against COVID-19.

CUPID COVID-19: Paediatric emergency department attendance during Covid-19 (€107,000). Led by Dr Emma Nicholson and Dr Thérèse McDonnell, UCD School of Nursing, Midwifery and Health Systems to assess the impact of the pandemic on the care seeking behaviour of parents to identify how barriers to accessing care can be removed.

Impact of Covid-19 on Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities and Caregivers (€63,000). Led by Associate Professor Christine Linehan, UCD Centre for Disability Studies and UCD School of Psychology to investigate the impact of COVID-19 on these vulnerable populations.

2020 Research Impact Case Study Competition

The 2020 Research Impact Case Study Competition was launched today. The competition encourages researchers from all disciplines to consider and celebrate the wider impact of their research. Various supports and resources are available as part of this initiative, helping researchers write a case study and understand the nature of research impact. Details of the competition, along with the winning case studies from previous years, are available here.

Call for Nominations - Teaching and Learning Awards

COVID-19 continues to present many challenges, not least for our students who have had to adapt quickly to teaching, learning and assessment online. Faculty and staff have worked very hard to make this a positive experience and to support our students in any they can.

Last November the 2019-2020 Teaching and Learning Awards were launched and over 1,000 nominations have since been submitted. The call for nominations is issued in each trimester and the nomination system remains open until 30 August 2020. You can nominate any UCD faculty or staff for an award. A short explanation must be provided for each nomination. The nominee will not know who has nominated them but will receive a copy of the nomination text. Nominations/applications for colleagues located in units not associated with the college structures will be evaluated using a process that mirrors the college process. The awards are for those who help students to develop, often beyond what they themselves may have imagined. It could be through inspiration, passion or creative communication, or it could be through providing understanding and encouragement to help students overcome obstacles and push through boundaries. For more information, including the nomination and application process, the selection criteria and key dates go to the UCD Teaching and Learning website.

COVID-19 Crisis Response Conferences

UCD Geary Institute has been running a series of very well received COVID-19 Crisis Response Conferences. They have been receiving a great deal of attention in the press, social media and among academics internationally. At a recent conference, one of the six sessions featured the Minister for Finance and Public Expenditure who joined a discussion on Fiscal Policy through the Crisis. The previous week, there was an online economic seminar which included the Secretaries General of both Departments of Finance and Public Expenditure and of Employment and Social Affairs. You can get more information about these and other updates from UCD Geary Institute here. My thanks to Professor Philip O'Connell and his team at the Institute for organising this series.

UCD: In Conversation Series

Following on from the successful launch of the UCD: In Conversation series last week, the next in line for this week's UCD Alumni Relations speaker series is Caroline Casey, award-winning social entrepreneur and founder of the Valuable 500, and Martina Fitzgerald, political journalist and author on the topic of 'It's Normal To Be Different'. Register to attend here.

Congratulations to the following:

Research grants and awards officially registered this week

UCD School of Archaeology

Professor Tadhg O'Keeffe: €15,000 from The Heritage Council for project entitled *The deserted town of Newtown Jerpoint, Co. Kilkenny and its hinterland: archaeology and agri-tourism*

UCD School of English Drama and Film and UCD School of Computer Science

Professor Gerardine Meaney with Dr Derek Greene: €2,498,126 from HORIZON 2020 for project entitled *European Migrants in the British Imagination: Victorian and Neo-Victorian Culture (VICTEUR)*

UCD School of Mathematics and Statistics

Professor Adrian Ottewill with Dr Vojtech Witzany: €184,591 from HORIZON 2020 for project entitled *PreciseEMRIs: Precise predictions for extreme mass ratio inspirals*

UCD School of Mechanical and Materials Engineering

Dr James O'Donnell: €142,250 from Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland for project entitled *ALIVE - Assessing Indoor Environmental Quality and Energy Efficiency In a range of Naturally-Ventilated Buildings: A Multi-Disciplinary Approach*

Professor Lizbeth Goodman: €85,000 from University College Dublin Foundation CLG for project entitled *Research into inclusive design and creative technologies*

UCD School of Medicine

Professor Walter Kolch: €300,000 from National Children's Research Centre for project entitled *Precision Oncology Ireland Strategic Partnership Programme (POI SPP)*

UCD School of Physics

Dr Rebeca Garcia Lopez: €464,994 from Science Foundation Ireland for project entitled *Precision Imaging of GEO satellites in Space - PIGS in Space*

UCD School of Psychology

Professor Barbara Dooley: €50,000 from Jigsaw for project entitled *My World Survey 2*

Kind regards,

Andrew

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