



Photo courtesy of Maura Boyle.

Welcome to the latest edition of the information sharing newsletter from MaynoothWorks at Maynooth University. Our goal is to share relevant market news and activities on the commercialisation of Maynooth University research. We hope you enjoy this newsletter.

MaynoothWorks encompasses knowledge transfer, entrepreneurship innovation and enterprise partnership.

www.maynoothuniversity.ie/maynoothworks

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER Q4 2019

“INNOVATION AND RESEARCH COMMERCIALISATION” GST10, DECEMBER 2019

Each year the MaynoothWorks team runs a generic skills module for early career researchers. This module aims to provide researchers with the skills required to identify the impact of their research, commercialise a research outcome, effectively interact within a team and with industry and to improve their ability to innovate and act with an entrepreneurial mindset.

Some of the key themes explored in this module include understanding the research landscape, legal contracts, IP, creating spin-outs, technical marketing, team building and interacting with industry and NGOs. Also included are workshops and exercises, including preparation of a marketing pitch, culminating in a group business plan and final presentation of their business concept.

An Introduction to the Lean Learning process and business canvas template and our detailed case-studies/practical workshops facilitate this in a relaxed hands-on environment.

GST10 2019 student testimonials...

“The training helped me to question the real value of my research to real life problems”

“I hope to start a business in the future while further exploring the concepts/tools addressed during the course”

“The GST10 module gave me the chance to work in a team to develop and validate our idea”



GST10 early career researchers

DR JOHN SCANLAN

July 18, 1965 – October 23, 2019

It is with deep sadness that we commemorate our colleague, mentor and friend, Dr John Scanlan, Maynooth University Commercialisation Director. John's battle with cancer ended in October 2019, and his loss is felt greatly by his friends and colleagues across the University and beyond. John was a gifted innovator, mentor and leader and, while it will not do him full justice, we want to briefly recount a few of his contributions to the Knowledge Transfer and Technology Transfer landscape, both in Maynooth and nationally.

Having graduated from DCU with a PhD in physics, and having accumulated 15 years of broad international industry experience, John joined Maynooth University in July 2005 to set up the Commercialisation Office as its first director. John had a deep and particular interest in the application of scientific insights to solve practical problems, and he had the expertise and experience to establish and promote a culture of entrepreneurship and enterprise across the University. He was expert in the technicalities of how to protect and manage intellectual property, and exercised good judgement in the task. Most importantly, he worked to develop deep long-term relationships and collaborations with industry and with members of our academic community.

John took the lead in many internal and external initiatives and programmes, with some notable examples as follows.

His first major initiative in 2006 was to set out to secure funding from Enterprise Ireland for a Business Incubation Centre for the University. He made the strategic and detailed business case, both to the University and to EI, and was successful in raising the maximum possible funding. It took six further years to finally get the contract completed (which is a tribute to John's persistence and creativity in overcoming obstacles) and the Maynoothworks incubator opened in August 2015.

The importance to the University of John's expertise went beyond technology transfer and research commercialisation. In two rounds of the national investment programme for research capacity building (PRTL) the university had to put forward three separate strategies for Research, for Teaching and Learning, and for Knowledge Transfer. This was indicative of the increasing intention of linking universities, government and enterprise. John wrote the main parts of the Knowledge Transfer strategy and, most importantly, was able to back up the strategic rhetoric with clear evidence of delivering excellent value to the state. Without his essential input Maynooth would not have been successful in securing major capital funding for research in the sciences, social sciences and arts and humanities.

John's was an important and influential voice in the development of the national Technology Transfer Strengthening Initiative, which aimed to develop the technology transfer capabilities of all higher education research institutions in Ireland. Over 3 phases of funding since 2008 John led our regional consortia, and was the driving force behind building strong collaborative relationships with the Institutes of Technology in Waterford, Carlow and Athlone.



John @ MaynoothWorks French Soirée in December 2018



John @ cycling event in 2016

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The most recent review of the programme performance took place in mid 2019 not long after John's cancer was diagnosed, but without reservation he put his shoulder to the wheel for the review, supported strongly by his team, and the programme consortium achieved the highest possible rating from the international panel, with particular commendation of John's leadership.

John was prominent in 2012 on the national stage when working with his counterparts in the Universities, Enterprise Ireland and the Institutes of Technology, and later Knowledge Transfer Ireland, to help frame the national protocols on intellectual property, which enabled universities and enterprise to work together on research and innovation projects with a common understanding of the necessary ground rules. John recently developed a [capability maturity framework for knowledge transfer](#) which was published in 2018.

The importance of fostering entrepreneurship was close to John's heart. Within Maynooth he initiated a student entrepreneurship competition, focussed on education and training for early career staff, and established two annual innovation awards to recognise staff achievements in the sphere. He was extremely proud of the 20 companies that were spun out of Maynooth research activities under his guidance since he took up his leadership post in 2005. About one third of those are active today (a high percentage for high tech start-ups), creating jobs and products and services that people need.

Over the last several years John worked closely on regional development with our partners in Kildare County Council, and Meath Enterprise towards the development of a network of regional innovation centres, including the MaynoothWorks incubator. This has grown into important partnerships with the new Merits Innovation Centre in Naas (Kildare County Council), and the Boyne Valley Food Innovation Hub in Navan (Meath County Council).



John Scanlan

John was always optimistic and brave in his ideas and had the courage of his convictions. He was not afraid to try something new, and not afraid that an attempt might fail, although he would commit every effort to try to ensure success.

John was characteristically courageous and forthright in the face of his illness. He continued working as much as was possible, and up until five days before his death he was still sending emails and offering sound advice. Our team relied greatly on John's leadership, foresight and advice, and he is enormously missed by all his friends and colleagues at the University.

Suaimhneas agus síocháin dó.

