

TY Students #Believe in Science

Twenty transition year students from thirteen schools took part in the first Science Foundation Ireland Research Centres TY Week at University College Cork recently.

This new programme provides unique opportunities for the students to engage with the cutting edge research of seven Research Centres funded by Science Foundation Ireland: the [APC Microbiome Institute](#), [iCRAG - Irish Centre for Research in Applied Geosciences](#), [INFANT- Irish Centre for Fetal and Neonatal Translational Research](#), [INSIGHT Centre for Data Analytics](#), [IPIC - Irish Photonics Integration Centre](#), [MaREI Centre for Marine and Renewable Energy](#), and the [Synthesis and Solid State Pharmaceutical Centre \(SSPC\)](#).

An action packed programme saw the students complete a wide variety of hands-on activities across scientific and engineering disciplines. Exposure to so many different research areas highlighted the multitude of diverse career opportunities within science which all help address fundamental challenges we face as a society. The students also received many talks from researchers as part of SFI's Smart Futures programme in which researchers share their enthusiasm for research, their motivation and their varied career histories to date.

The students particularly enjoyed the variety of experiences offered and reported that the weeklong course positively affected their opinion of science and helped them choose which subjects they would take at leaving cert level.

The students noted that the course "opened up my eyes to all the opportunities in the science world" (Ava Cudmore, Regina Mundi College, Cork), "showed me paths into science, benefits of a science career, a lot of uses I never knew" (Bridgid O'Sullivan, Skibbereen Community School), "broadened my horizons towards science and the possibilities available" (Sean-Henry Squires, Presentation Brothers College, Cork) and made them "more motivated to study science in college." (Nicky Dromey, De La Salle College, Macroom).

Course Co-ordinator, Ms Eimear Ferguson, Schools' Outreach Officer at the APC Microbiome Institute, said "During the week students had the opportunity to put theory into practice in exciting lab-based experiments and to reflect on the practical applications of their subject choices for the senior cycle. In turn, the researchers had the chance to challenge the students' beliefs and perhaps misconceptions on a career in science. All in all, I think everyone benefitted from an enriching and thought-provoking week. Challenging what we understand is what science is all about".

Science Foundation Ireland's Head of Education and Public Engagement, Margie McCarthy added "Through our national Smart Futures programme, we have learned that how young people make their career choices is strongly influenced by how much they can identify with a role, or with people involved in that career area. The positive response of students that have taken part in the TY programme, demonstrates the high value they can gain from getting exposure to people working in science, technology or engineering, so they have a better sense of this kind of career. It's important

that we help young people to base their future career and study choices on their own informed, real-life experiences, rather than on stereotypes.”

Based on the success of the course, the centres hope to run two TY weeks in 2018. So make sure to apply for a place early.

ENDS

Notes for Editors

About Science Foundation Ireland

Science Foundation Ireland funds oriented basic and applied research in the areas of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) which promotes and assists the development and competitiveness of industry, enterprise and employment in Ireland. The Foundation also promotes and supports STEM education and engagement, and creates awareness and understanding of the value of STEM to society and to the growth of the economy.

Science Foundation Ireland’s #BelieveInScience campaign promotes the potential that science and discovery offer Ireland, today and in tomorrow’s world. The #BelieveInScience campaign helps to promote an understanding of the ability of STEM to create positive change in the world and to drive a sustainable economy in Ireland. The campaign will see Science Foundation Ireland work in partnership with the Irish research community to share a mutual passion for science with the public. Visit www.ScienceFoundationIreland.ie for more information.

For further information please contact Dr Catherine Buckley, Communications & Outreach Manager. APC Microbiome Institute tel +353 21 4903362; mobile +353 86 8554744; email: c.buckley@ucc.ie