



SCHOOL OF Social Sciences and Philosophy

WELCOME

Welcome to the School of Social Sciences and Philosophy's annual newsletter. It has been another busy year for Trinity's second largest School and we are delighted to report that the School is expanding in terms of both staff and student numbers.

The popularity of our undergraduate degrees remains as high as ever, with demand for both CAO and international places on programmes such as BESS, PPES, Law and Political Science and History and Political Science increasing yet again this year. The reputation of these programmes, both at home and abroad, reflects both the achievements of our alumni and the quality and the commitment of the teaching staff in the School.

Given the times we live in, it is no surprise that researchers in the School find their work on voting behaviour, populism, the property crises and homelessness, climate change, and migration at the forefront of media, governmental and popular interest. This year we held a series of very well-attended lectures on topics such as the US election and the challenges facing Ireland post-Brexit. In the coming academic year we hope you will join us at one of these events, the first of which is in late September, when the President of the European Central Bank, Mario Draghi, will deliver a *Henry Grattan* lecture in Trinity.

We also encourage you to consider signing up for the free online course on 'Achieving Sustainable Development', which starts on 11 September, 2017. This MOOC - Massive Open Online Course - to which several of the School's economists contribute, examines the ways in which development really can be sustainable, its impact on communities, and how it can make a difference to real lives.

Our alumni, two of whom are featured in this newsletter, are doing remarkable things across the world and we are always delighted to hear from you, so please do keep in touch.



Professor Gail McElroy
Head of the School of Social Sciences and Philosophy

Major National Study Examines Irish Voters' Attitudes



Book Launch: Minister Paschal Donohoe and Professor Gail McElroy with alumni guests

Political Scientists Professors Gail McElroy and Michael Marsh recently published the first book to analyse the complete set of Irish National Election Studies (INES). The Oxford University Press book, titled *A Conservative Revolution? Electoral Change in Twenty-First Century Ireland*, examines underlying voter attitudes from 2002-11, following party system evolution and voter behaviour from boom to bust.

Trinity's Department of Political Science has a long tradition of research expertise in elections and voting behaviour, with Professor Michael Marsh making an outstanding contribution to the field over four decades. Professor Gail McElroy, whose research interests include legislative and party politics, has also been involved in INES since its inception.

Commenting on the publication, Professor McElroy noted: "Any country that values its democracy needs credible and valid measures of how its citizens think, feel and behave at election time. The richness of the election study data has allowed us to examine the role that morality and duty play in voter turnout and why ideology continues to play such a minimal role in Irish politics."

The book was launched by Paschal Donohoe TD. A graduate of political science and economics through the Economic and Social Studies (BESS) programme, Minister Donohoe is the first Trinity alumnus to be appointed Minister for Finance.

www.tcd.ie/political_science

TRiSS to Strengthen Social Science Research at Trinity

In November 2016, the Provost of Trinity, Dr Patrick Prendergast and the Secretary General of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, economist Robert Watt, officially launched TRiSS - the new focal point for social science research at Trinity.

By connecting world class academics, generating new ideas and nurturing future generations of social scientists, TRiSS will deliver innovative research which addresses issues of global, societal and economic importance. TRiSS encompasses 14 social science disciplines across Trinity and its headquarters, on the sixth floor of the Arts Building, is home to 50 Ph.D. students.

Speaking at the launch the Provost, Dr Patrick Prendergast, said: "Our social scientists already work strongly with government and policy-makers. TRiSS will build on this, increasing collaboration, coordinating research, and ensuring that it has impact."

During this academic year, TRiSS funded a number of innovative research fellowships for Trinity academics and Ph.D. students, exploring issues such as conflict, stock market volatility and climate change denial. TRiSS also hosted a number of visiting scholars - from institutions such as the London School of Economics and Bocconi University - as part of its commitment to increase international research collaboration.

www.tcd.ie/triss



Trinity Economics graduate Secretary General Robert Watt at the launch of TRiSS

Grattan Scholars – Expand their Academic Horizons through Teaching and Globally Significant Research



Grattan Scholars with Provost Dr Patrick Prendergast

This autumn marks the fifth anniversary of the launch of *The Grattan Scholars* programme, which supports outstanding Ph.D. students who have demonstrated potential to become future academic leaders. The programme has already gained a strong international reputation, attracting the best and brightest students from around the world to Trinity. There are now 14 *Grattan Scholars* who hail from ten countries, across Europe and Asia, as well as from the USA and Ireland. Through their individual and collective commitment to research and teaching they are having an immense impact on the academic life of the School.

The Scholars' research spans the disciplines of economics, political science and sociology, and addresses some of the major issues of our time such as migration, international development and inequality. In their research, the Scholars aim to not only advance academic frontiers but to also be directly relevant to policymakers at national, European and global levels.

“There are many wonderful aspects of the Grattan programme, but one that stands out is that the scholars teach as well as carrying out their research. It is great for the scholars - and it is great for the students too.”

Grattan Scholar supporter, Hamish McRae



Hamish McRae

Below is a brief snapshot of some of the current Scholars and their activities:

- Indian student Purnima Kanther is undertaking research in the areas of financial inclusion and development economics. Her first Ph.D. paper broke new ground in analysing the impact of India's largest financial inclusion scheme on individuals' financial behaviour. The Grattan Scholarship has enabled Purnima to undertake field work in India to develop the focus of her second paper which examines the effects of natural calamities and government relief on electoral outcomes. Purnima also teaches 'Introduction to Economic Policy' and provides crucial support to first year students.

- Ukrainian student Margaryta Klymak is researching the role of the private sector in developing countries. Her first paper examined the effects of the naming and shaming of child and forced labour in developing countries on international trade. Her second paper investigates the impact of foreign competition on network hiring in small firms in Vietnam. Margaryta, whose work has been presented at multiple conferences, was also accepted onto a distinguished UNU-WIDER Ph.D. internship that allowed her to collaborate with the United Nations' top development economics researchers.
- During his Ph.D. studies, on the Global Financial System, German student Yannick Timmer has been a visiting researcher at the Deutsche Bundesbank, a consultant to the European Systemic Risk Board and a summer intern at the International Monetary Fund (IMF). His first paper was awarded best research paper by the European Capital Markets Institute. His second paper, on productivity and financial frictions, was recently published as an IMF working paper. Yannick's work has also been cited in media outlets including Bloomberg and the Wall Street Journal.

The Grattan Scholars programme has been made possible thanks to the extraordinary generosity of Trinity alumni and friends who have donated over €1.25 million since the programme's inception in 2012. As well as helping enrich academic and student life in Trinity, this philanthropic support is enabling these students to expand their academic horizons and undertake research that will help answer important questions for the future of society. Another key element of the Grattan scholarships is that students must demonstrate a commitment to undergraduate teaching over the course of their doctoral studies.

For further details please visit:
www.tcd.ie/ssp/grattan-scholars

Alumni Interviews

One-to-One with Lisa Finneran

B.A. Economic and Social Studies (1991)
Single Honors Economics

What has been your career path?

After Trinity, I did an M.Phil and D.Phil in Economics at Oxford (with a year lecturing at Maynooth in between). I then went to McKinsey in Washington DC and from there to the World Bank.

Why did you choose your current career?

Working at the World Bank is really interesting and rewarding. I enjoy the international environment (my colleagues come from over 170 different countries) and I am motivated by the difference we can make. Last year I visited field projects where I saw a nutrition program in Senegal that has halved the national rate of childhood stunting (from almost 40%) and urban slums in Indonesia transformed to clean and beautiful neighborhoods maintained by the local community.



Most of my focus has been on financial strategy and more recently on operational strategy. The group I was leading just completed replenishment of our International Development Association fund for the poorest countries; between contributions from over 50 governments and recently getting an AAA credit rating that will allow capital markets debt access at attractive rates, the fund will provide \$75 billion of concessional finance over the coming three years, \$45 billion to Africa.

What did you like most about being a Trinity student?

I loved that the environment was both intellectual and fun, that I was surrounded by interesting people in a beautiful historical setting in the centre of the city. Without smart phones (or even email), remote communication with friends involved leaving notes stuck in the crevices of the front arch – it worked surprisingly well!

What is your advice for current students?

Try out different jobs. Take some risks. Be grateful.

One-to-One with Oisín Coghlan

B.A. Economic and Social Studies (1994)
Joint Honors Political Science and Sociology

Tell us a little bit about your role with Friends of the Earth

Friends of the Earth campaigns for solutions to environmental problems, solutions that work for people as well as nature. As the Director, I lead a small staff team that does everything from policy research, to political lobbying, to media, to mobilizing supporters for campaigning action, to fundraising to good governance.

What excites you most about your work?

The urgency of the issues and the camaraderie of colleagues.

We have a relatively high media profile and I love the opportunity to try to shape public debate, communicate in a way that makes sense to people, and push politicians to respond positively to the issues.

We've had exciting successes. The eight-year campaign for a climate change law was satisfying, eventually! But the 18-month campaign that led to the recent law banning 'fracking' for oil and gas was a real thrill. Working with the community groups in Leitrim who led that campaign so creatively and effectively was a genuine privilege.

What are your strongest memories of Trinity?

The friendships. I met four college friends for lunch for the first time in years recently and amidst the stories of life's various challenges we spent much of our time laughing. The coffee breaks in the Arts Block were as formative as the lectures.

Inspiring and supportive lecturers: Basil Chubb, Patrick Keatinge, Eddie Hyland, John O'Hagan, Barbara Bradby to name just a few.

Living in Rubrics in my final year and the changing seasons on our beautiful campus.



How did studying at Trinity influence you?

It gave me the tools to develop my critical thinking, and the discipline to research an issue properly before reaching a conclusion. And it tested my skills to communicate those conclusions effectively.

It also honed the social, political and economic analysis that I routinely apply now to developing strategies for public and political campaigning on issues from climate change to waste policy.

Economics Academic Receives Major Funding for Energy Efficiency Research

When consumers buy an electrical appliance, car or house how important is energy consumption and do they even pay attention to energy labels? A major project entitled CONSEED (CONsumer Energy Efficient Decision Making) has been awarded €1.5 million in EU Horizon 2020 funding to investigate what factors influence consumers in making energy-efficient decisions.

The pan European research team, led by Associate Professor of Economics Eleanor Denny, will run field trials and experiments across the property, appliance and transport sectors. Working with industry partners, including daft.ie and Volkswagen, CONSEED will test new energy usage labels which will enable consumers to easily compare product running costs. The aim is to 'nudge' people into making more energy efficient decisions by showing them the total cost of their investment, rather than just the initial upfront cost.



Commenting on the research, Professor Denny said: "This is an exciting research area with the potential to lead to ground-breaking developments in the design of energy policy across the EU and beyond and to deliver significant environmental and cost savings with relatively low investment."

CONSEED's academic collaborators include Dr Ronan Lyons who set up daft.ie's Economic Research unit prior to joining Trinity. Professor Denny, whose research interests include energy economics and behavioural economics, is currently Director of Trinity Research in Social Sciences (TRiSS).

www.tcd.ie/economics
www.conseedproject.eu
[@EnergyWiseEU](https://twitter.com/EnergyWiseEU)

BESS Student is First Irish Recipient of Schwarzman Scholarship

Congratulations to Lara Connaughton who has been awarded a highly prestigious Schwarzman Scholarship at Beijing's Tsinghua University. She was selected from over 2,700 candidates from 119 countries who competed for just 125 places.

Lara studied BESS and graduated with a first class honors degree in economics and business. Lara, who has also been named as a Fellow in the Class of 2018, will now pursue a Masters in Global Affairs and will have the opportunity to spend a year immersed in an international community of thinkers, innovators and senior leaders in business, politics and society.



Lara at her graduation in December 2016

On receiving the award Lara said: "It is a great honour to be the first Irish scholar chosen for the Schwarzman Programme. At a time when the landscape of current affairs is becoming increasingly polarized, I hope to bring perspectives from an interconnected Ireland when discussing the future of global relations with my international classmates."

Moral Philosopher Attempts to Revive Hedonism

In the 'post truth' era philosophy's emphasis on sound reasoning and questioning society's basic assumptions has never been more relevant. Since joining Trinity last year, Assistant Professor in Philosophy, Ben Bramble has been encouraging people to think critically through a series of public lectures on topics such as abortion, whether morally bad people can produce great art, and whether we are living in a computer simulation.

Dr Bramble is an expert on issues of well-being with recent academic work breathing new life into hedonism, the view that a person's life can go well or poorly solely based on their ability to feel pleasure and pain. His paper, *A New Defense of Hedonism About Well-Being*, argues that there is an inherent value in experiencing diverse pleasures which explains why pleasures which build up slowly, such as love and learning, have greater significance. Commenting on his research Dr Bramble said: "I think that arriving at the right well-being theory is extremely important. How can we know how to live well if we do not know what is good for us in the first place?"



Moral Philosopher Dr Ben Bramble

Ben Bramble's research interests include moral philosophy, social and political philosophy, and applied ethics. He teaches on both undergraduate modules and the new M.Phil in Philosophy.

www.tcd.ie/philosophy

Social and Political Review Awards Inaugural Student Prize



SPR Editor, authors and Academic Directors from Political Science and Sociology

The Social and Political Review (SPR) was established almost three decades ago to encourage student debate and discussion on social and political issues. Each year the review showcases exemplary academic work by students and volume XXVII, which was launched in March 2017 by BESS graduate and

former Senator Averil Power, was no exception. Ten outstanding articles were competitively selected for publication, exploring topics such as the hostile reception of Islam into the Western world and the conflict in Sri Lanka. Well done to Nicolas Yahyaoui, an M.Phil in Race, Ethnicity and Conflict student, who received the inaugural TCD Association and Trust Award for Best Article.

Dermot McAleese Teaching Awards Recognise Inspiring Postgraduate Educators

The 2017 Dermot McAleese Teaching Awards were presented to teaching assistants in the School's four disciplines, in May 2017, following a rigorous nomination process which assessed factors such as creativity in delivering tutorials and responsiveness and engagement with students.

Congratulations to *Grattan Scholar* Margaryta Klymak (economics), Peter West (philosophy), Liam Kneafsey (political science) and David

Cichon (sociology) who were recognised for their outstanding commitment to achieving excellence in teaching and learning. Now in their sixth year, the awards are in honour of Dermot McAleese former Whately Professor of Political Economy and much loved teacher within the School.



Award winners with Professor McAleese, School academics and Trinity's Dean of Graduate Studies

Project Brings Together Social Science and Biological Researchers



2017 LIFEPAATH Annual Meeting at the University of Lausanne

Professor of Sociology, Richard Layte has contributed to the conception and design of one of the world's largest studies on the effect of low socio-economic status on premature mortality.

The meta-analysis of 1.7 million people, which was published in *The Lancet*, directly compares the importance of socio-economic status, as a determinant of health, with the six major risk factors identified in global health strategies to reduce premature mortality. Considering the research Professor Layte said: "Findings suggest that low socio-economic status has the same health impact as risk

factors such as physical inactivity, smoking and obesity and should be targeted in local and global health policy and interventions."

The research was undertaken as part of the LIFEPAATH project which aims to understand the dramatic differences in healthy ageing, quality of life and life expectancy between individuals of different socio-economic groups. Part of the project, which involves leading social science and health science researchers in ten countries, will investigate possible effects of the economic downturn on biological changes related to ageing in Ireland and Portugal.

Professor Layte is Head of the Department of Sociology. His research focuses on the structure of social and economic stratification in modern societies and its impact on individual life-chances, health and well-being.

www.tcd.ie/sociology

www.lifepathproject.eu

Economists Celebrated in Provost's Teaching Awards

Congratulations to Dr Michael King and Dr Ronan Lyons, Assistant Professors in the Department of Economics, who were short-listed in the 2017 Provost's Teaching Awards with Dr King ultimately winning a prestigious Early Career Award.

In a highly competitive field, Michael King was recognised for his innovative approach to teaching, his ability to inspire students and his passion in the pursuit of societal change. Dr King was also praised for regularly providing individual feedback to students and for assisting colleagues in developing their

teaching portfolios. Dr King, whose research focuses on banking, household finances and social protection in developing countries, lectures on the World Economy and Economics of Less Developed Countries modules.

As one of the final short-listed candidates Ronan Lyons was presented with a Certificate of Commendation in recognition of his dedication to teaching and learning. Dr Lyons, who lectures on the Applied Economics and Economy of Ireland modules, is a regular contributor to media and public debate on housing markets and urban economics.



Dr King receiving the Provost's Teaching Award

Alumni Events at a Glance



John Bruton delivers the 2017 London Henry Grattan Lecture

It was wonderful to see so many alumni at the annual London Henry Grattan Lecture in June 2017, which was kindly hosted by the Embassy of Ireland for a fifth time. Guests thoroughly enjoyed former Taoiseach John Bruton's timely and thought-provoking talk, *New Fault lines in Europe, the political consequences of Brexit*, and to delight in the opportunity to catch up with old Trinity friends and academics.

We were also pleased to have the occasion to meet our London-based graduates at a Breakfast Briefing at *The Economist's* Office in May 2017 where Professor John Fitzgerald, of the Department of Economics, explored issues for Ireland arising from Brexit. Trinity is extremely grateful to Rupert Pennant Rea (Chairman of *The Economist*) for hosting this event.



Professor John O'Hagan, Paul Sammon, Cormac O'Dea and Professor Andrew Somerville at the Irish Embassy



Alumni at the GradLink Mentoring Programme Launch

Back on campus, the GradLink Mentoring Programme launch in October 2016, helped connect graduates with third year students seeking career development support. The School would like to thank all the graduates who have volunteered their time to GradLink over the last three years - students have really benefited from your invaluable guidance. Some exciting new developments are being planned in the field of mentoring and more details will be available soon.

Events and Courses

Online Course: Achieving Sustainable Development

Starts 11 September 2017

Henry Grattan Lecture

Mario Draghi

President, European Central Bank

22 September 2017

Evening Course: Great Philosophers

Starts 26 September 2017

Christmas Commons

6 & 13 December 2017

Christmas Homecoming

21 December 2017

Evening Course: Big Questions in Philosophy

Starts 16 January 2018

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

Other Upcoming Events:

www.tcd.ie/alumni/news-events/events/

Class Notes

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

www.tcd.ie/ssp

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