

## **Clonakilty prevail against stiff opposition in Munster Final of *Debating Science Issues***

Teams from Sacred Heart Secondary School, Clonakilty and McEgan College Macroom battled it out to secure the coveted position of Munster Champions in **Debating Science Issues (DSI)**, the secondary schools science debating competition, which took place recently in University College Cork.

Both teams tackled the challenging debate motion “*Nanotechnology has significantly contributed to our well-being and environmental sustainability*” in front of a panel of distinguished judges including Professor William Reville, UCC, Ms Anna Iwaszuk from Tyndall National Institute and Mr Ray McArdle, Sales Engineer Manager at TrendMicro, a global leader in cloud security.

The well-prepared team from Sacred Heart Clonakilty, comprising Heather Burke and Maeve Murphy, and supported by their teacher Ms Sheila Gilbert, proved to have the most persuasive argument on the day. Heather remarked “DSI has made me question things that I might have just accepted before”.

Heather and Maeve will travel to the All-Ireland semi-finals which will take place in the Royal College of Surgeons Ireland in Dublin on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2013.

Both Munster and Clonakilty have an impressive record in the DSI competition, with students from Clonakilty Community College winning the all-Ireland final in 2012. (Other Cork winners have included Ballincollig Community School and St Mary’s Macroom)

ENDS

### **About Debating Science Issues**

Debating Science Issues (DSI) [www.debatingscienceissues.com](http://www.debatingscienceissues.com), now in its 6<sup>th</sup> year, is an all-island schools science debating competition which encourages young people to engage in debate on the cultural, societal and ethical implications of advances in biomedical science. DSI is co-ordinated by nine Medical and Science Research Centres in Ireland. In Munster, debates are co-ordinated by Alimentary Pharmabiotic Centre (APC) at UCC and Cork Institute of Technology.

Schools in Munster, taking part in DSI, initially received three hour workshops to facilitate a discussion forum on the ethical issues raised by either Genetically Modified Food (delivered by the APC) or Self-Testing

(delivered by CIT). School teams then debated a motion related to the initial workshops in the regional heats. From there, the debating motions are circulated so that students debate on an array of controversial topical issues including stem cell research, genetically modified food, health and self-testing, nanotechnology, vaccination, health care funding and organ transplantation lists.