



**GRADUATE  
ENTRY  
MEDICAL  
SCHOOL**  
UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK  
SCOIL LEIGHIS IONTRÁLA  
IARCHEIME OLLSCOIL LUIMNIGH

# GRADUATE ENTRY MEDICAL SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

December 2016 | [www.ul.ie/gems/](http://www.ul.ie/gems/)



2016 marked significant advancement for Para medicine in Ireland and Paramedic Studies at UL. Previously all Paramedics across Ireland were trained only to Diploma level. This very special occasion was marked by a visit to the North Campus by the Shannon based Irish Coast Guard 'Rescue 115' Sikorsky S-92 helicopter.

## A strong GEMS presence at leading international forum for medical education leaders

In March, four academic staff from the GEMS attended the 17th Ottawa Conference in Perth, Western Australia. Held biennially, the Ottawa Conference was first held in 1985 in Ottawa, Canada and has become the leading international forum for medical and other healthcare profession educators to exchange ideas and developments in the field.

Professor Billy O'Connor, GEMS Head of Physiology, hosted a workshop entitled, "Empathy in medical education". Professor O'Connor, who is a leading international researcher in the field of neuro-biology, outlined how the brain works to allow us to feel empathy and how through empathy, doctors can deepen their understanding of patients, leading to better health outcomes and reducing burnout in the medical profession.

Professor Colum Dunne, GEMS Director of Research, delivered a seminar on "A comparative national study of continuous

professional competence (CPC) amongst pre-hospital practitioners in Ireland". This work represents the first published national study reported internationally that focuses on the professionalisation of ambulance and paramedic crews, and requirements for their registration to practice. This work has formed the basis of Irish national guidelines for emergency medical technicians (EMTs) in Ireland.

Professor Michael Larvin, Head of GEMS and Professor Deirdre McGrath, GEMS Director of Education, presented a poster entitled "Factors predicting successful matching of North American students from a new Irish Medical School".

Planning is already in place for a strong GEMS presence at the next (18th) Ottawa Conference in 2018 in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, and we invite you to pass this on to those that might consider presenting their research at this prestigious event.



Professor Billy O'Connor



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## Paramedic Studies, a Year in Review

August 25th saw the first 21 degree level graduates in Paramedic Studies conferred at UL.

All of the graduates are existing paramedic practitioners working with the Ambulance Service, Dublin Fire Brigade and the Coast Guard. Prior to this, Ireland was one of the few remaining countries in Europe to educate Paramedics only to diploma level marking a significant academic step forward for the profession.

The 2016/17 Academic year also welcomed the arrival of the first ever cohort of direct CAO entry students, including school leavers, who commenced their 4 year programme this September. The Paramedic Studies programme has been built upon innovative educational methodologies from our successful Graduate Entry

Medical programme. This includes a combination of problem based team and self-directed learning, leading-edge simulation training on campus, together with a large volume of electronically delivered distance learning.

2016 also saw the opening of the GEMS Paramedic Education Centre, in the Irish Chamber Orchestra building, adjacent to the GEMS. This generous investment provides purpose built resources and dedicated teaching space for the Paramedic Studies department including a state of the art simulation suite. This is a key part of UL's commitment to supporting and improving Ireland's essential public services – nationally and regionally – and our wish within the EHS Faculty to educate healthcare students together so that they will form better functioning teams in future.



Pictured: Paramedic Studies Practitioner Entry Graduating Class of 2016 with Mark Dixon, Course Director and Prof Michael Larvin.



Pictured: Paramedic Studies Year 1 Class of 2016

## Research Methodologies at WHO Conference in Geneva

The World Health Organisation (WHO) and the Geneva Foundation for Medical Education and Research (GFMER) invited Dr Khalifa Elmusharaf to be one of the lecturers amongst others from WHO, GFMER and the University of Oxford to deliver an intensive course on Research Methodology in Sexual and Reproductive Health at the WHO headquarters in Geneva on the 24th-28th October 2016 <http://www.gfmer.ch/SRH-Course-2015/Geneva-Workshop/index.htm>



Pictured: Dr Khalifa Elmusharaf at the WHO Conference

## Toward Unity For Health Conference - China

Dr Khalifa Elmusharaf was invited and sponsored by the Network: Toward Unity For Health (TUFH), to its annual conference in Shenyang and post conference meetings in Beijing, China in July 2016. During the conference, he conducted a workshop on "Transparency in Healthcare Biostatistics, Data Management and Fundamental Biostatistics". He has been selected to be in the organising committee for the conference next year "World Summit on Social Accountability", from April 8th-12th 2017 in Tunisia.



Pictured: Dr Khalifa Elmusharaf

## UK Aid Conference - Dubai

Dr Khalifa Elmusharaf was invited and sponsored to attend the annual scientific meeting and the capacity development workshop of What Works (<http://www.whatworks.co.za>) to prevent violence in women and girls project funded by UK Aid. During the meeting he presented on "methods in measuring the social and economic costs of violence".



## GEMS Researcher Wins Award



Congratulations to Dr Patrick O'Donnell, Clinical Fellow in Social Inclusion, who won the award of 'Establishing GP of the Year' at the gpbuddy.ie medical awards.

Left to Right: Mr Joseph Newell (Founder & CEO of GPbuddy.ie), Dr Patrick O'Donnell, Mr James O Donoghue (CEO Blackrock Clinic) at the inaugural GPbuddy.ie National Awards for Excellence and Collaboration in Primary Healthcare held at the Shelbourne Hotel, Dublin on Thursday 15th September 2016.

## Baby Box



Left to right: Dr Mendinara Imcha and Prof Amanda Cotter

Maternity Hospital Limerick (UMHL) has launched a major initiative aimed at reducing the incidence of infant mortality and raising awareness through educating parents on how to care for new-borns.

The use of baby boxes was credited with helping reduce infant mortality rates in Finland, where they have been in use for over 75 years.

The Baby Box is made from a durable cardboard and can be used as a new-born's bed for up to the first eight months of their life. It is thought that the small size of the box prevents babies from rolling onto their tummies, which experts think can contribute to SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome).

## AUDGPI 2017

### SAVE THE DATE!

GEMS are hosting the 20th Annual Scientific Meeting of the Association of University Departments of General Practice in Ireland (AUDGPI) and the Irish College of General Practitioners (ICGP) on the 9th & 10th March 2017 at the Castletroy Park Hotel.

## Report Presented At WHO regional meeting

The World Health Organisation recently published a Health Evidence Network report titled "How do variations in definitions of 'migrant' and their application influence the access of migrants to health care services?" The report was authored by Professor Ailish Hannigan, Dr Patrick O'Donnell, Dr Mary O'Keeffe & Professor Anne MacFarlane and was presented at a WHO Regional Committee meeting in September in front of the 53 Member States.

## BMBS Year 1 2016-2017



BMBS Year 1 students pictured in the foyer of the GEMS building at the beginning of the 2016-17 academic year.



Left to right: Jennifer Gettings, Patrick Tobin-Schnittger, Ivana Capin, Niall O'Sullivan

### The Dr Jack Flanagan Intervarsity Competition

Students in the final year of their medical studies took part in the 2016 Jack Flanagan Medal Competition in Geriatric Medicine. This year's competition was held in UCD on Wednesday 26th October.

This competition is named after Dr Jack Flanagan, who was the first doctor in Ireland to specialise in modern day geriatric medicine. The winners are awarded an academic medal in memory of Dr Flanagan's contribution to the specialty. UL GEMS were represented at the event by Jennifer Gettings, Patrick Tobin-Schnittger, Ivana Capin and Niall O'Sullivan. Well done to the team for a very interesting talk.

### Fr Peter McVerry Addresses GEMS - Student Health Equity Programme

Fr Peter McVerry SJ, was invited to speak at UL GEMS by the student Health Equity Programme (HEP) <http://ulhep.weebly.com/blog> on Monday 14th November. Fr McVerry was ordained as a Jesuit in 1975 and began working in Dublin's inner city. He opened a hostel for homeless in 1979 and by the end of 1983 he had founded the Peter McVerry Trust to tackle homelessness. On the day of his visit he gave great insight into the difficulties faced by young homeless people, and he also had some advice for healthcare professionals when caring for these groups.

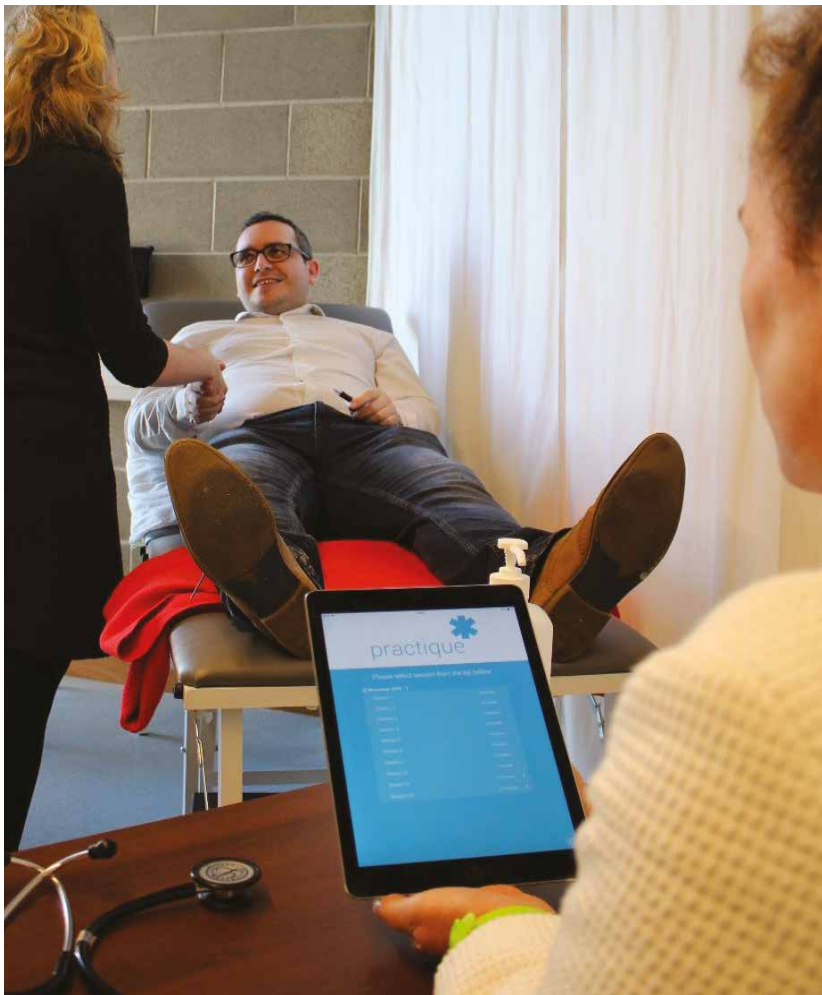


Left to right: Prof Michael Larvin, Fr Peter McVerry, Dr Patrick O'Donnell



Left to right: Frances Fallon (BMBS Year 1), Juliana Duffy (BMBS Year 2), Fr Peter McVerry, Robert Browne (BMBS Year 2).





GEMS staff pilot the new assessment software

## New GEMS Assessment Software to be used in conjunction with FRY IT

The School is delighted to announce that FRY-IT were successful in securing the tender to move much of the assessment process within the School to an online platform. In the past the assessment process has been extremely labour intensive and the calculation of results within a short time frame can be challenging, particularly following our Year 4 final year exams.

The initial roll out will see all clinical exams being run within GEMS in this academic year completed with examiners using iPads to assess the students as they complete each station. The long term plan will be to move all exams such as Extended Matching Question (EMQ) papers, Multiple Choice Question (MCQ) papers, Short Answer Question (SAQ) papers and Anatomy Spotter exams to the online platform but this will be introduced on a phased basis.

The School ran a pilot exam to test the new software on Wednesday November 23rd and it was a success. More information will follow on this exciting project in the coming months.

## ePrePP Symposium

On September 22nd 2016 the ePrePP Symposium: Future Professional Practice - A Step in the Right Direction was hosted in University College Cork.

Drs Eimear Spain and Andrew O'Regan of GEMS along with Dr Gerardina Harnett, Head of Nursing at the Institute of Technology Tralee (ITT), ran a workshop entitled "Teaching Ethical and Legal Issues across the Health Professions" at the ePrePP Symposium.

ePrePP is all about building digital capacity for 'electronic preparation for professional practice' and is a partnership between UCC, UL, UCD, TCD and ITT which is funded by the National Forum for Teaching and Learning.



Front left to right: Dr Terry Maguire, Ms Catherine Burke, Dr Eileen O' Leary, Dr Bettie Higgs (UCC), Ms Eirin O' Connell, Dr Mahendra Patel (Royal Pharmaceutical Society & University of Huddersfield) and Prof Anne Peat (University of Sheffield). Back left to right: Dr Andrew O'Regan (UL), Prof Theo Ryan (TCD), Dr Siobhan O' Sullivan (CIT), Prof Henry Smithson (UCC), Dr David Pearson (Hull York Medical School) and Ms Caroline O' Connor.

## GEMS Research News - Recent Graduations

Dr Colin Quinn and Dr Siobhan Coyle graduated at the August conferring ceremony with an MD and a MCh respectively. Dr Coyle's thesis was titled "Osteoprogenitor Regulation in Loading Induced Bone Formation" and Dr Quinn's thesis was titled "Neuro-Muscular Electrical Stimulation for the Treatment of Orthostatic Hypotension in an Older Community Dwelling Population". Dr Quinn was supervised by GEMS Director of Research, Prof Colum Dunne and Dr Coyle was supervised by Prof Calvin Coffey, GEMS Professor of Surgery.

## Atlantic Corridor Student Research Conference 2016

The 2016 annual Atlantic Corridor Research Conference (ACRC) was hosted by NUI Galway on November 3rd. The best undergraduate research students from UL GEMS, NUIG, and UCC came together to showcase their undergraduate research projects. 10 posters were displayed and 4 oral presentations were given by UL GEMS students.



Pictured: Prof Ailish Hannigan and the UL GEMS students who presented on the day

## Thesis in 3 National Final 2016

Beatrice Malacrida GEMS PhD student supervised by Dr Pat Kiely has won the regional finals of the "Thesis in 3" competition. It is an exciting national competition for research students from all over Ireland who have just 3 slides and 3 minutes to explain an entire thesis. The competition is operated by Science Foundation Ireland and is designed to showcase the world-class research happening in Ireland in bite-sized chunks.



Pictured: Beatrice Malacrida

## CTG Conference – 29th September 2016

Professor Amanda Cotter and the Obstetrics and Gynaecology Department hosted a two day cardiotocography (CTG) masterclass attended by doctors and midwives from around the country. The speaker, Dr Edwin Chandraharan, consultant obstetrician from St George's London was the guest speaker. More

than 100 delegates attended each day of the masterclass, which was hosted at the Graduate Entry Medical School, University of Limerick. The conference was also sponsored by the University Hospital Limerick group and the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland (NMBI).

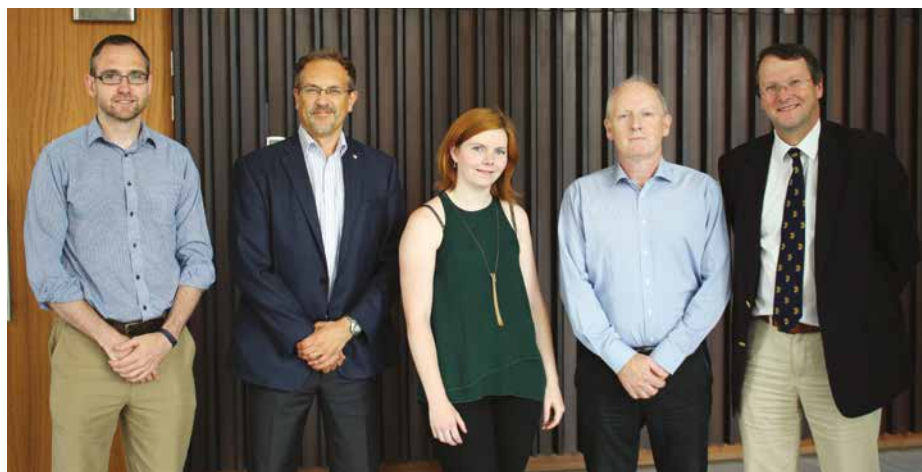


Left to right: Sandra O'Connor, Clinical Midwife Manager UMHL; Dr Mendinaro Imcha, Consultant Obstetrician / Gynaecologist UMHL; Professor Amanda Cotter, Consultant Obstetrician / Gynaecologist UMHL; Margaret Crowley Murphy, Director of Nursing & Midwifery Education; Mr Edwin Chandraharan, CTG Course Director; Suzanne Pereira, Consultant Obstetrician Kingston Hospital.

## Anatomical Society funded PhD student, Rebecca Anderson

Professor Stefan Przyborski, Research Officer and Professor Clive Lee, President of the Anatomical Society, visited the Graduate Entry Medical School in August to meet and review the research progress of the Anatomical Society funded PhD student, Rebecca Anderson and her co-supervisors Professor Kieran McDermott (GEMS) and Dr Gerard O'Keeffe (Department of Anatomy and Neuroscience, UCC). The

Anatomical Society (founded in 1887) is a learned society with charitable status. Its aims are to promote, develop and advance research and education in all aspects of anatomical science in the UK and Ireland. The Society achieves these aims by organising annual scientific meetings, publishing the journals 'Journal of Anatomy' and 'Aging Cell' and making annual awards of PhD studentships, grants and prizes.



Left to right: Dr Gerard O'Keeffe, UCC; Professor Stefan Przyborski, Durham University and Research Officer of the Anatomical Society; Ms Rebecca Anderson, PhD student, UL GEMS; Professor Kieran McDermott, UL GEMS; Professor Clive Lee RCSI and President of the Anatomical Society.



## Baystate Visit



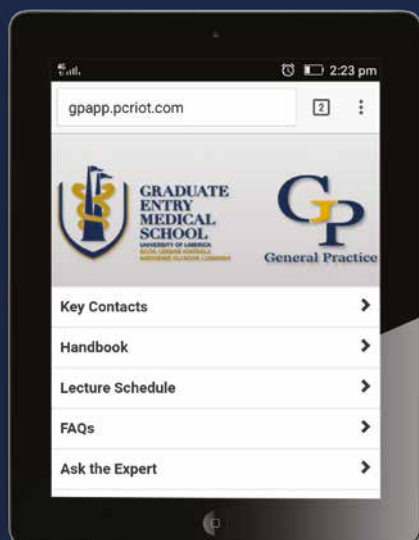
Left to right: Emmeline Searson, Dr Reham Shaaban, Dr Michael Rosenblum, Linda Baillargeon, Prof Michael Larvin.

UL GEMS was delighted to welcome senior staff from the Internal Residency Programme at Baystate Medical Centre on campus earlier this semester. Baystate Medical Centre is located in Springfield Massachusetts and a number of GEMS graduates have successfully completed residencies there.

Interviews for the residency programme are held annually in Dublin and the Baystate team took some time out of their busy schedule to visit UL. Useful discussions were had on the Baystate Residency programme and the group were very impressed with UL's campus.

## New GEMS GPApp

GPApp was launched by the General Practice teaching team this semester. It evolved in response to student feedback and hosts a wide range of multimedia features to facilitate learning from any place at any time. Great credit is due to the technical support team for their hard work in producing this innovative e-learning tool.



## Mid-Western Cancer Foundation (MWCF) Butterfly Ball



Left to right: Professor Rajnish Gupta; GEMS PhD students Amira Mahdi and Beatrice Malacrida with their supervisor Dr Pat Kiely.

The annual Butterfly Ball is run by the Board of the Mid-Western Cancer Foundation. The Butterfly Ball is considered one of the high profile events of the Mid-West area social calendar, with all money raised going to benefit the Mid-Western Cancer Foundation.

By supporting this event, the money raised by the Mid-Western Cancer Foundation is used to complement and cooperate with the HSE to assist with the regional Cancer Services in areas such as purchasing

of equipment, funding research, and continuing education that is necessary to support our designated National Cancer Centre but along with that the Foundation also helps to create awareness of cancer in the Mid-West region.

The MWCF have been important friends of the University of Limerick and are funding some of the research being carried out in Dr Pat Kiely's laboratory in GEMS. Dr Kiely spoke at the event.



## University of Limerick Rowing Club

On Thursday 20th October 2016 a male and female 8+ crew along with coaches and club members from University of Limerick Rowing Club travelled to Boston, MA to take part in the largest two-day regatta in the world, Head of the Charles regatta. The club has not had the opportunity to take part in this event since 2003 and it was a great privilege for all involved to represent the club and University.

Throughout the summer months leading up to it there were many fundraising events along with training so that crews were ready for an intense 6-week water training programme when everyone returned to college in September.

UL crews launched from Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) boathouse in wet conditions. The race started from Boston University De Wolfe Boathouse through a challenging 3 mile course to end by Northeastern University's Henderson Boathouse. Both crews placed well in their race and were able to enjoy the regatta afterwards and watch some of the elite races with this years Olympians (including the O'Donovan

brothers and Sanita Puspura representing Ireland) taking part in tough conditions as winds picked up as the weekend progressed.

The rowing club has had a large intake of members from graduate entry medical students over the past couple of years. The women's boat included four rowers from GEMS Sandra O'Malley (Y3) in stroke, Kate Marsden (Y3) in 5 seat, Courtney Reich (Y3) in 4 and Kathryn Mulryan (Y2) in bow. The mens crew included Conor Doorley (Y4) in 7 seat and Patrick Moynagh (Y3).

The rowing club on campus boasts one of the best boathouses in the country with an indoor rowing tank and a gym dedicated to rowers along with a growing fleet suitable for complete beginners up to senior level. Rowing is a great aerobic workout along with a lot of technical skill, if you are interested in giving it a go check the clubs FB page 'University of Limerick Rowing Club' or call down to the boathouse!

Sandra O'Malley  
Club Captain



## Orthopaedic, Sport and Exercise Medicine UL (OSEM UL)

On Wednesday November 2nd, OSEM UL hosted a very successful event with Mr John Stacey. John is a very experienced physical therapist and lecturer who specialises in the area of sports medicine. John's presentation focused on core rehabilitation, and how it relates to general practice followed by a practical workshop directed at posture and core rehabilitation programmes.

*Main Learning objectives of the session included:*

- » Gain an understanding of what is meant by core rehabilitation
- » Identify who could benefit from a core stability programme in your GP practice
- » Explore core stability programmes in patients experiencing non-specific low back pain
- » Perform a brief assessment of lumbo-pelvic & thoracic-cervico/shoulder girdle function
- » Outline the different stages of a core rehabilitation programme.

This was a very interesting, informative and interactive event and OSEM UL look forward to hosting some more exciting events in the new year.

## Piotr Jastrzebski Poster Reflection



Pictured: Piotr Jastrzebski

At the beginning of my GP placement in early January 2016, my GP supervisor, Dr Joe Gallagher, invited me to participate in an upcoming conference organised by the Association of University Departments of General Practice of Ireland.

Before starting my current path in medicine, I was a qualified physiotherapist. I would like to integrate both medicine and physiotherapy in my

future career. Consequently, we felt that it would be worthwhile to research lower back pain and its significance in general practice.

Lower back pain is very prevalent in general practice but doctors are still searching for good diagnostic tools to help decide management pathways. Unfortunately, there is no direct access to an MRI for patients in the public system. The research question was what influence MRI has on referral of patients with lower back pain to secondary care. It was a retrospective study utilising patients from the surgery and decided that it would be an interesting research task which could potentially lead to a valuable conclusion.

The conference itself was really interesting. I must admit it was my first poster presentation and I did feel slightly anxious before it started. However, after a few minutes and a couple of conversations all the anxiety left.

I met some very interesting and skilled



OSEM Workshop

researchers and doctors but also a couple of fellow medical students and we all had only good things to say regarding the conference.

To fellow GEMS students I would say: if you have a chance, do it! If you don't have a chance, try finding one and do it! It was a fantastic experience, you can work on literally any topic you enjoy and with it there is the prospect of directing your scientific and clinical careers into different and exciting pathways.

I would like to thank Dr Joe Gallagher and the whole team at Palms Surgery in Gorey, Co. Wexford for their support during my 18-week placement.

Piotr Jastrzebski  
Class of 2017