

Hi all,

Thanks to everyone who attended the Town Hall about the UL Foundation on Thursday and for your questions at the end. ULF CEO Harvey Duthie and President Kerstin Mey did not get around to answering them all during the live session but did respond to them afterwards. If you [re-join the event here](#), you can follow the conversation.

[Follow this link to watch ULF Town Hall](#) including a video from Analog Devices that ends with the inspiring words from its CEO Vincent Roche: “What the future brings for both of us depends really on how big our dreams are and the courage we have to fulfil those dreams.”

ULF encourages everyone in UL to consider who might support the University and whether or not you have any contacts to help open doors to this support. If you have an idea or a lead, please channel it via your Dean/Director.

### **HR Updates**

*Parents' Benefit:* We have had a number of queries about the legislative changes to Parents' Benefit, which are due in April. Parents' Benefit will increase from 2 weeks to 5 weeks for each parent. The period it can be taken in will be extended up to your child's second birthday, or within two years following adoption placement. You will be able to take 5 weeks together or take separate weeks of leave. As soon as we receive official confirmation of the details, I will communicate them to you.

*Higher Education Payroll Shared Services Project (HEPSS):* UL is one of four higher education bodies taking part in this Shared Service proof of concept model for Payroll and Expenses as part of the Public Sector Reform Plan. The other three are Trinity College Dublin, Waterford Institute of Technology and Marino Institute of Education.

Payroll will be processed by the Education Shared Business Services Centre (ESBS) instead of by each individual institution. You will not need to do anything and there will be **no** change to your pay dates. UL and ESBS are still working towards a start date for this process and I will let you know when it is agreed. [Follow this link for more information about HEPSS.](#)

*Annual Leave:* Please plan and book your annual leave over the summer months in good time. If you carried over days from 2020 into 2021, you need to use them by the end of June this year.

### **UL in the Media**

After 52 weeks of tracking COVID-19, Professor Liam Glynn and Dr Mike O'Callaghan are calling a halt to their real-time coronavirus tracker #COVIDWATCHIRL on social media. What an incredible year of work they have done. You can still keep up to date on the [COVIDWATCH EU-NPA website](#).

As we approach thirteen months of remote working, one of the reoccurring topics is an increase in lower back pain as we spend more time in front of our screens and less doing even simple movements like walking to and from our car or to meetings on campus. I was reminded of this when I saw a tweet at the weekend about this article from UL's Dr Mary

O’Keefe and Dr Kieran O’Sullivan: [All you ever wanted to know about back pain](#) is available on RTÉ Brainstorm with some very useful tips for dealing with and avoiding back pain.

If you are looking for an engaging listen during your daily stroll or other exercise over the coming weeks, a wide-range of UL researchers talk about their work in the [Research Impact Podcasts available here](#).

### Easter Break

Good Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> April and Easter Monday 5<sup>th</sup> April are both public holidays for UL staff. The library will be open on Good Friday from 9am to 5pm. For more detail on library services over Easter, please go their [website](#).

Finally, if you are looking for an online event this Easter, Haydn’s Quartet Op. 51 “Seven Last Words” is being performed by regular UL visitors the ConTempo String Quartet at 3pm this Friday. A meditation on Christ’s last words on the cross, this is one of the great pieces of Easter music featuring new texts by the Pulitzer Prize winning poet Mark Strand and you can find more [details about the concert here](#).

Enjoy the long weekend.

Eoin

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