

Progress on Chair of Hospice Studies

Irish Hospice Foundation

The Irish Hospice Foundation is committed to education and research in order to promote the values of a hospice philosophy (IHF Research Strategy, 2003). Such an approach supports the development of specialist palliative medicine and palliative care, but also seeks to explicitly preserve and develop the caring and less tangible aspects of hospice care across all healthcare settings, and the community. The promotion and conduct of activities, which will enshrine the hospice philosophy in all clinical practice, is in line with other contemporary Irish Hospice Foundation projects, for example – the Hospice Friendly Hospital.

Objectives of the development of a Chair in Hospice Studies

To promote holistic education – in the specialism of palliative care and beyond
To foster interdisciplinary education at graduate and postgraduate level
To promote high quality academic research in hospice and palliative care
To promote a critical mass for the development of hospice awareness, education and research in academic, professional, media and public fora.

Meeting at UCD 1/9/03

JM and OK met with Prof Patricia Noon Walsh of the Centre for Disability Studies.

Prof Walsh described recent restructuring at the university – including the development of a Faculty of Interdisciplinary Education. This Faculty has an emphasis on postgraduate education and development of postgraduate courses in a coherent structure allowing progression; for example diploma to higher diploma to Masters to PhD. The Continuing Professional Education office is a part of the Faculty and hence Certificate level courses are also developed. The philosophy of adult education seems to underpin much of the activity. The programme of studies includes – Equality Studies, European Studies, Women's Studies, Development Studies, Legal Studies, American Studies.

The Dean of this Faculty is Professor Mary Lambkin.

Professor Walsh's Chair is an 'endowed' chair, funded through the National Disability Authority (€500,000). Other Chairs in the Faculty – e.g. Jean Monet Chair reflect a similar position. In practice these Chairs do not appear to be time limited and tenure is support by the University (formal arrangements could be clarified with the Dean).

Prof Walsh has a background knowledge of hospice and an interest in hospice and bereavement issues for people with intellectual difficulties. We are to send Prof Walsh written information about the Irish Hospice Foundation. Prof Walsh will informally speak to the Dean of Interdisciplinary Education at UCD with a view to arranging a meeting later in September/October.

Orla Keegan, September 3rd 2003.