



THE EDGE

Say hello to our new CEO-in-Residence

A tough act to follow is how Dr Thomas O'Toole described Sam McCauley, our very dynamic and hand's on CEO-in-Residence (2006-8). In the same breathe he welcomed Pierce Casey to the School to fill Sam's big shoes. Serial entrepreneur, venture capitalist and with Dungarvan roots, 'Pierce has much to offer the School's community of 1,800 learners, over the next two years' added Tom as he settled Pierce into a meeting with faculty. He ever so gently hinted at the work the School has in mind for this 'strategically mind, opportunistic in the best sense, motivator of enterprise and people.' A real catch for the School.



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.....from the Head of Graduate Business

As another productive academic year draws to a close it is worth reflecting on the exciting activity that continues in the school. In early February we had over 100 graduate students – comprising nine different nationalities – invest in an intense period of academic seminars, company visits and meetings with politicians in Brussels and Leuven in order to prepare them to hit the ground running into an increasingly competitive employment market. This unique programme of events was a marriage of intellectual reflection based in the Irish Institute for European Studies in Leuven and exposure to the urgent challenges and difficulties facing the European Union's political economic structures in Brussels.

The programme involved collaboration with senior professors at one of Europe's oldest and most prestigious of universities – the Katholieke University in Leuven; a series of interactive seminars with senior representatives from a range of business bodies – the Directors of IBEC and the IFA's Brussels offices, as well as the Euro-association of Business Europe; and of course visits to the Commission and meetings with Colm Burke and Prionsias de Rossa MEPs. The highlight of the tour was a truly unique gala dinner to celebrate the place of Ireland in Europe – with Ambassador Bobby MacDonagh (Ireland's Permanent Representative to the European Union) joining the students and faculty for dinner in the historic grounds of the Irish College, long associated with the study of the Flight of the Earls. Planning is already underway on next years programme of events.

We also had a very successful first meeting of our new Rural Development Forum organised through the RIKON Research group to engage with regional stakeholders, involved in rural development/rural tourism development, and to facilitate an initial round table discussion, designed to initiate a collective approach to rural development in the region. This complements the work of the Tourism Learning Networks group within the Centre for Marketing Studies which in this newsletter updates us on the programme of learning residentials which they facilitated on our behalf with key tourism business professionals in the south east and west of Ireland. Again this year record numbers have signed up to be part of this exciting programme which provides valuable opportunities for businesses to share ideas, learning and expertise in addressing competitiveness issues within the tourism business context.

A number of site visits were also organised for our students one of which saw our MBS Economics and Finance students participate in a visit to Delta Index in Dublin and participate in a workshop with a leading finance specialist. The finance group also arranged for Brendan Burgess to visit the Institution during which he met with finance lecturers and addressed students and faculty in open session. In this issue we also report from the CEDRE Enterprise Awards which showcased the work of high potential companies participating on the SEEPP programme.

As a final remark, I would like to extend best wishes to all students and I look forward to meeting you at the Graduate Business Society Ball planned for later in the year. Warm best wishes also to all our staff for an enjoyable summer break.

SEEPP Enterprise Awards 2009

Two innovative and exceptional companies were honoured at the SEEPP Enterprise Awards 2009, sponsored by Ulster Bank, South East Business Centre, and Ernst & Young which was held on May 26th in WIT. The winner of the Start-Up category was David Delany, Neurosurgery Games Ltd, the Early Stage category winner was Gerry Ryder, Practanna Medical and winner of the best exhibit was Tom Byrnes, Pack Publishing. These



Back row L-R: Eugene Crehan, Catherine Whitty, Dr. Thomas O' Toole, Denise Hall, Dr. Bill O' Gorman
Front row L-R: Gerard Ryder, Anne Houston, Dr. Lorraine Boran, Dr. David Delany

awards were open to both current and past participants of the highly regarded South East Enterprise Platform Programme. The Enterprise Awards acknowledge the contributions made by entrepreneurs to the economic development and progression of the South East region. The judging panel included Brian O'Sullivan, Manager, Ulster Bank South East Business Centre, William Galloway, Partner, Ernst & Young and Clodagh Whelan, Regional Director, Enterprise Ireland, and was chaired by Mr. Pierce Casey, Entrepreneur and CEO-in-Residence at the School of Business in WIT. SEEPP Director Eugene Crehan said "The SEEPP finalists all presented their business ideas excellently to the panel of highly experienced judges and I think the finalists benefited greatly from the feedback given by the judges! The guest speaker on the evening was Jim Sheehan, MD, Surecom Network Solutions (NS) Ltd. Surecom is at the high end of the telecommunications technology business, providing telecommunications engineering services and solutions to major European players such as O2, Telefonica, Meteor, Ericsson, Vodafone and BT.

SEEPP is a one year enterprise programme that provides a range of supports to innovative start-up businesses in the South East region including business development workshops, incubation space, and mentoring. SEEPP is currently accepting applications for the next programme which commences in September 2009. For further information contact 051-302953 / 302949 or visit www.seepp.ie.



Seminar by leading consumer advocate

Brendan Burgess financial services consumer advocate (askaboutmoney.com), and former Chair of the Consumer Consultative Panel of the Financial Regulator contributed to the current debate on regulation with a seminar at WIT last semester to financial service providers, consumer welfare agencies, students, and faculty. Organised by John Maher, who sits on the Consumer Consultative Panel of the Financial Regulator, this timely talk addressed legislative initiatives that have the potential to further consumer rights, through the a redesigned institutional framework between the Financial Regulator, Financial Ombudsman, and the National Consumer Agency.



L-R: Dr Thomas O'Toole, John Maher, Dr Sheila O'Donohoe, Brendan Burgess, Ger Long



Largest every Graduate Business international study tour

In its second year, the IST for postgraduate business students this year involved over 100 WIT students reflecting a mix of nationalities from China, Brazil, India, Malaysia, Spain and the Cameroon, as well as our Irish students. Hosted at the Institute for Ireland in Europe in Leuven, students and faculty benefited from the wide range of European voices that pass through Brussels. The schedule included visits to the EU institutions, including a Q&A session at the Parliament with MEP Colm Burke, and other talks from Deirdre Farrell who heads up Ireland's permanent representation, Heidi Loughheed IBEC, Michael Treacy from the IFA and Andrew Jackson, Business Europe. A number of academic seminars were taken at the Katholieke University in Leuven, and students had the opportunity to experience the cosmopolitan, cultural delights of Brussels, and some factory tours too. The tour is a full module on the MBS and MBSI programmes and is accessed through participation and a reflective essay. The trip was co-ordinated and directed by Dr Sheila O'Donohoe and Gerard Arthurs and with support provided by John Casey, Collette Kirwin, Paul Morrissey and Ray Ryan. Given the projected number of students taking taught postgraduate programmes in the School in the next academic year, it looks like 2010 will be another recording breaking year for this very successful initiative.

MBA's dissect DELL in the MBAAI Strategy Competition

WIT's accomplished team of MBA students and graduates were piped by host business school DCU, in tight scoring at the annual MBA Association of Ireland Strategy Competition. Teams from all over the Island were pitted against each other in a day long case study competition- to solve the corporate woes of Dell in a HBS case study. With just three hours to evaluate, analyse, dissect and formulate future strategic options for the Dell Computer company, the pressure was on for the student finalists. The competition is the only all Island MBA intervarsity event.



Back row L-R: Dr Ray Griffin, Ray Mulligan MBA, Mark Galvin
Front row L-R: James Reynolds, Dr Austin Coffey, Colin Gibbon MBA

All teams presented to an audience of Ireland's leading academics and MBA graduates. Alumni Ray Mulligan and Colin Gibbon (both MBA Class of '08) kindly gave their time to represent their alma mater for the second time at the event, with the addition of first year MBA's James Reynolds, Dr Austin Coffey and Mark Galvin (all from the MBA Class of '10) to this year's team. Their presentation took bold risks in analysis, recommendations and presentation, which paid off in their relative high scoring. Greg Devlin, President of the MBA Association of Ireland commented on the high quality of MBA teaching, noting the 'impressive ability of all the finalist teams to think fast and on their feet. They used the MBA toolkit to analyse Dell's performance consider its strategic options and make realistic recommendations as to how the company might move forward, that's what an MBA is all about'.

What is The Fáilte Ireland Tourism Learning Networks South and South East (FITLNSSE) at WIT ?

Although strategically and economically its one of the most important industries in Ireland, tourism is fragmented, with the 'tourist product' an amalgamation of experience produced by many different companies. These companies are often very different in terms of scale, scope and capacity. But as an industry they rise and fall together. It is into this space that the Fáilte Ireland Tourism Learning Networks South and South East (FITLNSSE), managed by the School of Business at WIT, wades in, to put shape onto the efforts of all the participants in the industry, so that they pull together. FITLNSSE brings tourism SMEs and micro-enterprises across the south and south-east together for dedicated training and development programme designed to enhance and support business and management capability.

Working and training together, these businesses are better positioned to collectively develop their destination as well as grow their own enterprises. Renewed in 2008 until 2010, after a very successful first cycle, Fáilte Ireland through FITLNSSE have supported the participation of 557 businesses on the year long programme with 210 of these participants undertaking the WIT Certificate in Tourism Business Practice (Level 6) .

Working in such a creative industry, the programme has an innovative approach to learning, combining interactive workshops, e-learning, residential events, themed seminars and network meetings. The FITLNSSE delivery team members have adopted a role as participant advocates, exploring participant learning requirements and customizing the learning interventions to meet these needs.

Anne Marie Frampton, FITLNSSE Programme Manager highlighted that the feedback since 2006 indicates that participants value the opportunity the networks offer, to come together with their peers in a semi formal setting. She said: "Importantly, a range of actions stemming from the networking are delivering firm results. The whole idea underpinning the networks is to allow people operating in the frontline of our tourism and hospitality sector to come together in ways that benefit all."

There are 6 networks across the regions, 3 of these have a focus on the development of heritage & cultural, adventure and food tourism. They engage through *network meetings* often with a keynote speaker, there have already been 24 such meetings this year, *product development workshops* which facilitate groups of businesses put together larger proposals and plans for their destination, and through *online supports* which respond to tactical and strategic issues for tourism business— such as handling PR or search engine optimisation. Another key element of the programme is residential seminars which focus on the on the immediate needs



of businesses across the regions, addressing current development opportunities and challenges relating to people management, pricing, health and safety and effective communications.

The programme has been acknowledged at National level with a Taoiseach' Public Service Excellence Award, an Irish Institute of Training and Development National Outstanding Achievement Award, and a Vodafone Innovation in Government Award.



**Dr Susan Whelan
Waterford Crystal
Centre for Marketing
Studies**

Few people have made as significant an impact on marketing research in Ireland as Susan Whelan. Senior lecturer in marketing, Susan is a researcher at the Waterford Crystal Centre for Marketing Studies, founded by a generous endowment from the old Waterford firm, in better days. The Centre is certainly something Waterford Crystal can be proud of, evidenced by the vibrancy of the research ethos at the centre and by the more rudimentary measure of research outcomes. Susan's also the author over twenty research papers and her name regularly pops up in some of the well known marketing journals, such as the European Journal of Marketing, the Journal of Marketing Management, the Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services and the Journal of Brand Management. Her research interests are broadly in the area of brand personality and the management of corporate brand associations.

In the final days of semester, when being interviewed for this article, it's been a busy week for Dr Susan Whelan of the Waterford Crystal Centre for Marketing Studies (WCCMS). On Friday she was awarded a prestigious Government of Ireland Research Fellowship by the Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences (IRCHSS). On Monday she presented to Tesco preliminary findings from her research on the effectiveness of copycat branding for own label products, a project undertaken with Prof Tom J Brown of Oklahoma State University and Prof. Gary Davies at Manchester Business School. She also had a paper accepted for the Journal of Business Research on hospital reputation, written along with Gary Davies and two of her graduate students. She then has to finalise the sessions for the track at the American Marketing Association Summer Marketing Educators Conference in Chicago that she is chairing this summer, along with her colleague Dr Anthony Foley at the WCCMS. You only need to look at the rows and rows of theses on corporate reputation to see how influential her teaching is with students on the taught MBSI and MBS in Marketing. Amongst all this activity the IRCHSS award gives her the space and funding over the coming year to invest in her research by recruiting more researchers, deepening her international research network, all further building out the WCCMS.

Susan graduated from the WIT BBS Class of 1999, before taking an MBS in Marketing at Smurfit Business School in 2000. She completed her PhD with Gary Davies at Manchester Business School in 2004. She still has an active research partnership with Gary Davies, but not Susan's only one. She has recently started a project with Prof Mike A Kamins of Stonybrook University in New York on the interplay between brand and human personality. Looking at the aggressive timeline of her awards, you can see she is outputs driven, and this year with four graduate research students being examined, two masters and two PhDs, it is not going to be a quiet summer.

Professor Peter McKiernan launches Irish Management 2.0 in WIT

Management expert Professor Peter McKiernan delivered an inspiring lecture "Strategic Leadership in Times of Crisis" and officially launched Irish Management 2.0 at WIT at the end of April. The invited audience of current executive and postgraduate students, faculty, alumni and other worthies received a crash course on managing in turbulent times. The lecture was followed by the launch of the new book: 'Irish Management 2.0: New Priorities in a Changing Economy', co-edited by Dr. Denis Harrington, Head of Department of Graduate Business, Waterford Institute of Technology and Dr. James Cunningham, Director of Centre for Innovation and Structural Change, NUI Galway.



Dublin launch for the WIT Investment and Trading Club



L-R: Dr Sheila O'Donohoe, Anthony Lopes, Trevor Bagge, Emma Lawlor, Alan O'Brien, Margaret O'Connor, Richie Walsh, Colin Torpey, Frank Conway & Niall Doran

A new student society, that gives students the opportunity to trade in global stock and commodity markets, was launched recently at a Dublin event. Mark Shipman, the self taught, self made multi-millionaire stock trader and now best-selling author, was on hand to launch the WIT Investment and Trading Club. He works just one hour a week, having retired at 33 years of age and shared some of his insights on trading styles and risk management techniques. Society members also visited Delta Index, the Irish-owned spread betting firm and learned various technical trading strategies used in spread-betting. The Society, established by Frank Conway, Lecturer of Finance, is open to all students in WIT and demonstrates the School's commitment to practical education in financial services.

Padraig O'Ceidigh speaks to MBAs

Another in the series of 'Leadership in troubled times' events co-hosted with the MBAAI and WIT School of Business Padraig O'Ceidigh, Chairman of Aer Arann, took to the stage to share his experiences at WIT in March. Former teacher, accountant, periwinkle picker and legal eagle sampled many a career before becoming part owner of a loss making airline which served the three Aran Islands. The airline which carried 8,000 passengers in 1999, carried around half a million passengers this year, the year he bought out Eugene O'Kelly to take control of the now profitable and rebranded Aer Arann Express. Along the way this engaging speaker told of his exploits in setting up on Foinse, the Irish language newspaper. He really hit the national consciousness when he became Ireland's EY Entrepreneur of the Year in 2002, a competition he now judges.



What is executive education for?

It has been a turbulent two decades for executive education, which is about as long as the Waterford Institute of Technology (WIT) has been offering such programmes. At the edge of the previous recession it was a reasonably simple formula: offer a big brand American business school-type MBA experience and wait for the applications, cheques and ambitious students to beat down the door. For sponsoring companies, supporting their ambitious staff to study at a trusted business school was a low cost, low commitment way of building loyalty. Demand now is stronger than ever, but it does not stop the faculty here at WIT asking the following question: do executive programmes deliver value for time and money? Executive education is almost always a pleasant experience for those who participate, as they get to meet new people, travel, give presentations, debate, work hard and play hard. But is it a good investment too?

Despite the strong demand from organisations, alumni and executives, and the nice things that they say about their experience at WIT, the impact of executive development is hard to quantify. As one of Ireland's youngest business schools, home to one of Ireland's oldest MBA programmes, these are the things we continually think about.

At WIT, we have four executive programmes – our classic executive MBA; SEEPP which supports executive entrepreneurs; a degree level programme for emerging executives – as well as the HD in Management and the MBS in The Management of Change for senior executives making significant changes in their organisations. Each responds to a very different need, not just to the executive's career needs, but to the needs of their organisations and of our society. It is only when executive education is connected to the real organisational contexts of our students and the real managerial work that they face, that we can feel comfortable we at WIT are earning an honest living. So whilst the MBA image of macho workloads, pulling all-nighters, relentless HBR case studies and in-class competition is important mythology, our students really need practical tools, the camaraderie of fellow managers, encouragement and learning from relevant case examples and speakers and the intellectual and emotional thinking space to improve the quality of their decision making and their effectiveness in managing Irish businesses. That is our response to question "What is executive education for?" and that is why we think it is not an expensive luxury, but is a national and organisational necessity.

This article by Dr Ray Griffin and Dr Denis Harrington appears in the next issue of Business & Finance.

EXECUTIVE EDUCATION

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