It is a time of change in Education, both nationally and internationally. Some of these changes represent fundamental challenges to the purposes of education from early childhood to Higher Education. In response, the School has been actively involved in research across the humanities, social sciences and STEM in ways that contribute to the shaping of our future society: economically, culturally, socially, and environmentally. This Newsletter highlights a number of these activities, but I would encourage you to visit our website (www.tcd.ie/Education/) where many more such activities by our excellent staff, students and graduates are featured. As we transition into a new era both politically and socio-economically, the School is guided by the principles of social inclusion, equity of access, participation and progression, and high quality teaching and education outcomes. These are represented in our new courses and programmes, and in our research and outreach activities. We warmly invite your participation in any of the events that we organise and we look forward to continued engagement with our alumni and friends throughout 2017.

Associate Professor Carmel O’Sullivan
Head of School
Our Research

New Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership

New Erasmus+ strategic partnership uses digital technologies to improve mathematics learning.

A Scottish voluntary organisation leading a new, two year European project called Learning Link Scotland will work with partners in four European countries to identify how teachers in all education sectors can use digital technologies to teach mathematics effectively.

The partners are Learning Link Scotland (Scotland), Trinity (Ireland), led by Dr Mark Prendergast from the School of Education, LTA Solutions Ltd, (Northern Ireland), Vaasa Vocational Institute (Finland), the Centre for Teaching Resources, University College Copenhagen (Denmark) and the Swiss Federation for Adult Learning (Switzerland).

The UK, Irish, Finnish and Danish partners are funded by Erasmus+. The Swiss partner receives funding from the Swiss national government.

The project partners will visit each other’s countries to study practice in schools, universities, vocational colleges and adult learning. They will then develop a series of resources to be published in August 2017. These resources will include guidance for teachers on how to use digital technologies to teach mathematics effectively, a training course and teaching resources. The project will culminate in a multinational conference to be held in Scotland in the summer of 2017.

Taking Education From the 19th Century to the 21st

For the first time ever, the leaders of education departments and faculties from some of the world’s leading research universities met at the HSE Academic Centre in Pushkin, Russia. At the meeting, the Deans of Education, along with a representative from the OECD, discussed how education departments should change to meet the global challenges that face the sphere of education. The meeting was held on the initiative of the HSE Institute of Education and the Graduate School of Education at Peking University with the support of the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Dr Carmel O’Sullivan, Head of School represented the School of Education, Trinity.

Book Publications

Professor Carmel O’Sullivan published a series of three books for the Early Childhood Education sector in China (October 2016). These books use arts based pedagogies and were designed to encourage creativity and imagination in young learners in China. They are the first academic books published by Renmin University Press which were written originally in Chinese and are not translations of existing books.

Dr Carmel O’Sullivan and Miss Lin Li (publisher from Renmin University Press)
Professor John Heywood has been named an IEEE Fellow, (Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers). He is being recognised for contributions to engineering education research and the development of engineering education as a field of scientific inquiry. He is a Professional Fellow Emeritus of the School of Education and Trinity and was Head of School in the School of Education previously.

**Appointments**

**The Association for Teacher Education in Europe**

The Association for Teacher Education in Europe (ATEE) conferred an honorary membership to five long-serving members, one of these being Elizabeth Oldham. Elizabeth was a full-time lecturer in the School of Education from 1973 to 2010, and is still associated with the work of the School through her membership of the RISE (Research in School Education) and STEM-ERC (Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics Education Research and Communication) research groups. She has attended ATEE conferences since 1981, and is a co-chair of ATEE Research and Development Community ‘Science and Mathematics Education’.

**Europe Platform on Ethics, Transparency & Integrity in Education**

Dr Aidan Seery has been appointed one of two delegates to represent Ireland on the newly constituted Council of Europe Platform on Ethics, Transparency and Integrity in Education (ETINED). This is a pan-European platform of exchange of information and best practices on ethics and integrity in education with special attention to the fight against corruption and fraud in education and research with a view to furthering the ‘Helsinki agenda for quality education in Europe’.

**Awards**

**Sports Scholarships 2015/16**

Congratulations to our sports scholars from the Trinity Centre for People with Intellectual Disabilities (TCPID), Maeve Phillips and Fiachra Costello. Maeve and Fiachra received their awards from Mr Hugo MacNeill who funded the scholarships for students from TCPID at the annual Trinity Sports Scholarships Awards 2015/16.

**Trinity Equality Fund Awards**

The TCPID has been selected as one of the recipients of the 2015/16 Trinity Equality Fund Awards. The awards provide funds to staff and students on a competitive basis for a variety of equality initiatives and aim to raise awareness of equality issues and promote diversity in Trinity. The award will be used to aid the staff and students of the Centre to undertake a videography project to showcase the inclusive learning that takes place at Trinity.
Conferences and Seminars

Symposium Examines Provision of Early Childhood Education

Budget announcements on the expansion of the free pre-school year programme were top of the agenda at a symposium last October focusing on early childhood education in Ireland held in Trinity, led and organised by visiting Professor Nóirín Hayes of the Researching Early Childhood Education Collaborative (RECEC) at the School of Education in partnership with the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA). The event saw researchers and other stakeholders reflect on what early childhood education means and looks like for children and teachers in Ireland, and what implications this has for curriculum development and practice.

Dr Anne Looney, CEO NCCA, closed the symposium and pointed to the challenge of ensuring that as the sector expands we keep the focus where it is most needed – on children, the quality of their experiences and the quality of their learning.

NALA Numeracy Conference 2016

Over 70 delegates from around the country attended The National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) conference in collaboration with the RISE Research Group in the School of Education, supporting mathematical understanding and using informal methods in everyday maths. It was a professional development event for adult numeracy practitioners and FET practitioners who wish to learn more about numeracy.

Celtic Sociolinguistics Symposium

The School hosted the Celtic Sociolinguistics Symposium recently. Researchers working on Irish, Scottish Gaelic, Manx Gaelic, Welsh, Cornish and Breton gathered in the Trinity Long Room Hub to discuss their current work in the area of sociolinguistics of the Celtic languages. Research on the current status of the Celtic languages in education featured strongly. The event was co-hosted with COST Action IS1306 on New Speakers in a Multilingual Europe and featured a meeting between researchers, government and voluntary organisations working on the promotion of the Irish language. The Symposium was jointly funded by an Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta, Colmcille, the Research in School Education group (RISE), and Oifig na Gaeilge.

Funding in the Higher Education System in Ireland

The Vice-Provost, Professor Chris Morash, and the Trinity Research Centre for Cultures, Academic Values and Education (CAVE) hosted a one day seminar on the funding of the higher education system in Ireland. Dr John Walsh chaired the first discussion panel entitled ’A broken system of higher education funding?’ The panel featured contributions from Thomas Byrne TD, Fianna Fail Spokesperson for Education, Senator Lynn Ruane, Seanad Éireann, Senator Ivana Bacik, Seanad Éireann, and Kieran McNulty, Trinity Student Union President. The keynote speaker Professor Bruce Chapman, Australian National University discussed the topic ’Higher Education Funding and the Cassells Report in an international context’, and Mr Ruari Quinn, former Minister for Education responded to Professor Chapman.

L-R: Mr Kieran McNulty, Dr John Walsh, Senator Ivana Bacik, Vice Provost Professor Chris Morash, Senator Lynn Ruane, Thomas Byrne TD, & Dr Aidan Seery
Game Based Learning (iGBL)

The Irish Conference on Game Based Learning (iGBL) took place in Trinity which provided a forum for all stakeholders interested in exchanging ideas, projects, and best practice on the use of games and game-based approaches to support motivation, learning, and change. It was a forum for like-minded people (i.e., students, teachers, researchers, or companies) to meet and share their enthusiasm for this platform.

Research students were given the opportunity to present their work, meet specialists in their field and obtain feedback on their work. Teachers and other practitioners had the opportunity to discover new ideas and learn new game-based skills that they can integrate into their teaching. Companies were able to showcase their products and explain how these can be used in the context of learning and motivation.

The conference was co-chaired by Dr Ann Devitt, School of Education, Dr Mairead Brady, School of Business and Dr Neil Peirce of Learnovate Centre with Dr Patrick Felicia from Waterford Institute of Technology as Conference Director.

Music in the Commons

A special recital took place in the Common Room under the guidance of music coordinator Ms Marita Kerin as part of the Arts Education Research Group (AERG) - School of Education Trinity. Seven Senior Sophister students from the Bachelor in Music Education, our four-year degree course, which develops the dual identity of teacher and performer, presented a selection from their final year performance programme.

Quavers to Quadratics at the National Concert Hall

Students and staff from School of Education, Marita Kerin and School of Physics, Dr Shane Bergin shared their experiences and skills with primary school students at the National Concert Hall (NCH) through play, song and scientific investigation. The initiative Quavers to Quadratics provide young students with a highly engaging introduction to the intersections between the worlds of music and physics through a series of exciting, hands-on experiments. The workshops were kindly supported by Science Foundation Ireland’s Discover Programme and Dublin Port Company.

National Taskforce on Youth Mental Health

Helen McEntee TD, Minister of State for Mental Health and Older People, announced the membership of the National Taskforce on Youth Mental Health, a key priority in the first 100 days of Partnership Government. The Minister confirmed “This is a significant milestone in our work to empower and support young people to strengthen their resilience, mental health and wellbeing. To invest as much leadership and support as I can to this important work, I will chair the Taskforce myself”.

The newly formed National Taskforce on Youth Mental Health met for the first time in September. The Minister also established a Young Person’s Reference Group which will be co-chaired by singer Niall Breslin of a Lust for Life and recent PhD graduate Emma Farrell (supervised by Professor Michael Shevlin and Dr Paula Flynn) to create an inclusive national consultative forum that will involve key stakeholders in testing and shaping the work of the taskforce at key stages.
Launches

Breakfast Briefing in House of Lords

The Trinity Centre for People with Intellectual Disabilities (TCPID) in the School of Education launched a Business Partners programme, promoting inclusion and diversity in the workplace on Monday the 24th of October 2016. The launch event was hosted by Bank of Ireland at a special breakfast briefing in the House of Lords with a number of companies in attendance.

The TCPID Business Partners programme comprises of forward thinking companies who are committed to the values of inclusive recruitment policies. They strongly believe in harnessing potential and talent from all parts of society. These companies will join the TCPID in its progressive work, promoting the inclusion of one of the most marginalised groups in society. There are many ways that a company can get involved with the Centre such as work placements, mentoring, coaching, giving presentations or talks to students and ongoing employment.

Bank of Ireland CEO, Richie Boucher who hosted the event said, “Bank of Ireland has actively partnered with the Centre for a number of years, primarily through the provision of work placements for its programme participants. The experience has been both hugely positive for the Bank and rewarding for our colleagues. What we have found is the inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities in the workplace has brought numerous benefits - it contributes to team-building, increases motivation, and fosters openness, acceptance and inclusiveness”.

CEO Cpl Resources plc and IBEC President, Anne Heraty said, “The TCPID Business Partners Programme will facilitate the formation of many productive partnerships. It will join the TCPID in its work in promoting real inclusion in the workplace and will play a key role as champions and ambassadors”.

Graduates of the TCPID also spoke at the launch. The graduates included Kieran Biddulph and Mei Lin Yap who both formerly did work experience at Bank of Ireland. Mei Lin is currently working at St Vincent’s University Hospital and is part of a team developing a new course called “How to Support People with Disabilities in Trinity”. They were joined by Tomás Murphy, another graduate of the TCPID, who is now a permanent employee with A&L Goodbody.

TCPID’s Pathways Coordinator, Marie Devitt announced at the event, that our new Certificate in Arts, Science and Inclusive Applied Practice is now level five on the National Framework of Qualifications. This means that students will now receive a formal qualification on graduating. The graduates will be prepared to work in diverse employment settings and will also be able to progress to advanced certificate programmes in further education institutions or institutes of technology. The practical engagement and financial support of our Business Partners play a critical role in enabling the TCPID to provide transformative opportunities for our students.

Career Leap

Minster Paschal Donohoe and Provost Patrick Prendergast launched the Career LEAP (Local Employment Action Partnership) study in late 2016. Career LEAP is a work readiness programme developed by Professor Carmel O’Sullivan designed to assist 18-24 year old unemployed young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET). Career LEAP was a partnership between community, business and academia funded by the City of Dublin Education and Training Board (CDETB), Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) and prominent businesses in the docklands area.

The Minister for Education and Skills, Jan O’Sullivan launched Education Matters 2015-2016 in the National University of Ireland Dublin in December. Dr Paula Flynn’s thematic article Whose voice, who’s listening? Student voices in research and practice; embedding a culture of listening in education discourse, and Professor Nóirín Hayes’ article Early Childhood Education: Evolution and impact over the course of the year both feature in this publication.

Education Matters

L-R: Mr Richie Boucher, CEO Bank of Ireland, Ms Mei Yin Yap, Mr Thomas Murphy, Ms Anne Heraty, CEO Cpl Resources & Ms Marie Devitt, TCPID Pathways Coordinator

L-R: Dr Carmel O’Sullivan, Minster Paschal Donohoe, Provost Patrick Prendergast with the young people

L-R: Dr Paula Flynn, Minister for Education and Skills Jan O’Sullivan TD & Professor Nóirín Hayes
International Women’s Week 2016

The School of Education’s contribution to International Women’s Week in March 2016 comprised of three events aimed to encourage reflection and discussion around the influence of women in education, the perception of their role in society and actions towards the pledge for parity which is the theme for this year. The panel discussions were organised and presented by PhD students from the School, and chaired by Verity Limond a third year secondary school pupil who blogs at standstronggirls.wordpress.com about feminism and women’s rights.

The first discussion Women in Education and our contribution towards Gender Parity: presentations from postgraduate research students at different stages of the life cycle was presented by a panel of four PhD students from the School of Education, Jillian Kellough (USA), Ashling Ryan-Mangan (Ireland), Katherine Salvador (Equador) and Catalina Villanueva (Chile). The second discussion Men’s perspectives of female contribution in Society was represented by Dean McDonnell (PhD candidate), Conor Clancy (Welfare Officer, Trinity Students Union), Ciaran O’Rourke (Head Resident & Coordinator, Champlain) and Dr David Limond (School of Education). A documentary screening and open forum about Nobel Peace Prize Winner Laureate Malala Yousafzai who is the youngest female winner, defending the rights of education for women in her country (Pakistan), was shown.

Public Lecture: Education Policy Since The 1916 Rising

Dr Damian Murchan gave a public lecture in Trinity on Easter Monday as part of RTE’s Reflecting the Rising events. The talk, Bombs, Buses and Exams: A Selected Journey Through Education Policy in Ireland since the 1916 Rising was introduced by Paul Cunningham RTE. The talk offered a review of educational policy over the past century, especially in relation to testing and examinations. The story was set against the backdrop of national and international events and ran parallel with the life of one extraordinary Irish woman who lived through tumultuous times.

Fulbright TechImpact Experience at the University of Michigan

“At 3am on the 20th of December 2015, I arrived through the snow to Ann Arbor to start my Fulbright TechImpact Award Fellowship at the University of Michigan with three sleeping children and an exhausted husband. The Fellowship represented for me the opportunity to undertake a new research programme applying computational network science theory and methods to better understand the processes of learning a second language. The original ideas for this work had germinated during my PhD work back in 2004 and I had developed them in research activity in the area of language and literacy over the last eight years in the School of Education. In the intensely busy lead-up to departure, I had little idea of how the fellowship would evolve and of the experiences that lay ahead for my family and I. My programme of study developed far beyond what I would have envisaged due to a very exciting collaboration with my host at the University of Michigan, Professor Nick Ellis. It was a great pleasure to work with Nick whose work I have admired for many years. My husband, Dr Gareth Bennett in the School of Engineering, also on a Fulbright Scholarship, had great success designing, building and testing an aeroacoustics experimental rig with his collaborator in the University of Notre Dame. As for our children, from their first contact with the neighbours out playing light sabres in the snow, they jumped into Michigan life and school with no hesitation and great enjoyment. We threw ourselves into all the educational, recreational and cultural opportunities available to us. I learnt how to programme in Python and R. I was on the organising committee for the International Night in the Children’s School with 73 countries represented. Gareth was a parent mentor for the school’s Science Olympiad team. I ran my first ever five kilometre race with my eight year old son. We went ice-skating, kayaking, horse-riding, skiing, swimming. Finally we drove 2500 miles west to California through the prairie, over the Great Continental Divide, down the Colorado valley and across the desert to the great blue ocean. The Fulbright award was a research opportunity that proved to be an enriching and enlightening experience for us all”.

Dr Ann Devitt is an Assistant Professor in the School of Education in Trinity working in the area of language and literacy.
One to One with Dr Mark Prendergast on his research

What’s your specialist area in the School of Education?
My area is Mathematics Education… people often wince once they hear the word ‘Maths’ and presume that you spend your days locked away trying to solve some long-standing problem. However my role is more to do with the issues affecting the teaching and learning of the subject…

Is this a role that you had always imagined for yourself?
Honestly… No! Now don’t get me wrong, I always liked Maths at school… but truth be told… it was never my best subject. I have a very good memory and this suited the traditional maths curriculum where I was always able to recall certain formulae or theories and repeat procedures. However, when I look back now I have to admit that I never truly understood what I was doing. Thankfully the recent reform of the second level mathematics curriculum discourages this type of learning.

So how did you end up in Mathematics Education at Trinity?
Good question! I loved sport and when I left school I went to the University of Limerick to do PE teaching. You had to pick another subject and I picked Maths, probably because it was a good subject to get a job with. During my school placements I realised that I really enjoyed and had a passion for teaching the subject. I loved to break everything down and explain it in different ways. When you do this, you realise that there are no magic rules involved in Maths, everything falls into place and makes sense. As a teacher, my greatest satisfaction has always come from taking some ‘rule’ and trying to help students to discover where it has come from and why and how it works.

What do you enjoy the most about your current role?
I love working with the student teachers in Trinity and being part of their development that takes place over the course of the two year PME (teacher education) programme. Many of them come in with top degrees in their subject areas. The challenge is getting them to realise that teaching is about much more than content knowledge. It’s about how we help thirty individual students to learn and understand and see the relevance of the subject in their own lives. That is only one aspect… there is also the holistic aspect which is just as important. I genuinely believe that teaching, good teaching, is one of the most complex jobs there is and people will only realise that when they have spent some time doing it.

What are your plans for the future?
I want to continue to develop the mathematics strand of the PME programme at Trinity and ensure that the teachers who graduate from here are of the highest quality possible. We also have a Mathematics Education strand in the School’s M.Ed. programme starting in September 2017 and this is currently open for applications (pardon the plug!). This course is again aimed at developing a high calibre of mathematics educators through a research-based programme. Although it’s often overlooked, research in Mathematics Education is very important to ensure that we are constantly learning from best-practice. I’m currently involved in several studies investigating the time allocated to mathematics and the transition from primary to secondary Mathematics Education. We can only influence Government policy on these issues when we have the evidence to back up our recommendations.

Get Involved
Trinity has a long tradition of outreach and community engagement. To find out about the numerous ways you can get involved with Trinity both at home and abroad, please visit www.tcd.ie/alumni/volunteer

Upcoming Alumni Events
Alumni Weekend 2017
25 to 27 August 2017
Other Upcoming Events:
www.tcd.ie/alumni/news-events/events

Class Notes
Do you have any news or updates that you would like to share with your fellow alumni? Submit your news with an image, subject of study and year of graduation to alumni@tcd.ie. For more information please visit www.tcd.ie/alumni/news-events/publications