

UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER

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ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND QUALITY ENHANCEMENT COMMITTEE

22 October 2020

Agenda Item 14.1

ANNUAL REPORT ON PRIZES AND AWARDS – ACADEMIC YEAR 2019/20

COVER SHEET

Presenter: Mr A G Faulkner

No action is required of the Committee.

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ANNUAL REPORT ON PRIZES AND AWARDS – ACADEMIC YEAR 2019/20

1 LIST OF PRIZES AND AWARDS

Total of 509 approved prizes and awards. They are distributed as follows:

Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences	123
Faculty of Computing, Engineering and the Built Environment	151
Faculty of Life and Health Sciences	114
Ulster University Business School	114
University-wide prizes	7

2 NEW AND DISCONTINUED UNIVERSITY PRIZES AND AWARDS

During the academic year 20 new prizes and awards were introduced. They are distributed as follows:

Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences	7
Faculty of Computing, Engineering and the Built Environment	6
Faculty of Life and Health Sciences	1
Ulster University Business School	6

During the academic year 18 prizes and awards were discontinued as follows:

Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences	5
Faculty of Computing, Engineering and the Built Environment	3
Faculty of Life and Health Sciences	3
Ulster University Business School	7

3 UNIVERSITY-WIDE AWARDS

Awards made

- a) Business and Professional Women UK Limited Travelling Scholarship (£500)

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, this prize was not awarded in 2020.

- b) Findlater Award in Social Studies (£300)

Seven submissions were received during academic year 2019/20. The prize was awarded to Ms Megan Dickson (Year 3, BSc Hons Health and Social Care

Policy) for her dissertation entitled, 'An Investigation into the Loneliness of Older People Living in Rural Areas'.

c) Greer Garson Film Award (£500)

Two submissions were received during academic year 2019/20. The prize was awarded to Mr Dermott Burns (Year 3, BSc Hons Animation) for his short film titled, 'Forest', described as follows: "through contrasting a vibrant virtual paradise with a dark reality, the film reflects upon humanity's ignorance to their destructive nature on earth; the innocence of youth and the indifference of adulthood".

d) Greer Garson Theatre Award (£500)

One submission was received during academic year 2019/20 which was regarded of sufficient merit for the award of the prize. The prize was awarded to Ms Caoimhe McCarron (Year 3, BA Hons Drama) for his original play script titled, 'He'll Protect Ye'.

e) First Trust Bank Convocation Undergraduate Student of the Year Award (£500)

The First Trust Bank Convocation Undergraduate Student of the Year Award is presented annually to a student who has demonstrated significant personal achievement or substantial contribution to the life of the University, its students or the community.

The 2020 award was made to Ms Jenny Lindsay who recently completed the BSc Hons Interactive Media.

During her first year, Ms Lindsay helped deliver the Generation Animation programme, a collaboration between the School of Communication and Media and two local primary schools. It was a highly successful programme winning the Best Voluntary Project of the Year at the UUSU Awards and securing a second round of funding. Ms Lindsay then completed a second year of delivering the programme in 2018.

While Ms Lindsay has profound hearing loss, this has never inhibited her appetite to learn or to achieve academically. In 2018 she undertook a student placement with the Community Engagement team within the Centre for Flexible Education at the Magee campus becoming an integral part of the team and further developing a wide range of interactive media skills. On completion of her placement year, she accepted an internship with the Community Engagement team which saw her continue to work on producing interactive media outputs two days a week during her final year at Ulster.

Ms Lindsay has undertaken every opportunity to refine her skills and to embrace all the learning opportunities available to Ulster students. In support of her future career ambitions, she also participated in a wide range of extracurricular activities through successfully completing the Ulster EDGE Excel Award 2020 and being highly commended for her efforts.

Ms Lindsay has also shown enduring commitment in combining her academic studies with her personal life, working with the Connemara ponies with her family and competing in horse riding competitions and events throughout Ireland. She was also a member of the winning dressage team representing Ulster University at the National Equestrian Inter-Varsities hosted by Trinity College Dublin in March 2019 and was awarded Half Colours by UUSU Sport and Ulster University as part of the Equestrian team.

f) John RE Scott Convocation Postgraduate Student of the Year Award (£500)

The John RE Scott Postgraduate Student of the Year Award is presented annually to a student who has demonstrated significant personal achievement or substantial contribution to the life of the University, its students or the community. The 2019 award (awarded in November of each year) was awarded to two students, a non-doctoral and a doctoral student.

The non-doctoral award was awarded to Ms Luisa Fernanda Romero Munoz, an MSc International Tourism Management student.

Given her passion for social impact, Ms Munoz has always been engaged in local volunteering initiatives and has travelled abroad to volunteer in projects and work activities in Brazil, the USA and across the Cauca region of Colombia where she was born and grew up.

Her volunteering experience, at home and abroad, led her to lead local initiatives contributing to peacebuilding in her country through empowerment of young people. The use of tourism to help heal the wounds of the conflict was a logical consequence of her volunteering experiences. She is co-founder of 'Get Up and Go Colombia', an NGO that sought to transform territories which were dominated by the armed conflict into cultural and gastronomic destinations for national and international tourists, contributing to the construction of peace in the region of Cauca through tourism as an engine facilitating social and economic progress, changing the image and stigma of these areas and encouraging tourists to visit them.

Ms Munoz was selected as one of the most talented and promising young entrepreneurs in Latin America and the Caribbean for the programme 'Young Leaders of The Americas Initiative' (YLAi 2017) by the US State Department as well as receiving other international recognition such as the Chevening Award funded by the UK Government's Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), AFS Prize for Young Global Citizens 2019 by AFS International in Canada, and recently, part of Generation Change Exchange with His Holiness The Dalai Lama by the US Institute of Peace (USIP).

The doctoral award was awarded to Mr Nadim Aitya in recognition of his research in Computational Neuroscience. Making a significant contribution to the emerging field of metacognitive sciences, he has developed the first biologically based computational brain model that encodes, in real time, decision confidence while accounting for change-of-mind behaviour, bridging the two previously separate fields of study. Presenting his research findings at major international conferences, he was also selected to attend the prestigious

Deep Learning and Reinforcement Learning Summer School in Canada. Nadim's work has also been covered in various media outlets and has led to subsequent collaborative work with the National University of Ireland Galway, facilitated by the Santander Mobility Award. The success of his doctoral research has culminated in him securing a post-doctoral research fellowship at the prestigious and world leading Max Planck University College London Centre for Computational Psychiatry and Ageing Research where, working alongside leading researchers, Mr Aitya will work on computational modelling of decision-making and its link to mental health disorders.

Aside from his academic achievements, and despite his busy schedule, Nadim is often proactive in supporting and mentoring students and organising extracurricular activities for the research group in Ulster University, including leading a research club. Overall, Mr Aitya has shown exceptional qualities in intellectual abilities, academic attainment, diligence, creativity, leadership and integrity and we wish him every success in his future endeavour.

4 PUBLICISING PRIZES

The following action was taken in 2019/20 to publicise awareness of University-wide awards among staff and students:

- (i) posters are forwarded for display to:
 - Faculties and Schools
 - Students' Union
 - University libraries
 - University Career Development Centre
- (ii) information is posted on:
 - Campus reception screens
 - Academic Office website: www.ulster.ac.uk/academicoffice/prizes.html
- (iii) information is included in the University's online student handbook, the Student Guide;
- (iv) information is included in a global email to all students;
- (v) a link is available to the prize's webpage on the Student Portal;
- (vi) regarding the McCrea Literary Award (awarded biennially) which is open to graduates and honorary graduates of the University, information is also forwarded to the Alumni Office for publication.

Regarding arrangements for the forthcoming year, no posters will be online, rather, a global email which contains the same information that would normally be included in the poster will be sent out to all students. The email will direct students to the Academic Office prizes webpage (as did the poster) which contains details of the faculty prizes and also a link to a prizes leaflet containing all details of the University-

wide prizes (which is currently being updated by the Creative Services Team). By this means, students will receive the same information (and indeed more) than provided by the posters normally put on campus notice boards.

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