

AWARDS FOR  
EXCELLENCE IN  
**PUBLIC  
RELATIONS  
2020**



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# In-House PR Team of the Year

Teams with 1 to 5 Employees



## Organisation

RCSI University of Medicine And Health Sciences

## Judge's Citation

The judges were impressed by a hard working-team that plays a pivotal role in achieving these its organisational goals in a highly competitive sector.

## Background to the Campaign

### Brief description of organisation and objectives in the period

Founded as the training body for surgery in Ireland, RCSI has been at the forefront of healthcare education since its establishment in 1784. Today, we are an innovative, world-leading health sciences university offering education at undergraduate, postgraduate, and professional level.

Through our strategy, we are purposefully committed to working to solve the greatest challenges of modern healthcare by delivering a transformative learning experience, leading impactful research, and supporting healthcare and society.



## **Brief overview of team's communications objectives and strategy**

We support the delivery of RCSI's corporate strategy by developing and implementing a communications strategy which leverages our unique heritage and mission to position RCSI as a global leader in education, research, and healthcare.

Our Department embodies the qualities of a modern communications team, having evolved from a traditional media focussed team, to a team with the capabilities to communicate effectively in a digital media landscape. The team has a rich mix of skills and experience across strategic communications, issues and crisis management, media relations, social media, digital marketing, public information campaigns, video production, internal communications, and speech and script writing.

The team's strategy is to leverage opportunities to communicate with a range of stakeholders across a broad mix of earned, owned, and paid channels. We also manage internal communications across the university, and we deliver communications in support of our role as the postgraduate training body for surgery in Ireland.

The team has a priority objective to enhance RCSI's global reputation. Internally, we support our academics and researchers to communicate effectively and to be positive brand ambassadors for RCSI. Externally, we deliver targeted communications which share a compelling story about RCSI's world-class research and education. The campaign, "RCSI Discover", is comprised of a stakeholder e-zine, regular digital campaigns, and social media profiling of our researchers.

Indicators of the success of our key priority objectives are:

- Improved performance in the reputation surveys of the international university rankings.
- Achieving high Altmetric\* scores for key research papers.
- Increased volume in international media coverage.

\*Altmetric tracks the number of mentions that a research paper is receiving on mainstream platforms such as international online media and social media. Altmetrics shows the impact of a research publication outside the traditional academic citation metrics.

## **Analysis of team performance/delivery against those objectives and within the available budget**

Examples of how our strategic approach manifests through our communications plan include:

- Education – leveraging our final year medicine results day, open days, and conferring ceremonies as an opportunity to showcase RCSI's education experience.
- Research – profiling significant research findings.
- Society – identifying opportunities to demonstrate RCSI's commitment to society, through RCSI MyHealth in particular.
- Surgery – making informed commentary which influences public policy.

## **Summary of outstanding achievements**

### **Global reputation enhancement**

- The 2020 QS Subject Ranking results show that RCSI's reputation scores have increased, moving RCSI's School of Medicine from top 300 to top 250 and School of Pharmacy from 'not ranked' to top 250. This is a particularly strong outcome which was influenced by the RCSI Discover campaigns on sepsis and TB.
- We succeeded in driving the Altmetrics score for several key research papers. A paper on epilepsy moved from 13 to 383, a paper on the surgical management of cancer moved from 6 to 122 and a paper on TB moved from 5 to 133. Following the campaigns, these key research papers were in the top 5% of all research outputs scored by Altmetric and were classed as having a High Attention Score compared to outputs of the same age and source (93rd-99th percentile).
- We achieved 774 pieces of international media coverage during the period, up from less than 100 the year previous.
- For a digital campaign to communicate the evolution of RCSI's Department of Anatomy and Regenerative Medicine, the team produced a short piece of film which reached an audience of over 2.1m people through a targeted social media campaign.

## Research

- Parkinson's research – 16 national media items and 716 international media items.
- Sepsis treatment – 23 national media items and 36 international media items.
- Epilepsy seizure biomarker – 34 national media items and 165 international media items.

## Healthcare and Society

- RCSI MyHealth aims to position RCSI as a voice of authority on healthcare. A public lecture on cannabis was attended by 506 people with 319 joining in via live stream. Our social media campaign reached over 70,000 people. 275 people attended a public lecture on joint health. 180 watched the live stream and our social media campaign reached almost 247,000.
- The RCSI MyHealth expert directory was launched to the media in 2019, aiming to provide the media with access to trusted health information. Highlights include Irish Times opinion articles on cannabis and mental health, the flu vaccine and daylight savings time and an opinion article on The Hill on cerebral palsy. Our experts include Prof. Sam McConkey who has been a leading academic spokesperson on coronavirus with more than 200 appearances across all major media outlets. Highlights include two Prime Time appearances, Morning Ireland, the Claire Byrne Show, Newstalk Breakfast, Virgin Media News, and articles in the Irish Times and Sunday Business Post.

## Surgery

- We achieved significant media coverage which supported RCSI's President to influence public opinion and healthcare policy. Highlights include an Irish Independent opinion article on cervical screening, interviews in the Sunday Business Post, Medical Independent and on Newstalk's Pat Kenny Show and widespread coverage for a research paper on emergency abdominal surgery.

## Education

- Irish Times front page photo stories for Final Medicine Results Day, RCSI Open Day and Suaad Alshleh, Professor William C Campbell Bursary scholarship recipient.
- RCSI's simulated birthing mannequin gave birth on the Late Late Show, showcasing the immersive simulated teaching that RCSI offers.

## Internal communications

- The team led on the development and roll out of a digital platform for employee engagement in April 2019, transforming internal communications at RCSI from the centralised one-way delivery of information to a much more dynamic exchange of news and ideas between colleagues. There are now 1,147 active users on the platform (almost 100% of staff).

**KANTAR**

**PARAGON**



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