



Greetings from Head of Graduate Business, Dr Denis Harrington

Welcome to our December issue of our graduate business ezine where we update you on strategic developments within the school as well as recent activities and events. This semester we had the pleasure of welcoming leading entrepreneur and 'dragon' Sean Gallagher to the School where he contributed to a seminar hosted by the AIB Centre for Finance and Business Research and also was a speaker at an event hosted by the SLNIW.

As part of our graduate business seminar programme we continue to attract some of the leading voices from the business, academic and wider world, enabling students to exchange concepts and ideas with both academics and real-world practitioners from leading enterprises. In this edition we are pleased to update you on the recent seminar programme organised through the school.

In addition through our Business Education, Teaching and Research group (BETR) we played host to Professor Russ Vince from Bath university who facilitated a number of workshops on management education and learning.

The semester also witnessed the launch of two new programmes. Our new Doctorate in Business Administration (DBA) was commenced in August and our new B.Sc Small Enterprise Management for tourism professionals was formally launched in Dublin with Failte Ireland in November.

A number of important conference events were also hosted by the school including the Economic Development Conference in conjunction with the Ireland Newfoundland Festival drawing as it does on the historic connections between the South East region and Newfoundland, Canada. The first International Conference on Networks, Learning and Entrepreneurship was co-hosted by the Centre for Enterprise Development and Regional Economy with Aberystwyth University, Wales and an inaugural Food Tourism Forum was facilitated by RIKON in association with Failte Ireland and Enterprise Ireland. These important activities provide the space for collaboration, research and knowledge transfer and add significantly to our capacity to serve as a knowledge hub in the region.

Finally our congratulations to Dr Susan Whelan who featured as Outstanding Awardee of the Irish Research Council for Humanities and Social Sciences (IRCHSS) in recognition of her pioneering research on brand imitation and also to Dr Felicity Kelliher and Chris O'Riordan who were award winners at the National Case Writing competition with NUI Maynooth.

We hope you enjoy reading our newsletter and that you will continue to connect with us at the school. You can follow our activities on facebook and through our regular updates on the WIT School homepage.

At the close of another year, may I extend warmest best wishes to all of our students and alumni for a happy holiday season and prosperous new year.

Dr Denis Harrington

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Business in Ireland: Building for Success

The AIB Centre for Finance and Business Research recently hosted a seminar titled, 'Business In Ireland - Building for Success', which featured as guest speakers a key paragon of Irish entrepreneurship, Mr. Sean Gallagher, founder and CEO of 'Smarthomes' (along with Derek Roddy) and one of the five dragons on RTE's Dragons' Den along with Mr. Hugh Mansfield, Head of AIBs Business Centre, Waterford and Tipperary and Mr Gerard O'Neill, Economist and Chairman of Amarach Research. This invigorating seminar provided the attendees, both students and clients of AIB with a real opportunity to engage in core knowledge exchange.

Mr. Sean Gallagher advocated that a quiet revolution is unfolding on the ground where entrepreneurs are now focusing on their business, changing the language to incorporate solutions, possibilities and opportunities, failing to remain paralysed by current economic and financial problems whilst emphasizing the importance of the students as the next batch of new business leaders, strategists and financial controllers, a generation that needs to seek out new opportunities from hobbies, passion and markets, encountering the problem and thus presenting the solution. Wishing students not wealth but success and bundles of it, the audience was left with a feeling of empowerment, indebted with an attitude of changing the language and taking the necessary risks, instilling the importance of quality, customer service and value.

Fuelling the momentum of the seminar further, Mr. Gerard O'Neill in his very comprehensive account of the role of psychology in the modern day economy and the consumer asserted the need for resilience, the ability to bounce back and reinvent for the future. He advocated within Ireland the new consumer is now placing greater emphasis on the home environment, identifying new realities and new opportunities. Emphasizing the 'parity of voice', Mr. O'Neill highlighted the fundamental change is in how we connect and in how we participate with each other and like all recessions, the current economic and financial woes will end as sure as day follows night, thus when it does, we need the mechanism in place to move forward.

Concluding the forum, Dr Denis Harrington as Head of Graduate Business stressed how Ireland now needs a new narrative, a new story to communicate the delivery of future growth and success, a common thread woven through the arguments of all speakers.

Speakers at the AIB Seminar included Dr Sheila O'Donohoe, Director of AIB Centre for Finance and Business Research, Mr Hugh Mansfield, Regional Manager, AIB, Sean Gallagher, Dragons Den, Gerard O'Neill, Amarach Consulting, May Walsh, AIB and Dr Denis Harrington, WIT



Keynote speaker, Sean Gallagher addressing delegates at the recent entrepreneurship seminar hosted by AIB Centre for Finance and Business Research

BETR Group Host Leading UK Academic

Professor Russ Vince of University of Bath visited WIT recently as part of an initiative of the Business Education & Teaching Research group of the School of Business. As a leading management education specialist his profile was a further testament to the international profile of WIT's teaching abilities and it served as an outlet for discourse on a number of prevailing management education research themes. These themes resonate with the work carried out already within the School of Business but underline the importance of adaptability in an ever-changing world. Specifically, Professor Vince outlined the paradoxical nature of business education and the traditional focus on the internal and external business environment without any regard for the individual and the collective personalities of an organization. During his visit he reflected that WIT School of Business seemed to have stolen a march in this respect and it was clear to him that innovative programs offered at postgraduate level within the school had mirrored that shift in philosophy, ahead of many other business schools across Europe. The DBA and MBA on offer here were examples of same.

As part of his visit, he also facilitated an academic writing workshop to the School's research students which was very favourably received. As an editor of the Journal of Management Education his insight provided the School's research students with expertise and feedback. It is rare for research students anywhere to gain access to such personalized, tailored support from one so imminent and this further underlines the unique learning & research experience of this School's research graduates.

Professor Vince continues to provide support and advice to the School's faculty following on from his visit.

Another eventful Graduate Seminar Programme 2010

September through December of 2010 will be remembered as one of the most trying and traumatic periods in Ireland's economic and political history. However, difficult times make for great periods of learning, and within the Graduate Seminar Series, Masters in Business students could at the same time apply their theoretical frameworks to the myriad of front line speakers presented on a weekly basis to analyse the momentous happenings in Irish business life.

The Series has been long established as a core feature of the Graduate programme in the School of Business, and was opened this year by the Director of IBEC, Mr Danny McCoy. His unscripted address of more than 90 minutes reflected on many of the themes of the Series which would recur throughout the autumn - leadership, entrepreneurial dynamics, social awareness and change management - and will be the first featured seminar podcast to be hosted on the upcoming revamped School of Business website. His key message was that business opportunities still exist, even in the most severe of economic downturns, and that students should actively pursue potential avenues in a rapidly re-shaping Ireland. This theme was echoed by the concluding speaker in the Series - entrepreneur and Dragon's Den presenter Sean Gallagher - who gave an inspiring vision of the need to constantly adapt and reflect on opportunity.

Particularly informative accounts of the effects of the current economic environment came from opposite ends of the organisational size chart - Michael Flynn, CEO of FLI Environmental which has a presence in multiple global locations, spoke well of the need for constant personal and professional reflection and the need to take time to assess where one's organisation is at and where it needs to go. From a different perspective, Katherine Carroll traced the evolution of her Stable Diet SME from humble origins in rural County Wexford, through the economic rise and fall of the last few years, and was particularly open and warmly received by the students.

The growing internationalisation of Irish economic and political affairs throughout the semester was mirrored by an impressive range of speakers with first-hand experience of the international landscape. Alan Kelly MEP spoke passionately of the need for fundamental change in Irish society on a deeper level than traditional Irish political discourse, and Daithi O'Ceallaigh gave a fascinating account of his considerable expertise through his diplomatic career with the Department of Foreign Affairs and his current roles as Head of the Irish Institute for International and European Affairs and Chair of the Press Council. The European theme was continued with Andrea Pappin, Executive Director of the European Movement, who struck a chord with the students as she spoke of opportunities within the EU institutions.

The need for students to appreciate the wider macro-environment from an academic perspective was also well served by speakers of international experience and repute. In the economics and finance sphere, Professor John Holland from the University of Glasgow, and Professor Noel O'Sullivan of Sheffield University, gave insightful accounts of various aspects of internal organisational successes and failures in recent times.

Any economic downturn is particularly challenging from a marketing perspective and both Stephen Kent from Bulmers, and Peter Hatton of Colgate Palmolive, spoke of the need to constantly be creative and innovative in retaining existing clients while also reaching new customers in challenging times.

It is an imperative that students also hear from alumni of the very programmes which they are now participating in. Graham Doyle, CEO at Waterford Airport, laid out the crucial necessity of keeping transport links open for existing businesses and attracting inward investment to the south east region. Denise Molloy, a recent MBS graduate now working as an analyst with Barclays in London, utilised these transport links to engage the students with her rapid career trajectory in the City, while Cait Barden from the Portobello Institute reflected back on the inspiring words she heard from Liam Griffin of the Griffin Hotel Group as she participated in the Seminar Series some years ago.

The cross-disciplinary nature of the Seminar Series, along with the exposure of the students to external experts and practitioners, is a crucial combination to develop a wider and deeper connection between academic theory and reality of contemporary business and social challenges. The Series cannot be successful without the commitment of the speakers involved to engage with students at a crucial period in their development, and indeed the active participation of the students themselves to seize the opportunities presented by that engagement.

Danny McCoy, Director General of IBEC, speaking at the launch of the Graduate Business Seminar Programme for 2010



Waterford - A world class food tourism destination



*Pictured below:
Ms. Paula Donoghue,
Bord Bia & Ms. Rebecca
Harris, The RIKON Group,
Waterford Institute of
Technology.*

On Wednesday 15th September, Dr. Patrick Lynch of The RIKON Group, School of Business, Waterford Institute of Technology led a diverse group of expert speakers on the potential of food tourism in Ireland's south East in the Granary Theatre, Waterford. Key note speakers included Minister Mary White, Green Party TD, Jim Mulcahy, Enterprise Ireland, Tom Rea, Guaranteed Irish, Paula Donoghue, Bord Bia, Marie Kelly, Teagasc, Sue Braitwait, Slow Food UK, Gary Breen, Fáilte Ireland, Maurice Keller, Good Food Ireland and many others.

The speakers presented numerous strategic options for the region and gave recommendations on how the South East region can be developed into a world class food destination. A member of the group was quoted as saying "Fáilte Ireland has identified that local food is a key driver for consumers in both choice of destination and the purchase of food services within destinations."

Dr Patrick Lynch said "We were delighted with the great turn out of people from all over the South East and it goes to show that people want to participate and get involved. Building on the ideas and recommendations presented at the conference, we will develop a strategic document detailing the necessary actions to turn the South East into a food destination. We have the necessary raw ingredients here in the South East and by working together in a collaborative fashion we can create a competitive destination based on a solid food proposition. This initiative is important for the south east as food tourism is an important instrument for regional development and is a critical enticer to tourists to visit the south east."

MBA Leadership Seminar - Lessons from one of Ireland's leading entrepreneurs

Members of the MBA Association of Ireland's-South East Chapter pictured on their recent visit to the Griffin Hotel Group. The MBA Association of Ireland (MBAAI) is the 2000-strong representative body for graduates holding the degree of Masters in Business Administration (MBA) living and working in Ireland. Its mission is to improve the practice of management through continuous learning, to which end it organises around 20 events throughout Ireland each year. Excellent relationships exist with all of the business schools in Ireland, from where over 350 new MBAs join the MBAAI every year.

For this event, the MBA Association partnered with the Graduate Business School at Waterford Institute of Technology who invited Liam Griffin of the Griffin Group to address participants on their Executive MBA programme on the topic of leadership in an entrepreneurial context. Liam Griffin is one of Ireland's leading entrepreneurs and hoteliers (the portfolio of the Griffin Group also includes the Monart Destination Spa, Ferrycarrig Hotel and Hotel Kilkenny). Liam is also one of the country's leading motivational speakers and is well renowned in the corporate and sporting world for same. He is a regular GAA columnist with the Sunday Tribune, a contributor to Setanta Sports and a regular guest on George Hook's Newstalk 106 and Matt Cooper's Last Word radio programs.

Pictured below: Mr Tom Egan (Programme Director, Executive MBA, WIT), Dr Mark Rowe (CEO Waterford Health Park and Research Associate WIT), Mr. Liam Griffin (The Griffin Group), Mr. Darren Tutty (Chair MBAAI South East), Dr Denis Harrington



Unique degree programme aimed at tourism business entrepreneurs launched with Fáilte Ireland

The tourism industry is critical to the recovery of the Irish economy. It is particularly important that Irish tourism entrepreneurs have the skills and knowledge to develop successful commercial enterprises. This does not just require competence in management, finance, operations and marketing but also understanding of the digital and hyper-competitive environment within which Irish tourism and hospitality operations operate.

The Department of Graduate Business at WIT in conjunction with Fáilte Ireland recently launched a new national degree programme aimed at tourism business entrepreneurs. The exciting new degree programme which is customised for the owner/manager of small tourism and hospitality enterprises, as well as for supervisory and junior management levels in the industry was launched in Dublin in collaboration with Fáilte Ireland.

Commenting on the launch of the Programme Dr Thomas O'Toole, Head of School of Business remarked: "The Fáilte Ireland BSc in Small Enterprise Management programme is designed to be relevant to the commercial realities of being a tourism entrepreneur and therefore will employ a Problem-based Learning (PBL) approach which places an emphasis on addressing and resolving realistic business situations. This is a blended learning programme that incorporates limited class attendance at WIT with an online learning environment, which meets the flexible learning needs of tourism entrepreneurs".

The programme will emphasise the development of key personal skills such as critical thinking and communication, allied to exposure to specialist knowledge in business development. In particular, the programme will respond to the need for the tourism entrepreneur to be able to thrive in a radically changed landscape with the power and influence of the Web, changing tourist profiles, economic downturn and increased competition. On completion, participants will have developed the skills necessary to develop their enterprises so that they will be in a much stronger competitive position.

The programme will commence in September, 2011 and will run for three years. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) allows participants to gain exemptions from certain modules through possession of relevant qualifications and/or relevant tourism industry management experience, which satisfies the learning outcomes of these modules. Participants will be required to engage in an RPL programme involving the completion of portfolios to apply for these exemptions. This will take place in advance of the degree from February to April, 2011. This will also include a special orientation programme to facilitate access to the degree.

According to the Programme Director, Dr Anthony Foley, "The Fáilte Ireland BSc in Small Enterprise Management is designed so that the programme delivery is flexible, with a limited number of structured lectures/seminars and considerable participant and lecturer engagement through WIT's Moodle Online Learning Environment. Full training will also be provided to all participants on the use of Moodle".

The course is open to owners/managers/supervisors in the tourism and hospitality sector who have a minimum of 3 years of relevant tourism/hospitality experience.

For further details and informal enquiries, please contact:

Programme Director:

Dr. Anthony Foley
afoley@wit.ie or 051 - 302411

Dr Denis Harrington,
Head of Graduate Business
graduatebusiness@wit.ie

Ms Jackie Murphy, Graduate Office
graduatebusiness@wit.ie or 051 - 302424



Dr Anthony Foley, Programme Director of the Fáilte Ireland BSc in Small Enterprise Management pictured with invited guests at the launch of the programme in Dublin.

National Case Competition Winners

Dr Felicity Kelliher and Chris O'Riordan's management case study on the WIT CEO in residence programme was a finalist in the new National Case Competition hosted in collaboration with NUI Maynooth. The case explores the CEO in Residence Programme at Waterford Institute of Technology (WIT) School of Business, an academic-practitioner educational partnership enabling prolonged student and faculty exposure to, and interaction with, the appointed CEO and his company. This is the first programme of its kind to be introduced in an Irish college, and the case documents Sam McCauley's tenure as the first CEO in Residence, covering the period from late 2006 to early 2009. The programme rationale, design, and implementation are discussed in detail, and the programme's key benefits and challenges to both partners are identified within the case. The case also describes the programme outcomes and their impact on key stakeholders (including students, faculty, the CEO company and the regional community), and outlines potential plans for the future.

The scenario presented concerns the outgoing CEO (Sam McCauley), and the Head of the School of Business (Tom O'Toole) as they contemplate the future of the programme. Each considers how the programme evolved from first inception, how it operates, the challenges it has faced to date, and the distinguishing features that make it a valuable aspect of the business students' educational experience at the School. The evidence in the case consists of facts, multimedia and narrative that help the reader to get a broad understanding of the programme itself and the practitioner-academic partnership ethos therein, as these are important factors in addressing the scenarios and questions presented. The final section of the case summarises many of the key challenges that the programme faces in the future, and a number of these criteria are addressed in the case questions. The authors have also provided a Microsoft PowerPoint slide show [and embedded video] to assist the instructor in positioning the case. However, the case is designed to also allow alternative questions to be formulated, depending on the teaching focus. The case was awarded runner-up and will be published in a management journal next year.

For further information contact:

Co-directors of the Competition Prof Robert Galavan NUI Maynooth Robert.galavan@nuim.ie or Dr Denis Harrington WIT dharrington@wit.ie

WIT School of Business Host Major Economic Development Conference

Waterford Institute of Technology hosted an Economic Development Conference on 21st September in conjunction with the Ireland Newfoundland Festival. The conference aimed to explore regional business opportunities and trade through a series of presentations and focused workshops. Speaking about the conference, Mr John Maher, Chairman of the Centre for Newfoundland and Labrador Studies and Lecturer at WIT School Business noted that the conference succeeded in bringing together perspectives from Ireland and Newfoundland in an effort to reignite the business proposition in the South East.

Other speakers at the conference included: Dr Bill O'Gorman, WIT, Ms Suzanne Cormie, Senior Trade Commission at the Canadian Embassy, Mr Gerard Kirwan, Goatsbridge Trout Farm, Co. Kilkenny, Mr Con Traas, The Apple Farm, Co. Tipperary, Councillor Debbie Hanlon, City of St John's, Newfoundland, Dr Wayne King, Associate Professor, Entrepreneurship and Small Business, Memorial University of Newfoundland and Dr Thomas O'Toole, Head of School of Business, WIT.

The conference recognises the close relationship that exists between Ireland and Newfoundland since the mid 1700s. The Ireland Newfoundland Partnership, housed within the Department of the Taoiseach, manages an agreement between the Governments of Ireland and Newfoundland to recognise the deep historical links between the two regions and to explore the possibilities of mutually advantageous co-operation through business, industry, educational and cultural activities.

For further information contact:

Mr John Maher, founder member for the Centre for Newfoundland and Labrador Studies, jmaher@wit.ie

8th Annual Graduate Society Ball



The 8th Annual Graduate Business Society Ball took place on August 27th in the Granville Hotel. WIT graduates, lecturers, local businesses, Deputy Mayor, Cha O'Neill, and special guest speaker, Bobby Kerr and his wife were treated to a fantastic night.

Guests were greeted with a champagne reception and canapés on arrival and then led to the enchanted ballroom where the night's dining and entertainment occurred. Catherine Gannon, the President of the GBS, welcomed the distinguished guests and later handed over the GBS Presidency position to Noel Murray who has an exciting year of events planned.

Mr. Bobby Kerr delivered a thought provoking speech that enlightened members of local businesses and WIT graduates. Dr Tom O'Toole, The Dean of WIT's School of Business, and Dr Denis Harrington, the Head of Graduate Business, presented the 'Graduate Business Student of the Year' awards to outstanding students on each graduate business programme.

Guests won superb prizes sponsored by local business in the GBS raffle. Sponsors of the event included: Ardkeen Barbers, Azzurri, Ballymaloe House, The Book Centre, Boudoir Beauty, Fitzgerald's Menswear, Fitz U, Foxy Chopper, Glanbia, The Granville Hotel, Hairwaves, Hotel Kilkenny, Infokus Photography, Island Lane, Joe Roche Glass, Learn and Do Software Development (LADO), Mulligan's Pharmacy, Seamus Hogan Transport, Sign Technology Systems (STS), The Stanville Lodge, The Theatre Royal and Zen Hair. Entertainment was provided by Avalon, Darragh McCann and DJ Wayne Fleming where guests danced late into the night.



Award winners pictured with guest speaker Bobby Kerr and Business School management team



President of Graduate Business Society Catherine Gannon and members of the Committee pictured with guest speaker Bobby Kerr and Business School management team



Dr Thomas O'Toole, Head of School of Business, Dr Denis Harrington, Head of Graduate Business School, guest speaker Bobby Kerr, President of Graduate Business Society, Catherine Gannon, Cllr Cha O'Neill, Deputy Mayor and Mr Ger Long, Head of Accounting and Economics

