



### **Athena SWAN at MIC**

**Welcome to the Winter edition of the Athena SWAN e-zine. During these strange times, we have lots to share with you including a report from our recent EDI COVID survey, upcoming training opportunities and the celebration of International Men's Day 2020. We also take a look at our new membership with Advance HE and the benefits you can enjoy.**

**Finally, we launch our new EDI blog with our first submission and information on how to get involved for future editions.**

If you want to read more information on the background to Athena SWAN you can see our previous e-zines at this [link](#).

Further information is available on our webpage [here](#).

Read the Athena SWAN Action Plan [here](#).

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## ***Athena SWAN in MIC Update***

### ***Action Plan Updates***

Work is well underway at MIC implementing our four-year [Athena SWAN Action Plan to 2023](#) with over 50% of actions now in progress. Four significant actions which have progressed are listed below:

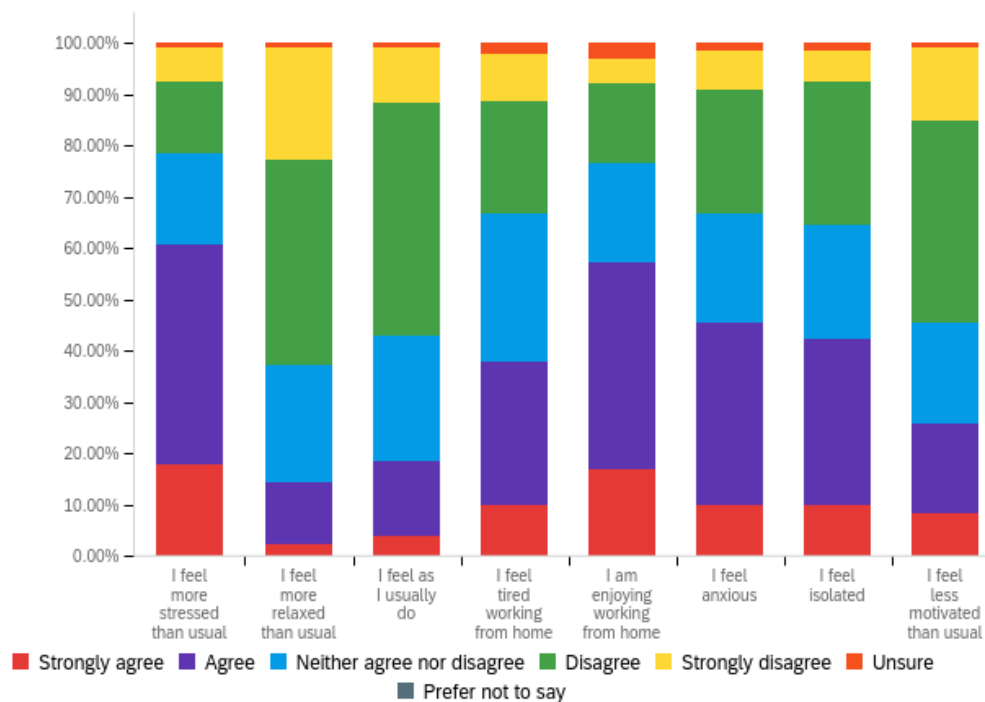
1. Of significant note is the recruitment process for the senior post of Director of Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Interculturalism, which was advertised on 28 October. This is an important step for the College in embedding EDI across the institution and in realising *Action 3.2; Create permanent EDI structures including the appointment of a Head of EDI as a senior post.*
2. The Terms of Reference of the Equality Committee have been amended, broadening them to include diversity and inclusion (Action 5.6.1). This was approved by the Trustees and is now updated on the College Committee page on the portal [here](#).
3. The requirement for college committees to consist of at least 40% female and 40% male members was approved by the Trustees (Action 5.6.12).
4. The Shorter Working Year Policy has been amended to extend the shorter working year entitlement to employees on fixed term contracts (Action 5.5.16). The policy is available on the portal [here](#).

### ***Impact of COVID-19 on staff at MIC***

The MIC Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Survey: Impact of COVID-19 on MIC Staff was launched on 6th October 2020 with a deadline for responses by 20th October 2020. The objective of the survey was to gather data on Mary Immaculate College employees' experiences of remote working during the Covid-19 restrictions and how the pandemic has impacted on the wellbeing of staff. The aim of the survey is to highlight the impacts and challenges facing staff in MIC Limerick and Thurles and also to identify areas where improvements can be made in equality and opportunity for staff of both campuses.

All staff were invited to complete the survey. 149 staff responded which is a response rate of 35%. Staff were asked a range of questions relating to wellbeing, impact on working duties and caring responsibilities. Overall responses to the question in relation to wellbeing at the time of the survey can be seen below.

Q11 - In terms of your overall wellbeing at present, please respond to the follow...



A higher percentage of female staff across all staff categories and contract type report feeling more stressed than usual at this time. For academic staff there is a high percentage (60%) of male staff reporting the same. Staff on fixed term contracts report the highest percentage of feeling stressed.

Feelings of isolation are reported as higher in academic staff than professional services staff. Staff on fixed term contracts report high percentage (60%F/100%M) of feeling isolated and anxious.

Thank you to all who completed the survey. A report on the findings was presented to the Equality Committee earlier this month. An action plan will be developed to address our survey findings along with the findings of recent Academic, Professional Services Quality Surveys and Student surveys. Read our report along with recommendations [here](#).

***International Men's Day 2020***

International Men's Day is marked annually on 19th November. We celebrated the occasion by hosting a panel discussion with student, graduate and staff role models of MIC Thurles and Limerick. An underlying theme of the talk was in relation to male underrepresentation in both education and professional services. Thank you to all who spoke on the day and to those who attended.

## **MIC Athena SWAN International Men's Day**

Join us to mark *International Men's Day* with a panel discussion to celebrate the many student, staff and graduate role models in MIC Limerick and Thurles.

- Stephen Dunne, graduate BA in Geography and Maths:
- Dr Patrick Cosgrove, Student Recruitment Officer, Strategic Communications & Marketing:
- Dr Tayo Paul Adenusi, Assistant Lecturer in Education:
- Aaron Sheil, John White & Alex O'Keeffe:

**Overcoming barriers**

**Male Underrepresentation**

**Education in West Africa**

**Experiences and perspectives of mature students at MIC**

**Date:** Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> November

**Venue:** Online

**Time:** 11am

*Open to all staff and students.  
All welcome!*



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## ***Aurora Leadership Programme for Women***

Our first cohort of attendees commenced the Aurora Leadership Programme for Women at the end of November. Aurora is for women, academic and professional services staff, working in a university, college or related organisation who would like to develop and explore issues relating to leadership roles and responsibilities.

Karen Fisher, Aisling Leavy and Sabine Egger are undertaking the programme which runs until May 2021. Our participants and their mentors attended mentor/mentee training prior to the commencement of the programme.



Dr Sabine Egger, Karen Fisher and Dr Aisling Leavy, Aurora 2020/2021 Participants

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## ***MIC EDI Blog***

We are delighted to launch our new Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Blog to keep us connected with so many of us working off campus and apart even while on campus. Topics can include tips on mental wellbeing, our colleagues' perspective on working on the frontline and on working from home with children, and much more.

Our first entry is a Limerick from *Dr. Eva Devaney* (Healthy Campus Coordinator):

### **Motivation**

Working from home I have found motivation has been a real challenge in the past 8-9 months, it has been up and down. Silly challenges, physical (such as the current '20 for 20') or otherwise, help me to keep going. Inspired by Twitter friends, I took on a '#Lockdownlimerickchallenge' during Level 5 and wrote a limerick every day for 38 days! Being an academic, not a creative, writer I really enjoyed it! They are now an entry in my Covid scrap book. One example:

Working remotely since March, what a change  
A home office we quickly had to arrange

Zoom and Teams  
Hoping it streams  
And oh so important to keep in touch and engage

***How to submit an entry:***

If you would like to submit an entry to our EDI blog, please get in touch. Some entries may relate to Covid-19 and our current situation - for instance staff may describe the "new normal" during Covid-19 and the activities people are engaging in to mind their mental health and wellbeing. Alternatively, some may wish to celebrate a diversity day in the EDI calendar with a thought, observation or poem. Ideas include:

- Your experience as an international MIC employee
- A new recipe from a cuisine common in a different continent that you've tried out
  - Tips to overcome the challenge of working from home while balancing caring responsibilities
- A favourite book or poem you'd like to recommend that reminds you of inclusiveness or belonging
  - Tips on minding your mental health and wellbeing during Covid-19
- What is the "new normal" for you? What is a day in the life at work during Covid-19?

Entries to be submitted to [edel.foster@mic.ul.ie](mailto:edel.foster@mic.ul.ie)

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## ***Upcoming Events***

***Athena SWAN in conversation with The Irish Women's Writing Network***

You are invited to join us for a conversational forum of this project and the Network. We will take this opportunity to introduce you to our Athena SWAN Champions, who have volunteered for the role ensuring cross-institutional representation. The speakers are all MIC and UL-based Network Team members including co-founder Kathryn Laing; blog editor, contributor and website administrator Deirdre Flynn; Postgraduate forum administrator and blog contributor, PhD student Geraldine Brassil, and blog contributor on diversity and advisor on editorial and other matters, Caoilfhionn Ní Bheacháin.

They will discuss their own research in relation to the founding of the Network, its reach, possibilities and challenges, the nature of networks and the promotion of postgraduate and early career scholarship.



## *MIC Athena SWAN: Equality Talks*

### **The Irish Women's Writing Network**

Join us for conversations on this feminist project and the network with:

*Kathryn Laing, Deirdre Flynn,  
Geraldine Brassil, Caoilfhionn Ní Bheacháin*

MIC and UL-based Network Team members

**Thursday 17 December  
3pm via MS Teams ([link here](#))**



More info on the network and speakers [here](#).

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## ***Training Opportunities***

### **Positive Workplace Relations**

A number of training workshops for Positive Workplace Relations have been organised and coordinated by the HR Office. By the end of January, up to 80 staff will have participated in the training.

MIC promotes a positive environment for all staff, fostered in our Strategic Plan and commitment to the Athena SWAN principles. Developing long term positive and sustainable working relationships is fundamental to the well-being of all colleagues, and core to our success. It would be great to see all staff attend this very worthwhile training.

Although the training is at capacity until the end of January, it will run periodically again during semester 2. This training is open to all staff.

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## **LinkedIn Training**

The College recently acquired access to LinkedIn Learning which is a resource of online courses that is now available to all MIC staff. The service can be accessed using an MIC domain account and password at the following URL: <https://lnkd.in/ebqJZFw>.

There is a range of courses available covering different topics and of varying duration. You can sync to your own LinkedIn account if you have one and suggestions will also be given to you based on your profile.

#### Top picks for Edel

◀ Previous Next ▶



▶ COURSE  
Diversity, Inclusion, and  
Belonging  
By: Pat Wadors



▶ COURSE  
15 Secrets Successful People  
Know about Time Management...  
By: getAbstract



▶ COURSE  
Strategic Thinking  
6 Recruiters like this



▶ COURSE  
Getting Things Done  
By: David Allen



▶ COURSE  
Learn Emotions: Key Determinants  
By: Big Think

#### Popular on LinkedIn Learning

◀ Previous Next ▶



▶ COURSE  
Influencing Others  
By: John Ullmen



▶ COURSE  
Time Management Fundamentals  
By: Dave Crenshaw



▶ COURSE  
Coaching Skills for Leaders and  
Managers  
By: Sara Canaday



▶ COURSE  
Overcoming Procrastination  
By: Brenda Bailey-Hughes



▶ COURSE  
Balancing Multiple Roles  
By: Sara Canaday

## GE Academy Training

### *Participatory methods for gender equality*

This online training will engage participants with real life exercises to select and implement participatory techniques in order to build their skills to facilitate institutional change in gender equality through participatory methods. This one-day session is running on the 16<sup>th</sup> and 18 December. Click [here](#) to register.



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## ***Advance HE Membership***



In October, we signed up as members of Advance HE. As a result, MIC staff have access to a range of services and benefits:

- access to digital support services such as global and regional webinars, member only resources, online Fellowship calibration exercises and the Accredited Programme Leaders Network, on Advance HE Connect
- access to a wealth of exclusive reports, publications and resources across key HE themes including education and EDI
- ability to bid for Good Practice Grants to develop and share practice around the globe
- significant discount on Advance HE programmes, conferences and events

- access to exclusive Advance HE Connect benefits such as member only networks and the global Connect Event Series of webinars

All staff can create an account with Advance HE Connect [here](#), enabling you to connect with more than 20,000 users from 100 countries around the globe. This community platform is open to all those who work in HE and provides a space where the sector can share, connect and collaborate in one place.

### ***Advance HE Connect***



### ***Development programmes, conferences and events***

MIC staff can access a range of programmes, events and conferences for 2020-2021. Advance HE have developed strands of expertise that address key areas of development and enhancement for institutions in the coming year, below. Click on each to find out more.

#### **Race Equality**

As the momentum for change intensifies, our portfolio seeks to support the improvement of the representation, progression and success of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) staff and students within higher education.

→ Find out more

#### **Gender Equality**

By challenging the status quo, championing progression and building strong and supportive networks, our portfolio supports encouraging and recognising the commitment to advancing gender equality in higher education.

→ Find out more

### Strategic Leadership

Designed for those in senior or strategic roles our strategic leadership portfolio can support the development of strategic outlook and skillset to lead across organisational boundaries.

→ Find out more

### Developing Leadership

For those new to leading or wanting to enhance their leadership practice, we have several options that give you the opportunity to reflect on and find solutions for challenges in all areas of leadership, or prepare for that next step.

→ Find out more

### Teaching and Learning for Student Success

Whatever your discipline, specialism or institutional context, our offer is designed to complement your institutional development activity, providing practical approaches, tools and stimuli to help you build or refresh your approach to teaching and learning throughout your career.

→ Find out more

### Fostering Inclusion

Our portfolio of services are designed to help your institution address systemic issues in equality of access and inclusive working environments. They will help participants understand the common issues in HE when designing inclusive support services, developing accessible campus environments and making everyone feel welcome at your institution.

→ Find out more

### Effective Governance

We have experience and expertise in supporting governing bodies across the UK to aid with board effectiveness, governor development, strategic sessions and wider support for the governance community. Our support is realised through national programmes, topical events, action research and tailored services for individual institutions.

→ Find out more

If you would like to know more, or have any queries about our Advance HE membership, please contact [edel.foster@mic.ul.ie](mailto:edel.foster@mic.ul.ie)

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## EVENTS AT MIC

### MIC Goes Purple To Show Support For Inclusion Of Those With Disabilities

On 3 December, the LINC Programme Team, working in conjunction with Buildings and Maintenance Services at MIC Limerick, transformed the College's Foundation Building lights from white to purple to mark United Nations International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD).

In addition to the illumination of the Foundation building, the LINC Programme Team hosted a purple themed coffee morning for the staff of the College - encouraging participants to reflect on all the people they know who may have an invisible need and the many ways we can demonstrate that we are there to support them and their families during these times. Well done to all involved!

The Foundation Building in Mary Immaculate College Limerick turns Purple as part of the Disability Federation of Ireland's Purple Lights Campaign and to mark the United Nations International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD).

More information [here](#).



## Double Gold for Wired FM at National Community Radio Awards

Limerick based College radio station Wired FM saw double when awarded Gold at the 2020 Craol Community Radio Awards last month. The Craol Community Radio Awards are the largest award of its kind in Ireland dedicated to recognising and celebrating community radio. Open to all community stations across Ireland, the awards are judged by key media leaders and recognises the best in national community radio.

Vanessa Flood and Jack McGann, both final year MIC Media & Communications Studies students were awarded Gold in the Commissioned Programme Category for their World

College Radio Day programme, which was aired globally as part of a 24 hour marathon on Friday 2nd October.

Wired FM scooped a second Gold award for a three-and-a-half hour live broadcast held in front of a live crowd from the Record Room in March, which was entered in the Community and Volunteer Participation Category. This special broadcast, entitled Wired FM Presents:

PX Music Live from the Record Room was produced by 12 staff and students from MIC, LIT and the Limerick School of Art & Design.

Read more [here](#).



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### **Twitter Highlights:**

Follow @MICAthenaSWAN on Twitter to keep up to date. Here's some of the recent twitter stories that may be of interest to you:



Noteworthy's research and report on academic staff on precarious contracts.



The Women's Gaelic Players Association's report on funding of female elite players in comparison to their male counterparts.



The HEA's announcement of two major gender equality initiatives for Irish HEIs.

## TALK TO US



We would love to hear from you, if you would like to know more about Athena SWAN or would like something included in the Ezine.

Contact Edel on [edel.foster@mic.ul.ie](mailto:edel.foster@mic.ul.ie) or 061 204338.

Follow us on Twitter for updates [@MICAthenaSWAN](https://twitter.com/MICAthenaSWAN)

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### **Our mailing address is:**

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