

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### ***Inspiring the next generation of scientists – Budding Biologists at UCC***

Little did students know when enlisting in this year's Budding Biologists Transition Year Experience Programme that they would need to be super sleuths to solve a crime scene investigation.....

Two groups of twenty six students from secondary schools around Ireland took part in the programme at the Alimentary Pharmabiotic Centre, UCC recently, where they used DNA profiling to try to meet the burden of proof to solve a staged murder.

During the programme the students were introduced to the fascinating worlds of microbiology, analysing water samples and identifying harmful pathogens; anatomy, where they learnt all about bones; food science where they experimented with the latest technologies in molecular gastronomy; and cell culture, where they saw how our immune system defend the body from infection. The students visited the Dialysis Unit at Cork University Hospital where Dr Liam Plant and his colleagues highlighted the importance of science, technology and biomedical engineering for safe and effective dialysis at the hospital or at home. The students went on a tour of AbbVie's manufacturing facility in Carrigtwohill. The international biopharmaceutical company manufactures medicines including those prescribed to reduce cholesterol levels in patients at risk of heart disease. The students also took part in a number of workshops from the genetics (and ethics) of cancer to intellectual property and presentation skills.

"The Budding Biologists TY programme was designed to provide students with an insight into how science works in a stimulating and inclusive way while encouraging debate on current and future scientific questions" said Dr Siobhán Cashman, Course Co-ordinator.

"I think the programme gave me a great insight into what it would be like to study science in college" said Emer Finnegan, Scoil Mhuire, Carrick-on-Suir.

Daire O'Herlihy, Presentation Brothers College, Cork, noted that the programme was "well structured, very interesting, gave a good feel for biology subjects and jobs - the highlight of my transition year."

Eimear Hennessy, St. Mary's Secondary School, Mallow said "I am definitely taking two sciences for the Leaving Cert after taking this course."