

# An interview with Associate Professor Jonathan McNulty

Jonathan McNulty is Associate Professor and Associate Dean in the School of Medicine at University College Dublin and a keynote speaker at ASMIRT 2022. Ahead of the conference in May, we asked Jonathan some questions about his career progression and future developments in the field of radiography.



## What is your current role?

I am an Associate Professor and an Associate Dean in the School of Medicine at University College Dublin. I have held many roles within the School of Medicine over the past 18 years but in my current role as Associate Dean for Graduate Taught Studies, I have responsibility for all postgraduate and continuing professional development activities across our school. We currently offer over 70 postgraduate programs and a wide range of CPD offerings across all areas of health care. Within UCD there are six constituent colleges, the largest of which is the College of Health and Agricultural Sciences with over 7000 students where I am currently the Vice-Principal for Teaching and Learning

and a member of the College Executive Management Team. At university-level, I am a member of the University Management Team's Education Group and a University Fellow in Teaching and Academic Development.

## How did you enter the profession?

In secondary school, I always had an interest in health care and considered several different professions. Ultimately, I started studying diagnostic radiography having almost missed out in securing a place on the only course in Ireland at the time, which took just 20 students each year. My back-up plan was to study in the United Kingdom, however, I was fortunate to get a late offer to join the program at UCD.

## How did earlier career choices lead you to the role you are in now?

On graduating from UCD with a Bachelor of Science (Honours) radiography degree, I commenced working in Beaumont Hospital in Dublin, a large university teaching hospital and national neurosurgical and renal transplant centre. I enjoyed my time working at Beaumont in a large radiology department and had

the chance to specialise in interventional radiology and MRI. Then in 2003, an opportunity arose to work as a lecture and clinical tutor on a half-time basis at UCD and I decided that the time was right for me to seek new challenges. For two years I continued to split my time between this new role and my clinical role at Beaumont Hospital. I saw some great potential opportunities with the academic role and was appointed to a full-time position at the university in 2005. Since then, I have not looked back and have continued to seek out and take on new challenges, always with the aim of doing my best with new roles and responsibilities. I guess this approach has led to me finding myself in my current leadership roles at school, college and university levels; it has also led to many leadership opportunities outside UCD with different international scientific and professional organisations.

## How did you prepare for your current role?

My approach would apply to any roles I have held, or currently hold, in that I always like to make sure I am fully up to speed with the role, responsibilities and remit of any position I might apply for. This usually involves advanced preparation, not being anxious about putting forward new ideas, and showing a clear commitment.

## What has been the most challenging part of your job?

I think the past two years since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic have been challenging for everyone; it has impacted on our professional lives (clinical, educational, research) and also on our personal lives. The past two years have been challenging for me with so many new problems needing solutions, the impact on staff and students across the university, the impact on research activity and on international events. I think we have all probably had major ups and downs during this time but in general, with supportive family and colleagues, we are managing these challenges as best we can!

## Can you tell us about the highlights of your time as President of the European Federation of Radiographer Societies?

My three and a half years as President has been the high point of my professional career to date. It allowed me to help influence and shape our profession across Europe, and beyond, in terms of our professional practice, education and training, and research. I had the opportunity to launch and deliver on new initiatives and projects for the Federation, to represent the Federation around the world and to meet like-minded, passionate radiographers which gives me great belief that, working together, our profession will go from strength to strength.

## What developments are you looking forward to in the next two to three years in the field of radiography? And further beyond?

Changes in radiography education, the growth in research activity being led by radiographers, embracing technological developments (including artificial intelligence), the promotion of our profession to the public and also among other professions, are all things that are happening now which are quite exciting. Educational institutions, professional bodies and individual radiographers all have a role to play in these developments and we should not stand back and wait for things to happen but rather we should embrace these opportunities and contribute to the growth of our profession.