

UCC Research Awards for APC Scientists

Alimentary Pharmabiotic Centre scientists Professor John F. Cryan and Dr Marcus Claesson have been awarded Researcher of the Year and Early Stage Researcher of the Year awards, respectively, at the inaugural 2012 UCC Research Awards.

The awards, which were presented on Monday 19 November, celebrate UCC researchers who have made exceptional and influential research contributions. Six individual researcher awards and one research team award were made at the ceremony, which was held in UCC's Glucksman Gallery. The awards recognise those who push boundaries, enhance knowledge and raise the national and international research profile of UCC.

John Cryan is Professor of Anatomy and Neuroscience at UCC and a Principal Investigator at the SFI-funded Alimentary Pharmabiotic Centre (<http://apc.ucc.ie>). He is a graduate of NUI Galway and has carried out research at the University of Melbourne, Australia, the University of Pennsylvania, The Scripps Research Institute, La Jolla, California and the Novartis Institutes for Biomedical Research, Basel Switzerland before returning to UCC's School of Pharmacy and Dept. Pharmacology & Therapeutics in 2005. John is a Principal Investigator in Neurogastroenterology Core of APC with an interest in understanding the interaction between the brain and gut and how it applies to stress and immune-related disorders, ranging from Irritable Bowel Syndrome to cognition. He and his colleagues have made fundamental discoveries into how the gut microbiota can influence brain function. These have been discussed widely in both the leading scientific and lay press including the Economist and wall Street Journal. Together with his APC colleague Professor Ted Dinan John has many industry collaborations focusing on developing novel strategies for disorders of stress, cognition and food intake. *"This award is largely due to the APC and its environment, which has been an amazing opportunity to build a team of researchers focused at unravelling how the brain-gut axis contribute to the pathophysiology of complex disorders, which can have direct societal and commercial impact"* says Cryan. John is also a lover of the Arts and one of the principal organisers of "The Experience of Illness: Learning from the Arts" International Symposium being hosted by the APC in UCC on 30 November & 1 December 2012.

Marcus Claesson is a Lecturer in the Dept. Microbiology, University College Cork. He has a BSc in Chemical Engineering and Engineering Physics and MSc in Bioinformatics from Chalmers University of Technology Sweden and a PhD in Bioinformatics from University College Cork. . He has previously worked in Dept. Microbiology, UCC, Alimentary Health Ltd, AngioGenetics (Sweden) and AstraZeneca (UK). Marcus' research interests are in metagenomics and metatranscriptomics of the human gut and in bioinformatics methods development.

Dr Michael Murphy, President of UCC, said: "Research is central to the life of a university. UCC is committed to the on-going development of, and support for, research across the diversity of disciplines, with a focus on excellence in addition to impact". Professor Anita Maguire, Vice-President for Research and Innovation at UCC added: "The Research Awards provide an ideal opportunity to recognise the excellence, talent and potential of leading researchers in UCC across diverse areas".

The event was sponsored by Gilead Sciences, Ireland, a leading pharmaceutical company in the field of HIV/AIDS and other life-threatening conditions, with global manufacturing facilities located in Cork. Speaking at the awards ceremony, Ms Julie O'Neill, Vice President and General Manager at Gilead Sciences, said: "Support for Ireland's research base is an important part of the enterprise sector's strategy for growth, both for Irish companies as they expand their activities and for multinational companies as they compete for investment at Irish sites. An active research landscape across the university sector is critically important in sustaining Ireland's workforce of talented doctoral and postdoctoral professionals. UCC, as a national research leader, plays a key role in this".

