NOTE FROM THE EDITORS

In the March 2009 issue of The Irish Psychologist the article by Power & Conlon referred to a helpline run by The Psychological Society of Ireland for its members. This was included in error as no such service currently exists. Apologies for any confusion.

Suzanne, Elizabeth & Dermot

Report from the External Relations Panel

The NIBPS & PSI Joint Careers Event, University of Ulster, Coleraine, Saturday, 28 February 2009

On Saturday 28 February the joint organising committee of the Northern Ireland Branch of the British Psychological Society (NIBPS) and the External Relations Panel (ERP) of PSI ran a successful Careers Event in the University of Ulster, Coleraine (UUC). Nearly 200 students attended this event from colleges all over Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. The aim of this event was to inform psychology students of career opportunities available to them both inside and outside the realms of psychology.

The actual lectures on careers commenced on the Saturday; however, UUC generously hosted a Friday night reception and reception of food and drink for all attending the event. The Friday night event consisted of two talks, the first by Michael Callaghan and Kerri McCusker of The Serious Games and Virtual Worlds Team (ISRC) UU on Worlds in Motion: The Rise of Virtual Worlds: Beyond Second Life and onto the Metaverse. The second lecture was entitled Morals in Cyberspace? and was presented by Dr Monica Whitty, a Reader in Psychology at Nottingham Trent University, who travelled over especially for the event. These were two extremely interesting and interactive lectures which were enjoyed by all.

Registration began at 9am the next morning, with students receiving their information pack and an opportunity to browse through the stands from the various universities which were positioned outside the lecture theatre all day.

Stands present there on the day included: NIBPS, PSI, and the Student Affairs Group. The universities represented were the University of Ulster, the Open University, Trinity College Dublin, NUI Galway, University College Dublin, Dublin Business School and Queen’s University Belfast.

Professor Ronnie Wilson, Head of Psychology in UU, started the proceedings for the day with welcoming everyone to the university and to the careers event. He highlighted the importance of such events to students and wished them an enjoyable day. Brendan Rooney, a Council member of PSI and the Student Liaison Officer for PSI, represented the president of PSI, Dr Rosaleen McElvaney on the day and opened the careers event. He stressed the importance of student subscribers and their membership of the Society and of the Student Affairs Group, which represents psychology students within the society.

The first session and keynote was chaired by Pauline Cummins, a member of the ERP. This session examined what to do with your psychology degree if you don’t intend to pursue one of the psychology disciplines. It also looked at educational psychology and organisational psychology. Professor Ronnie Wilson gave a very informative and positive presentation about the different skills that psychology students have attained on graduation and how these can be applied to the workplace. Dr Barbara McConnell of Stranmillis University College gave a thorough overview of what is involved in becoming and working as an educational psychologist. Ruth Mulally of AIB Dublin finished off the first session with a presentation on occupational and organisational psychology, examining the various subjects covered in postgraduate courses and broad avenues open for careers. The keynote speaker was Dr Ray Glennon of Saville Holdsworth Limited (SHL), who delivered an engaging lecture on the topic of graduate recruitment, and the use of psychometric questionnaires in the selection and recruitment process.

There was a short coffee break before the second session commenced. This session was chaired by John Hyland, a Council member of NIBPS, and Northern Ireland representative for the Psychology Postgraduate Affairs Group of the British Psychological Society. This session focused on sport psychology, health psychology, and counselling psychology. Dr Gavin Breslin of Queen’s University Belfast outlined in his presentation the path to becoming a sport psychologist and opportunities available in sports psychology. Dr Martin Dempster also from Queen’s University Belfast gave an informative presentation regarding the work and routes involved in becoming a health psychologist. Finally, Dr Donal McAteer, a counselling psychologist in the Western Health and Social Care Trust, gave students a thorough understanding of what is involved in the training, competencies and practice of counselling psychology.

Pictured above: SAG Chairperson, Marion O’Gorman (left) with Brendan Rooney (PSI Student Liaison Officer) at the Joint NIBPS/PSI Careers Event.

The session after lunch was chaired by Dr Barbara McConnell, NIBPS. This session examined a career in research, clinical psychology, and forensic psychology. Dr Tim Trimble of Trinity College Dublin gave an interesting presentation about careers in research and an overview of current work that is presently occurring in the discipline. Dr Kevin Tierney, Director of Clinical Psychology in Trinity College, Dublin, gave a realistic presentation about the job of a clinical psychologist and working in a multi-disciplinary team. He also outlined the training involved which combines placements, research and academia. Finally, Geraldine O’Hare, who is Head of Forensic Psychology in the Probation Board in Northern Ireland, gave a stimulating presentation about forensic psychology which examined the work involved, where they are employed and how to become a forensic psychologist.
The event ended with a closing address by Professor Maurice Stringer, Chair of NIBPS, who thanked the students for coming and everyone involved in making the event successful.

Thanks to all the students, speakers and stand representatives that supported the event. Particular thanks to John Hyland of NIBPS and UUC who played a huge part in organising the event. Further thanks to Anne Kerr and Dr Barbara McConnell of the NIBPS organising committee, and all the NIBPS staff who helped on the day. On the PSI team, thanks to Ruth Mullally, Brendan Rooney and Conor O’Malley for their help on the day, and Marian O’Gorman on the PSI desk.

Pauline Cummins
External Relations Panel

The Careers Event Team were Anne Kerr, John Hyland, and Dr Barbara McConnell (NIBPS) and Pauline Cummins (PSI). Slides from the Careers Event can be downloaded from the PSI and NIBPS websites.

Student Affairs Group: Easter Students’ Corner

Hi Students! Happy Easter!

The Student Affairs Group were present at the recent joint NIBPS/PSI Psychology Careers event for the second year since our inception. It was held in the University of Ulster, Coleraine; and our stand was right next to the Registration desk, so many interested and eager psychology students had the opportunity to meet some of the SAG committee and to sign up as subscribers or register their interest to get involved!

The event was a great success, with attendance by students from all over the North and South, including University of Ulster, Queen’s University Belfast, UCD, Trinity College, American College Dublin, DBS, UCC, NUI Galway and NUI Maynooth. There were also enquiries by a number of students as to how they could access our various webpages and contact us with queries or suggestions; and we were able to provide them with information about the numerous benefits of joining PSI. The SAG received a great response to our subscriptions drive, significantly increasing the number of students getting involved with PSI (as they automatically become members of SAG once they have joined)!

You can meet us next at the Annual Psychology Student Congress in Trinity College, Dublin, 17–18 April 2009, where our AGM will be taking place (on Saturday 18th). You will have the opportunity to meet our committee members, ask questions, make suggestions for what you would like to see in PSI for students, join PSI, meet your college and university reps for SAG, and become directly involved yourself!

Wishing you all a very Happy Easter! Look out for more news from SAG in the next issue of the IP!

Marian O’Gorman
Chairperson, SAG

To find out more about the PSI Student Affairs Group, check out:
1) Our Student Page on the PSI website – http://www.psihq.ie/members_studentSoc.asp
3) Our Bebo – http://www.bebo.com/PSISAG

Report from the Conference Committee: PSI Conference 2009

The Annual Conference this year will take place between 5 and 8 November 2009. The venue is White’s Hotel, Wexford. This is an excellent venue, not least because of the superb conference facilities, but also because it is situated in the centre of Wexford town, with its picturesque narrow streets and ocean-front vistas. The hotel boasts unique spa and recreation facilities, including cryogenic therapy for those of you brave enough to be frozen alive. I know we have plumped for the South East again for the conference venue. I can promise, though, that we will spread it around next year. Nevertheless, Wexford is only two hours drive from Dublin and, of course, it has good rail access.

Although there is no overarching conference theme, the committee decided that we would have a “strapline” theme. This is to be in the arena of human rights. As a domain of interest within psychology both in Ireland and internationally, this can be extremely broad. For example, such a theme provides a lens for ethical practice and the implementation of research. Children’s rights have a contemporaneously salient currency in Ireland. Issues with regard to peace and conflict resolution remain a rich vein for research, as do human rights considerations in practice for those of us engaged with agencies combating terrorism. The ideas and concepts that can be drawn upon within psychology are potentially infinite with regard to providing germane perspectives upon human rights and issues pertaining to them. We therefore particularly welcome submissions to the conference programme that will examine psychological practice and research as viewed through the prism of human rights; and conversely, those that shed light on how the implementation of human rights legislation and policy affects the application of psychological principles in our work.

Dr Tim Trimble,
Conference Committee