



SCHOOL OF

Psychology

WELCOME

I am delighted to let you know that the School of Psychology has yet again been ranked in the Top 40 Psychology Schools in Europe by the prestigious Times Higher Education rankings.

Given the financial constraints that the School and the University experience, this high level of performance is testament to the outstanding work and commitment by the academic staff, with the invaluable support of the administration and technical staff. I am very proud that the School's continued success is due to the academic excellence, commitment and creativity of the staff and students collectively. The current issue highlights some of our notable successes in the past year.

We are very excited to welcome three new staff members to the School (Profs. Claire Gillan, Rahul Sambaraju, and Sven Vanneste) and you can find a brief description of their research interests inside. Their appointments will allow the School to further its commitment to impactful cutting-edge research that enhances human capacities across their lifespan. Furthermore, Profs. Frédérique Vallières and Lorina Naci both received prestigious Provost Scholarship Awards to support their research programmes.

In addition to high-level research grants, staff have also been recognised for the societal impact of their research. Dr. Joan Cahill was nominated in the "Social Impact" category for this year's Trinity Innovation Awards, in recognition for her excellent research in the area of assisted living and ambient intelligence. The School has demonstrated ongoing leadership in the Growing up in Ireland study and this year Prof. Elizabeth Nixon produced a report examining how families and their children were affected by the recent economic recession in Ireland.

Highlighting the School's commitment to innovative post-graduate training, our Online M.Sc./Postgraduate Diploma in Managing Risk and System Change was shortlisted in the Best New Course category for the 2018 gradIreland Higher Education Awards.

Our students continue to excel and their achievements have been recognised nationally. For example, Deirdre Donohue, an SF student, was awarded a Laidlaw Undergraduate Research and Leadership Programme Scholarship. Niamh MacSweeney, a SS student, was the Island of Ireland Regional Winner in the Psychology Category at The Undergraduate Awards 2018.

We thank you for your continued involvement and hope that you will enjoy learning about the recent developments at the School outlined below. We want you to feel part of the School's development, and we warmly welcome your contributions, suggestions and input. The School's website and twitter feed provide more detail on the latest news on our activities.

You can find recent news and events on our website www.psychology@tcd.ie or twitter [@PsychologyTCD](https://twitter.com/PsychologyTCD)



Professor David Hevey
Head of School of Psychology

News

School programme nominated as Best New Postgraduate Course

The Online M.Sc./Postgraduate Diploma in Managing Risk and System Change was shortlisted in the Best New Course category for the 2018 gradireland Higher Education Awards.

This award recognises the importance of developing new courses that meet the emerging needs of students, industry and institutions. The judging panel specifically look at several criteria such as innovation in course design, planning and implementation. Collaboration between academia, industry and other education institutes. The international quality of the course and its ability to be aligned with and supportive of national economic, social and cultural needs.

The innovative and collaborative online delivery format of this Trinity

course has appealed to a wide range of industry sectors such as Defence Forces, Emergency Services, Aviation, Healthcare, Finance, Pharmaceutical, IT and Casino and Gambling. The course also benefits from a team of highly skilled academics and industry professionals who deliver current, topical and thought-provoking material which encourages critical thinking among students.

Applications are now open for the September 2019 intake and we are pleased to advise that we will shortly be offering an Online Postgraduate Certificate in Managing Risk and System Change. A one-year online course covering four modules and totalling 30 ECTS.



Trinity psychology student wins Undergraduate Award



Congratulations to Niamh MacSweeney who was the Island of Ireland Regional Winner in the Psychology Category at The Undergraduate Awards 2018. Her final year project thesis titled Active Coping and Depressive Symptoms in Female Adolescents was in the top 10% of all submissions in the psychology category and was the highest-performing Highly Commended Entrant in the

region for psychology. What an achievement! Congratulations also to Richard O'Conaill and Niamh Murphy who were also Highly Commended in psychology for the region.

You can read more about the awards on the following link: <https://www.undergraduateawards.com/2018-highly-commended>

New Staff Profiles

Dr. Claire Gillan



Dr. Claire Gillan

Dr. Claire Gillan obtained her Ph.D. from University of Cambridge in 2013 and then earned a prestigious Henry Wellcome Postdoctoral fellowship, which she took up at New York University for three years before returning to Dublin to set up her research group in the School of Psychology. Claire's lab (www.gillanlab.com) is interested in developing novel approaches to studying brain health in psychiatric and ageing populations – a key goal is to develop objective tests that can be used to diagnose individuals and predict who will respond

to which treatment. Claire is perhaps most well-known for her work in the area of goal-directed learning and habits in obsessive-compulsive disorder; research that earned her the Junior Investigator Award from British Association for Psychopharmacology in 2015. More recently, she has focused on how individual differences in cognition can leave individuals susceptible to mental illness and how those propensities manifest trans-diagnostically. Her lab at Trinity was founded in 2017 and is building on these areas of research, linking dimensional psychiatric

markers to neurophysiology, developing new models of disease and treatment response, and following individuals over time to study and ultimately model the trajectory of mental illness. She uses a 'big data' and internet-based approach for most of her questions and by developing these methods, she is driving broader change in how psychiatry research is undertaken. Her findings have been featured in three BBC documentaries, outlets that include Scientific American, the Guardian and New Scientist and she was listed among the top 30 thinkers under 30 by Pacific Standard.

New Staff Profiles

Dr. Rahul Sambaraju

Dr. Rahul Sambaraju works broadly in the fields of discourse analysis, social psychology, and political psychology. His research interests are in using discursive research techniques to examine how we make sense of our actions, events, and lives. His current research focuses on 'epistemic issues in race/racism', where he examines how we negotiate and make claims to knowledge about racism.

He is also examining the role of media in our political lives. This focuses on, first, how we participate in social media and the political outcomes of this, and, second, the role of broadcast media in (re)configuring and (de)legitimizing democratic practices.



Dr. Rahul Sambaraju

He holds a Bachelor's degree in Medicine and Surgery from Dr. NTR University of Health Sciences in India, a M.Sc. in

Psychological Research Methods from The University of Edinburgh, and a Ph.D. from Queen Margaret University in Edinburgh.



Dr. Sven Vanneste

Dr. Sven Vanneste

Dr. Sven Vanneste was recently appointed as Neuroscience Professor at the School of Psychology at Trinity College Dublin. He earned his Master's in Psychology and Criminology at Ghent University and a Doctorate Degree in Medical Sciences at the University of Antwerp.

The ground-breaking research undertaking in his lab relates to ageing-related neurological disorders. Sensory loss conditions such as chronic tinnitus and chronic pain, Parkinson's and memory related issues such as mild cognitive impairment and Alzheimer's disease pose the greatest medical and social challenge of our generation. Using advanced techniques including brain scanning,

electrophysiology, and both invasive and noninvasive neuromodulation, his aim is to map how the brain responds to pathological perturbations in an adaptive or maladaptive manner in different neurological disorders. More recent, Vanneste's team starting to look into the process of memory consolidation in healthy and pathological brains.

News



Dr. Frédérique Vallières and Aisling Hearn

The Hamilton Mathematics Institute

Dr. Frédérique Vallières was awarded one of 40 prestigious Provost Scholarship Awards. Together with Aisling Hearn, who was recruited in September 2019 to complete her Ph.D. in the Trinity Centre for Global Health, they will investigate the 'outcomes of asylum seekers and refugees who have experienced torture, following participation in Spirasi's rehabilitation services'. Spirasi is Ireland's leading national centre for the rehabilitation of survivors of torture, working with asylum seekers who have often been subjected to the triple trauma paradigm: (i) the trauma of torture in the home country, (ii) the trauma of the journey, and (iii) the trauma encountered in the host country (i.e. the asylum process). Aisling brings with her a wealth of experience as a trauma therapist and as the head of therapy services in Spirasi for the last 5 years. Dr. Vallières is the Director of the International Doctorate in Global Health programme and has led a number of projects focusing on the applications of Psychology to the field of Global Health, most recently through her role as the Principal Investigator for the CONTEXT programme.

www.psychotraumanetwork.com

Trinity psychology student becomes newest Laidlaw Scholar

In April 2019 Senior Freshman student Deirdre Donohue was awarded a Laidlaw Undergraduate Research and Leadership Programme Scholarship. The Laidlaw Programme is an innovative scholarship designed to help undergraduate students from all disciplines and walks of life to develop strong research and leadership skills which will allow them to excel in both their degree programmes and their future careers.

Assistant Professor Lorraine Swords will be supervising Deirdre's research project to be carried out over 10 weeks in summer 2020. The provisional title of this project is: Moving to, and Growing Up in, Ireland: Immigrant children's experience of early life stress, supportive relationships, and long-term psychological wellbeing.

Congratulations to Deirdre!



Deirdre Donohue

Research Fellow nominated for Trinity Innovation Awards

In October 2018, Dr. Joan Cahill was nominated in the category "Social Impact" for this year's Trinity Innovation Awards. This nomination was in recognition for Dr. Cahill's research in the area of assisted living and ambient intelligence.

The advancement of assistive technology raises overarching questions in relation to the values of society and how we design technology to:

- (1) promote positive values about ageing and
- (2) enhance ageing experience.

Specifically, it raises fundamental questions in relation to the meaning of care and the role of people and technology in delivering care. This includes questions about what value we place on promoting autonomy and social participation for older people, protecting the personal sphere, and the importance of the human role in care (including family involvement).

Dr. Cahill's research investigates the human dimensions and care implications of this technology, to ensure that it is ethically aligned and promotes positive states for older adults and other stakeholders

(for example, caregivers, nurses and families). Further, Dr. Cahill's research addresses the human machine interaction (HMI) design of different assisted living technologies.

Congratulations to Dr. Cahill!

Professor awarded prestigious Provost Ph.D. Project Award



Professor Lorina Naci

Congratulations to Professor Lorina Naci who was awarded one of 40 Provost Ph.D. project Awards that were competitively awarded across Trinity. This award will provide full coverage of fees and stipend for a four-year Ph.D. student to carry out the testing of the PREVENT study at Trinity, St James's and Beaumont Hospitals in Dublin.

The PREVENT project involves studying people between the ages of 40 and 59 who may or may not have a parent with Alzheimer's disease. Dementia is one of the greatest challenges facing us as a society today with an estimated 47 million people affected world-wide and are expected to double by 2040. The Naci laboratory at Trinity and the Global Brain Health Institute (GBHI) is joining forces with major universities in the UK and France to find early indicators or markers in people at mid-life that point to an increased risk of developing Alzheimer's disease in the future.

If markers can be found in mid-life that indicate the risk of getting Alzheimer's disease at a later date, there is potential to intervene before people develop the damaging brain changes of Alzheimer's disease.

New report examines effect of economic recession on Irish families and children



Growing Up in Ireland study

A new report, authored by Professor Elizabeth Nixon from the School of Psychology, with colleagues Richard Layte and Maeve Thornton, used data on over 9000 families in the Growing Up in Ireland study to explore how families and their children were affected by the recent economic recession in Ireland. Trinity graduates Aisling Murray and Des O'Mahony are also working on the project.

The findings showed that two-thirds of families had household income reductions as a result of the recession, 14% of families were in arrears on their utility bills and 9% in arrears on their rent/mortgage. The greatest impact on economic strain or "difficulties in making ends meet" came about as a result of having to cut back on basic necessities, not being able to afford luxuries, and being in arrears on the rent/mortgage and utility bills.

An important way in which economic strain can affect children is through its impact on parental symptoms of depression and different economic factors affected symptoms of depression. Being made redundant or

having working hours or social welfare reduced were not directly associated with depressive symptoms – whether these affected depression depended upon whether mothers felt economically strained as a result of these economic events. Economic factors were only weakly related to mothers' and fathers' marital satisfaction, but strong relationships emerged between mothers' and fathers' depressive symptoms and marital satisfaction.

Both mothers' and fathers' depressive symptoms and marital dissatisfaction had negative associations with their parenting in terms of higher levels of hostility and lower levels of warmth, with the strongest effects evident for the effects of depressive symptoms on hostility. Children's socio-emotional and behavioural difficulties were greater where the mother experienced depressive symptoms, and mothers' hostility and lower warmth were also associated with greater difficulties for children. Once mothers' depressive symptoms and marital satisfaction and parenting were accounted for, only fathers'

hostility remained a predictor of children's behavioural but not emotional difficulties.

One conclusion arising from the analysis is that economic hardship has an important influence on parental depressive symptoms and marital satisfaction, but has a weak association with parenting. Instead, economic hardship affects parenting and children's emotional and behaviour difficulties, indirectly, through effects on depressive symptoms. Speaking at the launch of the report, Professor Nixon said: "The findings of the research suggest that economic hardship had important negative effects on the mental health of parents and the quality of the relationship between parents, and these effects may spill-over to affect how parents interact with their young children. Interventions to support the well-being of parents are likely to be particularly important when they are facing economic stress. As well as dealing with the underlying problem (e.g. the loss of employment or drop in income), the research indicates that supports for parents' mental health are also likely to facilitate positive parenting."

Remember. The power of a legacy to Trinity



When you remember Trinity in your will, you join a tradition of giving that stretches back over 400 years – and reaches far into the future. You're empowering ground-breaking research which will benefit people in Ireland and all over the world. You're supporting students from all backgrounds to access a Trinity education. You're helping preserve our unique campus and heritage for new generations.

For more information about leaving a Legacy to Trinity, please contact Gareth Crowe.

T. +353 1 896 8994
E. gareth.crowe@tcd.ie
www.tcd.ie/alumni

Trinity Alumni Online

As a Trinity graduate, we'd like to help you make the most of being part of a community of over 115,000 Trinity graduates around the world. We know how important it is for our alumni to stay connected and how valuable networking and mentoring opportunities can be for career advancement. With this in mind,

we would like to invite you to join our new platform, Trinity Alumni Online. This platform will help you to connect with fellow alumni as well as current Trinity students, allowing you to give and receive career advice. It's easy to use and a great way to stay connected to Trinity. To register go to www.trinity.aluminate.net



Get Involved

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

Upcoming Events

Other Events
www.tcd.ie/alumni/events

Class Notes

Do you have any news or updates that you would like to share with your fellow alumni? Submit your news with an image, subject of study and year of graduation to alumni@tcd.ie

For more information please visit
<http://tcd.ie/alumni/classnotes>

psychology.tcd.ie

School of Psychology
Trinity College
Dublin 2, Ireland
T. +353 (0)1 896 1886
E. psychology@tcd.ie