

## ***Introduction to the Issue***

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We are delighted to welcome you to our Autumn 2021 issue. In recent months, for many, we have witnessed a return to our physical campuses, another significant milestone and transition for the Irish higher education sector. While not yet exactly the ‘full’, ‘normal’ return many had envisaged, it has been made possible by a committed collaboration across institution-wide teams. This was also very evident during recent graduation ceremonies which took place at many institutions, and we extend our congratulations to the class of 2021 who have shown incredible strength and resilience. Complementing the return to campuses, the sector is in a position now to reflect on the experiences and learnings from the COVID-19 induced move to digital spaces for teaching and learning. In addition, it is of value to pause now and recognise how the concept of community and togetherness had such a valued impact in recent months, in how everyone supported each other to get through unprecedented circumstances.

In this issue of AISHE-J, our last of 2021, we are excited to share the work of four teams. The topics being discussed are far reaching, but collectively they provide insights that will be of interest to readers across the sector.

In their submission, Trinity College Dublin’s Patrick Phillips and Krystyna Szczepanska provide a unique insight into the issues careers services staff often meet when supporting international students. In their submission, the authors present their findings following engagement with the literature and subsequent interviews with six staff members in careers services at Irish Universities. The insights presented will be of interest to many stakeholder groups in higher education, who may be teaching, supporting and working with international students. Becoming aware of the transition and cultural adaptation for these students, as well as their career aspirations and expectations can support and enhance how we collaborate on their learning and career journeys. Realising the career goals that are instilled in some students, and how they view careers supports across institutions, can help us as a community to enhance how we all work together, and value how the sector understands the needs of culturally diverse students.

Munster Technology University's Brigid Lucey and her co-authors Roisin Spriggs, Katie O'Brien, Craig Muphy and Angela Wright present an article detailing their experiences and insights from a true team effort involving mentoring on several levels, with peer learning occurring across two institutions (MTU and University College Cork). With two students having engaged with their lecturer-mentor, the team developed and ran a student-led webinar with 86 biomedical undergraduate science students to guide them in writing high quality, practical laboratory reports. We learn about the collaboration between the two students and their mentor, as well as the mentoring role taken on by the students in how they led the webinar with fellow undergraduates in attendance. The process of how the webinar was conducted is presented and complemented by both the results of an evaluation with attendees, and reflections from the team.

Our next paper, by Briony Supple, Siobhan O'Neill and Guangbo Hao of University College Cork and Alex Pentek of the National Sculpture Factory, Cork, discusses an innovative collaboration between an engineering lecturer, an artist and faculty from learning and teaching. The paper presents a case study of the use of origami in Engineering Education. *'By engaging with origami as an artform, whose geometry and economy of line contain a certain aesthetic, students can make exciting discoveries and the creation of new complex articulated forms of their own. This helps to inform and inspire the design process in successful advanced robotic and engineering design.'* (p.5). This approach is rooted in the concept of making to enhance learning and teaching and the authors introduce the term 'makerlearning' - this encompasses the feature necessary to support making as a 'learning ethos' (p.2).

The final paper, 'Researching Inclusion in HE: A Narrative of Initial Enquiry', by Sandra Nolan and Susan Flynn, is a reflection on the preliminary stage of a postgraduate study that explored inclusivity in higher education. This short paper takes the form of a braided essay with alternating inputs from supervisor and postgraduate study. These explore how the *'...value of lived experience, conversations, creating a sense of belonging and understanding for all learners can bring a richness and depth to the research journey'* (p.1).

We really hope you enjoy reading the current issue. As you may be aware, our next issue is a collaboration with The National Student Engagement Programme (NStEP) on student

engagement and partnership in Irish higher education. Collaborating with NStEP has been a wonderful experience for everyone at AISHE-J, and we hope the issue will be of interest to all stakeholders across the higher education sector and beyond. We are already excited by the range, number and quality of submissions we have received for consideration. We are particularly delighted that we have been able to recruit a panel of student reviewers for the special issue and this is something that we hope to continue and develop.

Coming back to the current issue, sincere thanks to the authors who submitted their impressive work to AISHE-J, and to our team of dedicated reviewers for supporting both the journal and the authors despite their busy schedules and workloads, we are very grateful.

Stay safe everyone.