CÚRAM Teacher in Residence Programme

Blog Report Session 1 - 25/10/16

At the end of September the Galway branch of the ISTA invited both primary and secondary teachers to join the CÚRAM Teachers in Residence (TIR) Programme. The programme offered 10 places, five for primary and five for secondary and set out a plan to run over 10 evening slots between October and March 2017. The objective of the programme is to provide teachers with the opportunity to work directly with researchers to develop content for their classrooms, while learning about the medical device research carried out by CÚRAM. Concurrently, we the teachers hope to make CÚRAM tangible for students and for the teaching and learning that happens within the everyday setting of schools.

On Tuesday, October 25th teachers from around the county of Galway made their way to the Biomedical Science building in NUI Galway for the introduction to the TIR Programme, CURAM, Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) and ongoing STEM activities that are currently available to teachers. We were kindly greeted by Claire Riordan, Outreach Manager for CÚRAM, who facilitated introductions and made us all feel very welcome and part of the programme. Plenty of food, tea and coffee were made available to teachers and presenters alike.

Claire began the session by outlining how the public engagement programme hopes to break barriers leading to two way communication between communities and research. Claire was followed by the Cell Explorers, Muriel Grenon and Claire Concannon, who gave us an insight into the challenges encountered in developing content. Teachers were given the opportunity to introduce themselves, explain why they joined the programme and what they hope to achieve as a result of participating. All teachers were enthusiastic and had joined for various reasons. Teachers wanted to find out more about CÚRAM and the research conducted. Teachers also felt there was a gap between schools and industry and that a bridge could be formed through the programme, thus promoting more applications to the CAO for STEM related careers. Jackie O’Dowd from SMART Futures and Discover Primary Science and Maths also outlined the necessity and challenges when promoting STEM related careers. Other STEM activities currently available to teachers that were discussed were INSIGHT Education and Public Engagement by Brendan Smith and REEL Life Science by Enda O’Connell. Finally Niamh Burke from the Teachers in Residence Programme 2015-2016 navigated us through some content that she and Sarah Duggan created for this programme.

As we move into the coming weeks, I am looking forward to see the amazing work carried out by the CÚRAM researchers and will be eagerly anticipating to see how we break down barriers between research and primary & secondary education. Fun times Ahead!

Clive Monahan.