

PRESS RELEASE 14 March 2014

Teams from Colaiste Muire, Crosshaven and McEgan College Macroom, debated the merits and ethics of nanotechnology in a heated Munster Final of the secondary school Debating Science Issues competition.

Miriam Riordan and Luke Fehily of Colaiste Muire were declared the winners on the day. They were supported by their teacher Ms Sarah Downey, and other “researcher” students at the final, held at the Nimbus Centre, Cork Institute of Technology.

Tadg Lane and Denise Kelleher from McEgan College, supported by their teachers Ms Maureen McAdam and Ms Emma Buckley, put up a brave battle on the day.

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 which included Dr Hugh Mc Glynn, CIT (chair), Ms Niamh Doyle, Johnson& Johnson and Dr Bryan Kelleher, CIT.

Debating Science Issues (DSI) www.debatingscienceissues.com, now in its 7th 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.

‘The competition enables students to think about science as more than a subject; something that surrounds and supports their lives in every way’ commented Dr Sharon Lawton, Science4Life Officer at Cork Institute of

Technology Access Office, who co-organises the Munster section of the competition.

"Munster schools have been very successful in this competition nationally, so we wish them all the best in the national semifinals and final in Dublin " said Dr Catherine Buckley, Communications and Outreach Officer at the Alimentary Pharmabiotic Centre, UCC who co-organizes the Munster Region of the competition.

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