On behalf of the Department of Physical Education and Sport Sciences (PESS) I wish to welcome you to the seventh edition of the PESS e-Zine. My thanks go again to all those involved in the editing and contribution of submissions to the e-Zine.

PESS will advertise in March 2016 an opportunity for individuals to spend up to eight weeks in PESS gaining experience in one of four research areas, (1) Food for Health, (2) Physical Activity and Health, (3) Sport and Human Performance and (4) Sport Pedagogy. The internship allows individuals an opportunity to work with PESS faculty, explore further their interest and disposition to postgraduate study and / or to consider working in a university setting. The opportunity to apply for a PESS PhD Scholarship will also arise in March 2015. Scholarships are held for up to four years and the recipient is expected to work on a full time basis on their PhD and enroll on the Education and Health Sciences or Education and Professional Studies structured PhD programme. Scholarship recipients are also expected to contribute hours to PESS-related tasks (e.g., teaching, demonstrating, organisation of events) for the duration of their scholarship.

PESS are delighted to be in a position to congratulate Ross Anderson on his promotion to Senior Lecturer and Drew Harrison and Ann MacPhail on their promotion to Associate Professor. PESS will shortly be advertising for a Lecturer below the bar in Sports Nutrition and an Applied Studies Coordinator and are hoping to appoint a Professor in Physical Activity and Health.

We are delighted that a new Masters in Sport, Exercise and Performance Psychology began in January 2016 and we welcome all students on that programme to PESS and wish them well.

I trust you will find the next edition of PESS e-Zine as informative and engaging as previous additions. As always, if you have any interest in collaborating with PESS across areas of teaching and / or research please do not hesitate to contact me at Ann.MacPhail@ul.ie

Ann

Prof. Ann MacPhail (PESS) and Dr. Ed Walsh (Founding President of the University of Limerick) at the launch of UL Beo
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   Gary Ryan (UL Beo Project Manager)
Over the last 50 years, the average life expectancy in Ireland has increased by more than 10 years. This has brought about the idea of healthy aging. It is undeniable that as we age, we are faced with a variety of health challenges. However, there is an abundance of evidence emerging showing that there are a range of areas that we can influence in order to maintain health and reduce the risk of disease and disability.

One such research study that has been looking at the factors that can influence healthy aging is the Mitchelstown Cohort Rescreen (MCR). Originally started back in 1998 by the Department of Epidemiology and Public Health, University College Cork, the latest edition of the study is rescreening those who participated in a previous edition in 2010. Based in the LivingHealth Clinic in Mitchelstown, this edition looks to build on the previous results, while offering further insight into the prevalence of cardiovascular disease (CVD), type II diabetes, the metabolic syndrome and the distribution of major risk factors that influence cardiometabolic health for middle aged Irish men and women.

The MCR study is examining how factors including nutrition, family health history, physical activity, sedentary behaviour and demographic/socioeconomic status influence health. Under the supervision of Prof. Alan Donnelly and Dr. Brian Carson, I was asked to come on board with the MCR study to offer assistance and guidance in both the measurement and subsequent analysis of physical activity and sedentary behaviour. While it is well established that physical activity can have a substantial influence on cardiometabolic health, the idea that the amount of time we spend sedentary (i.e. the amount of time we spend sitting and/or lying down during waking hours) can also have a negative impact on our health is a newly emerging research area.

I am based in the LivingHealth Clinic three days a week where I see up to 18 participants per week. We are measuring physical activity and sedentary behaviour through two devices; activPAL3 Micro (thigh mounted device) and GENEActiv (wrist worn device). These accelerometry based devices offer objective measurements of each participant's daily physical activity and sedentary behaviour. Once fitted with the devices, the participants wear them for 24 hours a day, for seven consecutive days. In addition to the activity based data, we are also collecting data relating to glucose control, anthropometrics/body composition and blood pressure.

The pilot phase of the study is completed, with the main data collection phase currently underway. The study is scheduled to run until October 2016, and it is anticipated that 2000 participants will be recruited and tested. This study will form an important part of my PhD. It will advance current knowledge of sedentary behaviour and health based research, while adding to the current physical activity research field. Upon completion of this study, it is hoped that we will have a detailed answer as to the extent of the influence of sedentary behaviour on cardiometabolic health, thereby offering us an insight into how best to arrest any potential negative health connotations.

Cormac Powell attaches the activPAL3 device on a study participant.

LivingHealth Clinic, Mitchelstown, Co. Cork.

Cormac Powell is a 3rd year Ph.D. student on the Faculty of Education and Health Sciences structured Ph.D. programme. Under the supervision of Prof. Alan Donnelly and Dr. Brian Carson, Cormac is exploring the impact of sedentary behaviour on cardiometabolic health in adults. Cormac is the Sport Scientist and Assistant Coach at Swim Ireland’s University of Limerick Performance Centre and also the Lead Coach of Mallow Swans Swimming Club.
The Summer Games of the XXXI Olympiad will take place in Rio de Janeiro between 5-21st August 2016. It is anticipated that Ireland will be represented by over 80 athletes from up to 16 different sports including: aquatics, athletics, badminton, boxing, canoeing, cycling, equestrian, golf, gymnastics, hockey (M), modern pentathlon, rowing, Rugby, sailing, shooting and triathlon. In total, Team Ireland will comprise of over 150 athletes, coaches, managers and support staff making it Ireland’s largest team ever.

For over 25 years Dr Giles Warrington, who recently joined the academic staff in PESS as a Senior Lecturer in Sport and Exercise Sciences, has provided sports science support to a wide range of Olympic athletes and sports including a number of Olympic medallists. Giles previously worked as a Sport and Exercise Physiologist for the British Olympic Association at the British Olympic Medical Centre before moving to Ireland in 1993 where he worked as Head of Player/Athlete Services at the National Coaching and Training Centre (NCTC), based on the UL campus, for 12 years. NCTC preceded the Irish Institute of Sport and was responsible for the coordination and delivery of Sports Science and Medical support services to Ireland’s elite and developmental athletes.

Since 2004, in his capacity as Lead Performance Physiologist and Sports Science advisor to Olympic Council of Ireland (OCI), Giles has been responsible for coordinating the development and delivery of performance enhancement strategies to assist Irish athletes preparing for Olympic competition. Each Olympic Games poses its own unique challenges. In Sydney it was travel and jet lag, in Athens the heat and in Beijing both travel, heat and humidity coupled with pollution.

The success of the pre-Games training base in London served a useful blueprint for future training camps. In Rio it was always going to be a challenge to fully replicate the London experience due to a number of logistical, geographical and cultural differences but the main focus has been to create a “home from home” for Team Ireland to allow the athletes to focus on their final preparations, free from distractions and the associated hype surrounding the Olympics and to allow the team to arrive in Rio in peak condition and ready for competition. Having conducted extensive research to identify an appropriate training base for Rio, Team Ireland has selected the city of Uberlandia located 700 km north west of Rio de Janeiro.

As the 2016 Summer Olympics approaches the OCI Technical and Medical team are in the process of finalising all preparations for Uberlandia and Rio including a final study visit in March. As Team Ireland gets ready for Rio, no stone will be left unturned to ensure that the supports provided to each athlete allows them to achieve their performance potential and Ireland builds on its successes in London.
Outreach

The University of Limerick - Breaking New Ground in Physical Activity and Sport

Gary Ryan (Project Manager UL Beo)
Department of Physical Education and Sport Sciences

UL Beo is the physical activity, health, lifestyle and sport initiative from the University of Limerick. Its aim is to support projects that help UL work towards a goal of being a “world leading environment for the practice and research of sport and physical activity”. That entails a huge variety and array of projects in high performance sport, community engagement initiatives, strategic development and research.

UL Beo operates by either assisting existing UL projects by providing support through practical personnel resources, provision of project management support or by helping incubate new ideas and work with UL staff and external organisations to make such ideas a reality. UL has a long history of such projects and initiatives, and UL Beo’s aim is simply to enhance these, make them more sustainable or help new ideas get off the ground.

UL Beo High Performance Circle

UL Beo has an experienced advisory board comprising of internal UL staff and external members who are leaders within sport in Ireland. One of the key goals from the UL Beo Operational plan is to identify avenues to support High Performance sport.

UL Beo set up a “High Performance Circle” of personnel who are working with PESS and UL Sport to support four sports at the University (GAA, athletics, swimming and triathlon). These sports have a number of outstanding student athletes and significant coaching talent on campus. UL Beo provides a range of sport science supports to these athletes and coaches.

UL Beo Activities in Sport

In association with undergraduate and postgraduate research projects, the UL Beo Applied Sports Experimental Officer (Rosemary Daniels) supports regular testing sessions for all of UL GAA teams. These teams also receive coaching support from PESS staff.
In athletics UL Beo provides coaching and sports science support to enhance the wonderful work of Drew and Hayley Harrison that has been in place for many years. Hand in hand with this practical support are a number of research projects which will contribute to the sport of athletics. Furthermore, through Dr. Tom Comyns (PESS) UL Beo provides a strength and conditioning coaching and a mentoring scheme for a strength and conditioning coach associated with this athletics group. Top image: Thomas Barr (International athlete) and coach Hayley Harrison (Coaching Ireland); Bottom image: Dr. Tom Comyns mentor to Padraig Carey.

UL Beo supports a number of postgraduate projects that provide sports science support to a number leading inter county and inter-provincial teams in the GAA and rugby as well as to a number of our leading individual athletes in athletics, swimming and triathlon. Visitors to PESS in the last couple of months have included the Munster and Connacht Rugby teams and the Tipperary and Limerick Senior Hurling teams. UL Beo is also working with local athletic clubs on a new initiative for sport in Limerick.

One of the most interesting and exciting innovations is a co-funded project between PESS and a number of rural communities in Limerick. The funding supports MSc student, PESS graduate Eimear Cregan (BSc. Sport and Exercise Sciences, Grad. Dip. Physical Education), on a project that will examine and develop fundamental movement skills and physical fitness in children. In addition, community leaders will be trained to ensure that the initiative is carried on after the two year research project is completed.

I would like to note the number of contributors from the PESS department who voluntarily offer their time to support the campus community and the ambitious young student athletes in it. Part of UL’s unique edge is the level of expertise available but also the willingness of staff to engage with students and contribute in meaningful ways. This extracurricular activity is central to the development of the whole student.

In the UL Beo annual report we recognise all those formally working with groups associated with the UL High Performance circle sports. Though we do not refer to those working outside of that framework it is important to recognise the value of those contributions also. This might be as simple as a quick cup of coffee and advice to a student on something that helps the student’ but it is the essence of “community engagement” and the UL Beo ethos.

The future for UL Beo is hugely exciting. ‘Broadening Horizons’ (UL’s strategic plan 2015-2019) has set a number of challenges for UL Beo including:
- Development of a Sport and Physical Activity strategy for the University
- University “Healthy Campus” status
- Support and delivery of a new scholarship programme

In addition, UL Beo is developing some new and exciting initiatives across the spectrum of the physical activity, sport, health and lifestyle spaces.

I see UL Beo as a channel so that ideas that relate to community engagement in any area of physical activity and sport can find a way to flourish. We are happy to contribute whatever resources, skills or time so that those ideas can become reality.

Please contact Gary Ryan (UL Beo Project Manager) to discuss UL Beo activities (gary.ryan@ul.ie) or 061-234980

UL Beo and Community Engagement

UL Beo is supporting a project by Dr. Matthew Herring (PESS Psychology Lecturer) and Katie Andrews (PESS post graduate student), who are working with the Limerick Fire Service on a research and training project. UL Beo is delighted to support in whatever way possible, these types of research led, community engagement projects. We hope that projects such as these will become models to be repeated nationally and internationally in the future.

Furthermore, UL Beo has also been working with industry in areas such as proof of concept. UL Beo recently invited some of the former graduates of PESS to an Alumni function at Thomond Park and recorded some short videos which you will see on social media soon.

Please contact Gary Ryan (UL Beo Project Manager) to discuss UL Beo activities (gary.ryan@ul.ie) or 061-234980

UL Beo and Future Plans

UL Beo is difficult to describe in a sentence or a paragraph, but that’s what makes it interesting, flexible and innovative. If you have an idea, whether you are faculty, staff, student or a member of the community, let’s see if we can develop it into something.

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On the 14th October 2015 first year BSc. Physical Education students had the opportunity to participate in a 2 hour wheelchair basketball workshop. Paul Ryan, Irish Wheelchair Association (IWA) Sports Development Officer, who is a wheelchair basketball athlete himself, taught the students various wheelchair basketball skills, such as; controlling the chair, stopping, turning, picking up the ball and dribbling. The students were amazed at how much of a workout it was to move the chair and move around the basketball court. The students appreciated how hard it was to move the chair and dribble and to shoot without the use of their legs, as can be seen by their comments.

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"Amazing Experience. A lot more competitive and fast paced than I had imagined!"

"For me it was one of the most enjoyable and eye opening sports I've experienced. It's definitely a game I'd like to play more often but it also gave me a huge appreciation for being able to step out of the chair at full time and also for the effort some have to go to be active in ways I take for granted."

"A thoroughly enjoyable experience which makes you appreciate the skills involved."

This was a great experience for these future teachers as they got to appreciate the skill and fitness needed to participate in wheelchair basketball. More importantly they got to appreciate that even though a person may use a wheelchair they can still fully participate in a basketball game. Hopefully our students can bring this experience to their future classrooms and incorporate their students who use wheelchairs into their physical education classes.

"As a future teacher I would definitely aim to arrange for my students to have the same experience. I think it would widen their outlook on participation in sport and increase their appreciation for activities they take for granted."

"I loved the way everyone was at the same level as beginners so could definitely use this in my future teaching."
The BSc degree in Sport & Exercise Sciences began at UL in 1993 and the first graduates were in 1997. It was the first degree of its kind in Ireland. For some time sport and exercise were being studied from a scientific perspective in the USA, Canada, Australia, the UK and other countries throughout the world. Back in 1993 it was recognised that if our elite sports performers were going to be successful internationally there was a need for graduates with expertise in the science of sport. Additionally, the importance of participation in sport and exercise for health reasons had emerged and there was also a need for expertise here. For these reasons the degree was titled “Sport and Exercise Sciences” (SES).

As the first course director for the SES programme I began in 1997 to keep records of what our graduates do and where they go to and I continue to do so to this day. These records provide information for the course staff, prospective students and also for the present students who derive great inspiration from the achievements of our graduates.

The records show that the SES programme prepares students for careers in a wide variety of areas in sport, exercise and health and also other areas. Careers range from involvement in sport at elite level to sport and exercise for participation and health and from high level research to practical work in the field. Graduates have not only made their mark in Ireland but also abroad.

A number of graduates hold or have held key positions with the national governing bodies of sport (e.g. IRFU, FAI, GAA, Triathlon Ireland, Swim Ireland, Basketball Ireland, Special Olympics); Coaching Ireland [formerly the National Coaching & Training Centre (NCTC)] (coach education staff, physiologists); the Irish Sports Council/Sport Ireland (e.g. head of education & research in the anti-doping unit; head of sport partnerships, local coordinators of the sports partnerships around the country); the Irish Institute of Sport (e.g. head of performance support services, performance analyst, performance physiologist, lead strength & conditioning consultant).

SES graduates have also made their mark abroad and hold positions in Welsh, Scottish and Canadian rugby as well as UK Athletics and the Sports Institute of Northern Ireland (SINI).

In premiership soccer in England SES graduates hold positions as sport scientists, strength & conditioning coaches and performance analysts in various clubs. An SES graduate has been senior sport scientist with the British Olympic Association and later was sport scientist with the British & Irish Lions Rugby team to tour Australia in 2013. Another is with GB Hockey as they prepare for the Rio Olympics. The inaugural sport psychologist at St Andrews Golf Club in Scotland is an SES graduate.

Graduates of the SES programme have been responsible for the fitness of the recently successful Irish men’s and women’s international Rugby teams. At the recent men’s rugby world cup the three man fitness team for the Ireland were all SES graduates.

SES graduates also have the skills and knowledge to enter taught MSc programmes to become specifically trained in areas such as physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech & language therapy, cardiac rehabilitation, biomedical science, biomedical engineering, ergonomics, sports engineering, computer science, information technology and teaching (primary & post primary schools).

Many of our graduates have gone on to postgraduate research and have careers as researchers and lecturers at third level institutions in Ireland, UK, Denmark, Canada and the USA. Their areas of expertise are in areas of physiology, neuroscience, genetics, nutrition, physical activity & health; biomechanics; motor learning and sport psychology.

A number of SES graduates have their own businesses related to sport, health and fitness. Some are scientific writers for publishing companies, some are in journalism and some work in health promotion or public health departments of the Health Service Executive (HSE).

What graduates of Sport & Exercise Sciences do is very well summed up and also exemplified by Denise Linnane, an SES graduate of 1997, who says

"It is true that Sport & Exercise Science does not prepare you for a specific job. It is much better than that because it prepares you for a wide variety of careers which we are all now in".

Denise is an award winning scientist [e.g. The Physiological Society (UK) and The European College of Sport Science] who obtained a PhD in environmental physiology and is an occupational physiologist who has worked as both a researcher and a consultant with the British Army, RAF, Williams Formula 1 and Antarctic explorers. Currently she is working with the Australian Defence Forces.

If you would like to see a more detailed document about what SES graduates do please contact me at P.J.Smyth@ul.ie
In recognition of World Mental Health Day (October 10th, 2015), the PESS Department, in conjunction with UL Beo and UL Sport, organised three workshops on October 6th, 7th and 8th. The workshops covered topics related to mental health and were led by staff and students from PESS as well as esteemed guests from the world of sport. Jessie Barr was invited by Dr. Tadhg MacIntyre, to speak at two of the workshops. At the first workshop Jessie shared her knowledge developed from her own in-depth research, while at the other workshop she formed part of an athlete panel, sharing her experiences from nearly 10 years of competitive international athletics. Below, Jessie Barr provides an account of two of the workshops.

Workshop 1: Five Steps to Student Resilience - Research to Practice

Workshop 1 highlighted issues around mental health, promoted mental well-being and introduced the idea of “the resilient student”. Speakers on the night included Dr. Tadhg MacIntyre, Felix Jones (former Munster and Ireland Rugby player), Dr. Alan Ringland (Head of Psychology at Tralee IT, former Sport Psychologist for the Irish Paralympic team), Chris Bryan (PhD student at PESS/KBS and elite open water swimmer), Clodagh Butler (MSc Sports Performance, UL; PhD student KBS) and Jessie Barr (pictured below in order from left to right).

I opened with a discussion on the existence of mental health stigma and how it can influence help-seeking behaviours, i.e. the perception of a stigma can make people slower to seek the necessary support for mental health disorders. This service aversion is particularly high among student-athletes. Felix Jones followed with an insight into his experiences of injuries throughout his career and the proactive approach he took to his recovery and rehabilitation. His open and honest account of his injury history was refreshing, and served as a window into what defines a “resilient athlete”.

Chris Bryan and Clodagh Butler are focusing their PhD research on aspects of resilience, drawing from the domains of sport and business. At the workshop they provided definitions of resilience as well as steps to developing personal resilience. Dr. Ringland drew on the example of Chris Robshaw’s (England’s Rugby Team Captain at the World Cup) decision for a play which ultimately led to the demise of England’s World Cup journey - or so it was portrayed in the media. His argument was that incidences such as this do not define an athlete, and overcoming the aftermath is the mark of a resilient athlete.

Workshop 3: Breaking Through: Athlete Panel Discussion on the Resilient Athlete

The final workshop was an interactive panel discussion about what it means to be a resilient athlete from the perspective of three elite athletes; Munster Rugby player Cathal Sheridan, 10k open water swimmer Chris Bryan and myself (Jessie Barr), Olympic 400 m hurdler.

Each of the panel explained what we thought it meant to be a resilient athlete. As well as training full-time, we are all studying psychology; Cathal (bottom right image below) is part of the new Sport, Exercise and Performance Psychology MSc in the PESS department and Chris (top image) and I are both undergoing psychology PhDs. Being able to draw on our knowledge of psychology complemented our personal experiences of having to demonstrate resilience, providing a more complex and in-depth insight for the audience.

“Amazing highs and the lowest lows” was an opinion the panel shared when asked about the experience of competing in high performance or professional sport. Injuries, loss of form, chasing (and missing) qualification standards were some of the difficult challenges that the panel described in our chosen athletic pursuits. A smooth upward trajectory to the top levels of sport is almost mythical.

We each commented on photos that illustrated personal highs and lows. Each of us explained the back-story to the pictures; the emotions we were experiencing, the sheer joy of victory versus the torment of relegation to the side-lines through injury, the celebration of a successful race versus the agonising realisation of missing qualification for the Olympic Games by mere milliseconds, pre-race excitement versus post-race reality of a last place finish. All of the panel agreed that these challenges were key in our development as resilient athletes and act as constant motivation for us to continue to strive to become the best that we can be.

There followed a questions and answers session where members of the audience posed questions to Dr. Tadhg McIntyre and the athlete panel. This workshop provided many insights into mental challenges faced by athletes and the tools they have acquired to overcome setbacks, build resilience and achieve personal growth.
The PESS Internship is an opportunity for individuals to spend up to eight weeks in PESS gaining experience in one of four research areas, (1) Food for Health, (2) Physical Activity and Health, (3) Sport and Human Performance and (4) Sport Pedagogy.

The internship allows individuals an opportunity to work with PESS faculty, explore further their interest and disposition to postgraduate study and/or to consider working in a university setting. The internship will allow individuals to gain experience in working on a project that entails collecting and processing preliminary data. It may be that a PESS faculty member already has data that requires further analysis and, in such circumstances, the internship would contribute to an already established project.

A maximum of three internships to be completed between June 2016 and May 2017 are to be offered. Internships will receive €200 a week over a maximum of eight weeks. PESS will not fund associated running costs of the project. The eight week internship can take place at any time throughout the June 2016 to May 2017 period. For more information on the PESS Internship see here. Applications should be submitted electronically to Sharon.Barrett@ul.ie and be received no later than 12.00pm GMT+1 on Monday 25 April 2016.

In 2016 there will be one scholarship award in one of the four PESS research area themes; ‘Food and Health’, ‘Physical Activity and Health’, ‘Sport and Human Performance’ and ‘Sport Pedagogy’.

The scholarship will begin in September 2016. The purpose of the PESS Postgraduate Research Scholarship is to support full time PhD students. The scholarship is for a four-year PhD inclusive of EU fees (approx. €5,000 per annum) and maintenance (valued at €11,000 per annum). For more information on the PESS Scholarships, e.g. terms of the award, the nature of the application, evaluation criteria and the evaluation process, see here. Applications should be submitted electronically to Drew.Harrison@ul.ie and be received no later than 12.00pm GMT+1 on Friday 29 April 2016.

‘One Destination Many Pathways’ is the title of the 2015-2020 Strategic Plan of The National Council for Exercise and Fitness (NCEF) which was published on the 27 October 2015 at the University of Limerick. The strategy commits to excellence in the provision of exercise and health fitness education and training nationwide.

Excellence in education is one of the core values of the NCEF, together with an inclusive approach to student focused teaching and learning. NCEF will provide opportunities to study at UL and at many outreach centers nationwide. Students are also afforded the flexibility to study at home or abroad through the provision of the NCEF e-Learning Hub.

The NCEF, an Academic Affiliate of the University of Limerick since 2006 continues to explore, research and develop opportunities in the area of health and fitness education. Please click here to download a copy of One Destination Many Pathways. For further information, please contact ncef@ul.ie or 061-202829.

UL Beo is hosting a short spring public lecture series of interest to sports coaches, teachers and athletes. The series is delivered by some of Ireland’s leading Sports Scientists and the lectures will be held on Wednesdays at 7.00pm in P1033 (PESS Lecture Theatre) PESS building, UL. Admission is free. Follow the links to register.

23rd March 2016 Dr. Brian Carson
Workshop: HIIT Training vs. Traditional Aerobic Exercise – Not one HIIT fits all! For more information and register for free.

30th March 2016 Dr. PJ Smyth

6th April 2016 Dr. Giles Warrington
Workshop: Training Considerations for the young athlete. For more information and register for free.

13th April 2016 Rosie Daniel
Workshop: Nutrition for optimal sports performance and boosting immune function. For more information and register for free.
On Wednesday 14th of January fourteen UL athletes set off for Boston, six of whom were past and present PESS students. During the course of a six day visit the athletes spent time at Yale University in New Haven. Here, David Shoehalter, the Mark T. Young ’68 Director of Track and Field and Cross Country, took time out of his busy schedule to meet us at the airport and tour the magnificent Yale facilities, showing us the many residence colleges and top class sports facilities. We had the pleasure of training in the Yale indoor track, Coxe Cage and in the elite gym, the Payne Whitney Gymnasium.

During our time at Yale we got to experience life as a Yale student, staying in the dorm rooms and eating at their dining halls with the Yale athletes. While there, David Mahedy, Director of Sport at UL, and Adjunct Professor Michael Hayes, met with Thomas Beckett, Director of Athletics at Yale. It is hoped we will have exciting prospects for the future of UL Sport.

We departed for Harvard University in Cambridge on Friday morning, as we had to prepare for the invitational track and field meet ‘The Beantown Challenge’, at the Gordon Indoor Track. Here we were met by Jason Saretsky, The William W. “Bill” McCurdy Director of Track and Field/Cross Country and Patrick Wales-Dinan, Associate Head Cross Country Coach at Harvard. Again, we were shown great hospitality and stayed and dined with the Harvard athletes in their dorms and dining rooms.

It was the hope of Professor Michael Hayes that “our (UL) athletes gain mutual respect on track, and show at the banquets and associated social events that our (UL) students match those from the world’s greatest Universities”. I do think this was achieved by each of the UL athletes during this trip. It was an amazing experience for our UL athletes to have and I know they are very grateful for the opportunity they were given.

About 10 major Colleges from the Massachusetts regions took part in the ‘Beantown Challenge’. In total UL athletes won six events, were second in five, and placed well in the other events - a truly magnificent performance in a high quality collegiate athletics event! The large audience were loudly appreciative of what they saw, and many are now aware of the University of Limerick, if they were not so before.

The PESS athletes were as follows: James Ledingham (Sport Sciences Graduate) won the 1000 m in 2:28.23, Eanna Madden (4th Year Sports Science) won the 400 m in 48.03 (PB), Grace Lynch (4th Year Sports Science) 3000 m, Sorcha Murphy (4th Year Sport Sciences) was joint 2nd in the High Jump, Alana Frattaroli (Sport Sciences Graduate) and Roisin Howard (Engineering/PESS PhD Student) both performed well in the Shot Putt, achieving close to their respective personal bests. Overall it was a very exciting and rewarding trip for all involved!
Congratulations to Emmet Crowley, Cillian McDowell and Nollaig O’Sullivan who were awarded scholarship awards for their PhD Studies in the Physical Education and Sport Sciences department.

Scholarship Student: Emmet Crowley
Supervisors: Dr. Mark Lyons and Prof. Drew Harrison
Scholarship Award: sPhD EU Fee Waiver.
PhD Study: The Transfer of Dry-land Strength Training Exercises to Swimming Performance

Emmet graduated from Sport and Exercise Sciences, UL in 2015. Emmet is a competitive swimmer and swims with the UL Sport Performance Centre in the UL Arena. He has won numerous national titles and held Munster Records. He is a keen swimming coach and coach with Limerick Swimming Club. His passion for swimming is one of the main factors that influenced his pursuit of a PhD in this area. His final year project, “The Impact of Dry-land Strength Training on Swimming Performance”, made him realise that he wanted to pursue a career in research.

Scholarship Student: Cillian McDowell
Supervisors: Dr. Matthew Herring and Dr. Ciaran MacDonncha
Scholarship Award: sPhD EU Fee Waiver
PhD Study: Examining relations of physical activity and sedentary behaviour with depression, anxiety, sleep and relevant biomarkers.

Cillian graduated from Sport and Exercise Sciences, UL in 2015, earning the WG Dugdale and Silver Medal Awards. He undertook a PESS Summer Internship with Drs. Matthew Herring and Mark Campbell. Cillian’s proposed research is a collaboration with, and expansion of, the Determinants of Diet and Physical Activity (DEDIPAC) Knowledge Hub. It aims to develop a compilation of mental health outcomes and potentially relevant biomarkers that will enable Cillian and his supervisors to investigate the following research objectives:

(1) To quantify the associations of physical activity (PA) and sedentary behaviour (SB) with mental health outcomes, including anxiety, depression, fatigue, and sleep quality
(2) To examine how potentially relevant biomarkers and their interrelations influence the associations of PA and SB with mental health outcomes
(3) To characterise how other psychosocial and sociodemographic moderator/mediator variables influence the relations of PA and SB with mental health outcomes

Scholarship Student: Nollaig O’Sullivan
Supervisors: Dr. Giles Warrington and Dr. Tadhg MacIntyre
Scholarship Award: sPhD EU Fee Waiver
PhD Study: An investigation of a community wide educational intervention programme on the use of self-regulation strategies, lifestyle behaviours and green exercise on well-being and physical activity.

Nollaig completed a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and Sociology at the University of Limerick (2011). In addition she has a Master in Psychology of Performance in Sport and Health from Queen's University Belfast (2013) and a Masters from University of Ulster in Sports and Exercise Psychology (2014).

She is an accredited Sport and Exercise Psychologist with the Irish Institute of Sport. She has worked closely with professional sporting teams, professional athletes and the general public. Nollaig’s vision is to assist the Killaloe Ballina community to become the First Healthy Town in Ireland, a town where everyone can enjoy physical and mental health and wellbeing to their full potential.

Nollaig’s PhD research complements her vision and investigates a community wide educational intervention programme on the use of self regulation strategies, lifestyle behaviours and green exercise on wellbeing and physical activity. This PhD research proposes to gain a deeper understanding of the benefits of physical activity and environmental components (green exercise and water based) and the possible benefits to increase positive mental health and wellbeing.

(1-R) Emmet Crowley, Cillian McDowell and Nollaig O’Sullivan, recipients of scholarships for their PhD Studies
The co-operative education placement for Sport and Exercise Sciences students takes place in semester 2 of year three. This year, there are seven Sport and Exercise Sciences students and one Psychology/Sociology student on placement in the PESS department. Three of the students are working on a project supervised by Prof. Alan Donnelly and Grainne Hayes (PhD student in PESS), three are supervised by Dr. Tadhg MacIntyre and one each supervised by Dr. Ross Anderson and Dr. Drew Harrison.

The students will be exposed to many different facets of research and will upskill in a variety of areas. In this feature the supervisors and students take time out to describe what it is like to be a co-op student in PESS. Dr. Brian Carson also provides an insight as to where the remainder of the class are on co-op placements.

Bridget O'Leary, Leanne Ahern and Chelsea Farrel (Sport and Exercise Sciences) are each working on the Health Research Institute (HRI) seed funded project “What’s causing the obesity epidemic in Irish young people?” The study is a collaboration and includes Prof. Alan Donnelly (Principal Investigator), Ciaran MacDonncha, Matthew Herring, Brian Carson (PESS) and Eibhlis O’Connor (Life Sciences), Cloidagh O’Gorman (GEMS), Ailish Hannigan (GEMS), Helen Purtill (Maths and Stats). The project is funded by €38,000 awarded competitively from the HRI seed fund.

The project involves collecting data that will investigate the relationship between sedentary behaviour, physical activity, diet and health in 200 male and female adolescents. A purposeful sample of 6 representative schools will be involved with a random sample of 15-18 adolescents selected from those schools. Measurements include fasted bloods for a range of measures including those for glucose regulation, lipid transport and inflammation, BMI, skinfolds, grip strength, 20 MST and anxiety/depression levels. Physical activity and sedentary behaviour will be measured using the new ActivPAL3 Micro, which is a wearable accelerometer. Diet will be measured using a new phone app developed in CSIS (and LERO) which enables participants to photograph everything they eat and upload those to a UL server for analysis. An evaluation of the phone app data against food diaries will be undertaken in the project.

The Co-op students are based in the CPAHR lab in the PESS department. Grainne Hayes (PhD student in PESS) and Dr. Kieran Dowd (Post Doctoral Researcher) work closely with the students. Granne explains what she hopes the students will gain from the experience. "The students will work as part of a large multi-disciplinary team and will gain invaluable experience working with volunteers, medical professionals and other co-researchers. They will gain a wide knowledge of data analysis software, including SPSS, specialist software (MatLAB and LABview). We aim to instil the importance of precise measurement, careful data recording, and accurate calibration of research instruments during the co-op placement. I hope the co-op placement will allow the students to become more competent in research and will help them in the future in the areas of ethics applications, writing reports, recording data, writing literature reviews and understanding sound scientific methods."

Patrick McCarthy and Malachy Sheeran (Sport and Exercise Sciences) work with fellow coop student Ashleigh Hayes (Psychology and Sociology) and are supervised by Dr. Tadhg MacIntyre in the area of Sport and Exercise Psychology. Patrick, an avid basketball player explains where his interests come from.

“I play basketball with the UL Eagles as well as the UL varsity team so my days are pretty full with both Coop and training. I am highly interested in the role that psychology can play in the development of skill, overall performance and the maintenance of a healthy and active lifestyle.”
Malachy Sheeran provides an insight into the work that he, Patrick and Ashleigh are involved in:

- Performance psychology: working with the Munster academy and studying training, dietary and psychological patterns in development of skill and success in sport.

- Assistance on PhD students’ studies and research projects such as Jessie Barr (Mental Health in Elite Athlete), Eoin MacNeil (Pre-performance Routines) and Nollaig O’Sullivan (Go green, healthy lifestyle, exercise).

- Assistance to Dr. Tadhg MacIntyre with preparation of course material and resources for undergraduate and new master’s degree courses (Sport, Exercise and performance psychology) in UL.

Derek Breen and Evan Crotty (Sport and Exercise Sciences) are both working in the area of biomechanics. Derek is supervised by Dr. Ross Anderson and his placement involves research in the areas validity and reliability of unsupervised sensor self-attachment for gait analysis, examining the effect of social training apps on exercise performance and he will also provide assistance to other PESS researchers e.g. Michelle Norris and Dr. Mark Campbell.

Evan Crotty, supervised by Dr. Drew Harrison explains the diversity of his coop placement. “I am assisting in numerous projects, the majority of which are Biomechanics based. As part of my placement I will be assisting Gary Ryan and Rosemary Daniel in projects as a part of UL Beo. I will also be working with Rosemary in the continuous assessment of the UL Athletics Team. The majority of my placement will be spent on a project with PhD student Eoin Everard involving 3D Biomechanical Analysis and FMS”.

Dr. Brian Carson (PESS) who works with the co-op office regarding sport and exercise sciences student placements reports on where Sport and Exercise Students are currently on placement.

"Placements are both national and international with students taking up placements in applied areas of strength and conditioning, elite and amateur athlete sport science support, adapted physical activity, rehabilitation or providing research support in academic departments. Some placements take a number of Sport and Exercise Sciences students, enabling them to support for each other”.

In 2016, co-op placements in Ireland have been secured with the Irish Defence Forces, Special Olympics Ireland, Limerick Sports Partnership, Munster Rugby, Limerick Senior Football, Cope Foundation, Cork City F.C., UL Arena, Limerick, Clare and GAA clubs. International placements include West Coast Eagles Football Club, Stellenbosch Academy of Sport, New Zealand Sports Academy Ltd., University of Reading and Exeter, and Ecole Normale Superieure de Rennes.
Michelle Finn is a 3rd year BSc. Physical Education and Irish Teaching student in the PESS department. She has a B.Sc. in Interdisciplinary Studies and Health, and a MA in Organisational Communication. She is a middle distance runner with Leevale AC in Cork and represents the University of Limerick at many athletic competitions. She competed in the Women’s 3000 metres steeplechase at the 2015 World Championships in Athletics in Beijing, has qualified for the Rio de Janeiro 2016 Olympics and has won two bronze medals with the Irish team at the European Cross Country Championships. Below, Michelle talks about about training, how she juggles athletics and academic life and her future ambitions.

Why PE at UL?

I love all sports and physical activity. I like working with young people and I think it’s important for them to be active. I was also very attracted by the University of Limerick’s campus.

Formative Years

Both of my parents were runners so I suppose I was always around it! I played lots of other sports when I was younger though – Gaelic football, camogie, soccer, gymnastics and athletics too. It was only when I went to America on an athletics scholarship that I stopped playing the other sports and started concentrating more on running.

Training Commitments

It changes depending on the season and what races are coming up, but here’s a general gist!

**Monday:** Speed session in the morning followed by an easy run and gym session in the evening.

**Tuesday:** Morning and evening runs.

**Wednesday:** Tempo run in the morning followed by an easy run and gym in the evening.

**Thursday:** A medium to long run of about 10 miles.

**Friday:** Easy run or rest day, depending on the week.

**Saturday:** Speed session in the morning and an easy run and sometimes gym in the evening.

**Sunday:** Long run of 13-16 miles.

Support from UL

I was lucky enough to receive the Jacinta O’Brien/Michael Hillary Athletics Scholarship which assists me with accommodation and covers the cost of my gym membership. UL Beo has been a great help too offering various tests and dexam scanning.

Juggling Academic Life and Athletics

Organising my time is the hardest part for me because I’m naturally very disorganised and I don’t like thinking or planning too far ahead. However, once I get a good routine going and I figure out which days I need to train and whether it is before lectures, after lectures, or between the gaps in my timetable – managing the two is very achievable!

Future Ambitions

I am hoping to get officially selected for the Olympics, run a few personal bests on the track this Summer, have some fun racing in some new countries, finish my degree, motivate some secondary school students to get more active and speak more Irish – Tír gan teanga, tír gan anam!
The fifth Annual EHS Teaching & Learning Symposium was held in the Pavilion, UL on the 21st January 2016. The symposium provided a mix of break-out sessions, plenary discussions, and short presentations exploring efficiencies in education. The take home messages and action points related to ‘working smarter’. There were examples of good practice in both assessment and feedback, discussion topics around module classification, time to reflect on the ownership of modules, and information on definite practices which are already in use within EHS. Drs. Brian Carson, Ian Kenny (pictured left) and Ross Anderson presented at the event on the following topics: Sport and exercise sciences: restructuring to facilitate transition (Dr. Brian Carson), Group supervision for projects at level 8, 9, 10 (Dr. Ian Kenny) and Vertical collectivism in third level - who owns a module? (Dr. Ross Anderson). Ross Anderson was also involved in the organisation of the event and is pictured right with Mary Fitzpatrick (Centre for Teaching and Learning).

Thomas Barr PESS Student honoured as GloHealth Athlete of the Year 2015

PESS joins with the Campus Community in extending congratulations to UL student Thomas Barr (MSc Sports Performance) who was honored with THREE awards at the ‘GloHealth National Athletic Awards’ in November 2015.

Thomas was honored with the following awards:
- University Athlete of the Year
- Track and Field Athlete of the Year
- Athlete of the Year

Congratulations also to Thomas’ coaches Drew Harrison (PESS Dept) and Hayley Harrison (Coaching Ireland).

Technique Development in Sprinting Workshop

Niamh Whelan and Drew Harrison (PESS Department) presented a very successful seminar/workshop on “Technique Development in Sprinting” on Sunday December 13th December 2015 at the new Conference Centre of Sports Campus Ireland, Blanchardstown, Dublin. The workshop was attended by over 30 sprint coaches from all over Ireland and explored various technique aspects of sprinting especially the importance of the biomechanical links between practice and performance. The event was organised for sprint and hurdles coaches on behalf of Athletics Ireland.

Dr. Ashley Casey (PESS Adjunct) Awarded Research Writing Award

Congratulations to Dr. Ashley Casey (PESS Adjunct Senior Lecturer) who has been awarded the Society of Health and Physical Educators (SHAPE America) Research Council Writing Award for his paper “I just remember rugby”. This paper is selected from the 86th volume of Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport (RQES) as the winner of the Research Council’s 2015 Research Writing Award. This award is designed to identify outstanding contributions of scholarship from papers published in each volume of the RQES.


Achievements

Force and Motion Travel Awards Awarded to PESS PhD Students

Congratulations to PESS PhD students Niamh Whelan (left) and Michelle Norris (right) who both won Force and Motion Travel Awards in October 2015. The award will be used to fund Niamh and Michelle’s travel to the International Society for Biomechanics in Sport Conference 2016 in Tsukuba Japan. Niamh and Michelle are both 4th year PhD students in the PESS department. Michelle is supervised by Drs. Ross Anderson and Ian Kenny and Niamh is supervised by Drs. Drew Harrison and Ian Kenny.

Fifth Annual EHS Teaching & Learning Symposium : 1+1+1>3-exploring efficiencies in education

The fifth Annual EHS Teaching & Learning Symposium was held in the Pavilion, UL on the 21st January 2016. The symposium provided a mix of break-out sessions, plenary discussions, and short presentations exploring efficiencies in education. The take home messages and action points related to ‘working smarter’. There were examples of good practice in both assessment and feedback, discussion topics around module classification, time to reflect on the ownership of modules, and information on definite practices which are already in use within EHS. Drs. Brian Carson, Ian Kenny (pictured left) and Ross Anderson presented at the event on the following topics: Sport and exercise sciences: restructuring to facilitate transition (Dr. Brian Carson), Group supervision for projects at level 8, 9, 10 (Dr. Ian Kenny) and Vertical collectivism in third level - who owns a module? (Dr. Ross Anderson). Ross Anderson was also involved in the organisation of the event and is pictured right with Mary Fitzpatrick (Centre for Teaching and Learning).
In October 2015, thirty seven high performance scholarships were awarded to University of Limerick students in conjunction with Bank of Ireland at a ceremony in the Castletroy Park Hotel. A large number of PESS students were recipients of these awards. The 2014/2015 season was a very successful one for UL GAA with the senior hurlers winning the Fitzgibbon Cup for the fifth time, the O’Connor Cup being retained and the fresher hurlers winning their first ever Fresher 1 title. Three PESS students were awarded Gold Scholarship Awards: Niall McDermott, 2nd Year Physical Education (Football), Laura McMahon, 4th Year Physical Education and Irish (Camogie) and Roisín Leonard, 4th Year Physical Education (Ladies Football). PESS recipients of the Silver Scholarship awards were: Patrice Diggin, 3rd Year Sport and Exercise Sciences (Camogie), Anna Galvin, 3rd Year Sport and Exercise Sciences (Ladies Football), Niamh O’Dea, MSc. Sports Performance (Ladies Football/Camogie); Jennifer Grant, 3rd year PE (Ladies Football), Kate Keaney, 4th Year Sport and Exercise Sciences (Ladies Football); Ruairí Deane, Professional Masters Physical Education (Football); Aidan Rowan, Professional Masters Physical Education (Football); Eoin Carroll, 4th Year Sport and Exercise Sciences (Football); Piers Lillis, 1st Year PE and Maths (Football). A further 14 UL players were given gym memberships from the Castletroy Park hotel as part of a new initiative.

Organised by Ursula Freyne (Applied Studies Coordinator) and Michelle Hyland (PESS Administrator), the Department of Physical Education and Sport Sciences hosted an information session on school placement for physical education students on the 15th February 2016. Outstanding presentations were given by 4th year Physical Education students: Niall Twomey, Sarah Dunphy, Denise Stenson and Ellen Horgan.

Topics discussed included school life as a pre-service teacher, preparing for school placement, expectations and fears of school placement, working with tutors and successes and failures while on school placement. The department would like to thank the 4th year students who presented at the information session and who provided invaluable advice to those attending the session.

UL Camogie Team (Winners of the Ashbourne Cup 2016): PESS players: Ciara Murphy, Clodagh McGrath, Eimear Kelly, Emma Buckley, Laura McMahon, Niamh O’Dea, Niamh Ryan, Patrice Diggin, Roisin Breen, Sarah Fryday, Ciara Holohan Ellen Horgan Grainne Egan Adeen Hogg and Ciana Ó Chuinnseáin
Congratulations to all UL and PESS Students and management who have played in this year's University GAA season. The department wishes those of you involved in further competition the best of luck in the coming season.

The PESS department promotes staff, student and graduate achievements. If you are aware of student and/or staff achievements (your own or others) please inform the department administrator Michelle.Hyland@ul.ie or pess@ul.ie so that such achievements can be celebrated and promoted.
The Physical Education and Sport Sciences department was saddened to learn of the passing of Anne Sweeney in February 2016. Anne was a physical education lecturer in the department for almost 25 years.

Originally from Ballyshannon, Donegal, Anne studied physical education at St. Raphael’s College, Sion Hill in Dublin, and later became a lecturer there.

Anne was one of the first Physical Education lecturers in the National College of Physical Education (NCPE) when it opened in Limerick in January 1973. Anne retired from the University in December 2002.

Anne was also a volleyball coach and coached many students including Dave Mahedy (Director, UL Sport).

The PESS Department is one of the most sought after departments at UL for incoming ERASMUS, Study Abroad and International Exchange students!

During the Autumn 2015 semester, PESS has welcomed 55 incoming ERASMUS, Study Abroad and International Exchange student module registrations. Students studying in PESS this semester come from Holland, England, the United States, Brazil, and Canada - to name a few.

This semester also sees six year three Physical Education students on exchange to California State University Long Beach and Slippery Rock University in Pennsylvania.

PESS WINTER GRADUATIONS 2016

1. Dr. David Diggin, PhD and Prof. Drew Harrison
2. Dr. P.J. Smyth, Dr. Mark Campbell and Dr. Deborah Tannehill
3. Dr. Mark Campbell and Dr. Deirdre Lyons
4. Dr. Leanne Coll and Prof. Mary O’Sullivan
5. Seamus Kerr, BSc Physical Education with Geography and Course Director Brigitte Moody

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A delegation from the Department of Physical Education and Sport Sciences (PESS) recently made the trip to Beijing Sport University (BSU) to reciprocate a visit by BSU to UL in April 2015.

A Memorandum of Understanding was signed in April 2015 between the two universities with a focus on promoting and supporting student and staff exchanges, particularly with respect to developing collaborative research opportunities between the two universities. BSU has a similar number of students to UL (i.e. approximately 13,000 students) with the unique context that all students who attend the university are registered on sport-related programmes, e.g. sports science, physical education, journalism, sports training, sports coaching and sport therapy and health.

The visit allowed the PESS delegation to tour the extensive sport facilities, visit the impressive sport science research facilities, deliver lectures to BSU undergraduate and postgraduate students and discuss potential research collaborations. On return from the visit to BSU, Professor Ann MacPhail, Head of PESS commented, "It is clear that the infrastructure for sport at BSU is an attractive prospect for future research partnerships between UL and BSU, with BSU having extensive facilities and staff numbers who service over 13,000 students in sport-related programmes. Discussions on comparative research studies as well as opportunities for UL to access the extensive number of elite athletes and coaches housed at BSU were a particular focus".

Delegation from the Department of Physical Education and Sport Sciences (PESS), UL meeting members from Beijing Sport University

DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

Jacinta O’Brien Plassey 10k
Date: Sunday April 10th
Start Time: 11.30am
Venue: UL Sports Arena
Register here

2nd Year Bsc. Sport Sciences students Nicole Lavin, Lorcan O’Donnell and David McNamara at the launch of the Jacinta O’Brien Plassey 10km race on March 10th 2016.

DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORT SCIENCE

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF IRELAND, LIMERICK

PESS PUBLICATIONS SINCE OCTOBER 2015

Journal Publications


**Keynote lecture**


**Conference Publications**


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