

## DCU Showcased at Big Ideas 2012



Invent DCU participated in Enterprise Ireland's annual technology transfer gathering at the Big Ideas Showcase on 28<sup>th</sup> November. This event provides an opportunity for Irish universities and Institutes of Technology to get together and to demo their latest and greatest technologies to a wide audience that includes company executives, investors and entrepreneurs.

In recent years the Big Ideas Showcase has been hosted in some of Dublin's most impressive venues including the Convention Centre Dublin and Croke Park. 2012 was no exception, as the Aviva stadium provided an impressive backdrop. The event was heavily oversubscribed, a strong indication of the showcase's growing popularity despite the harsh economic climate.

**Richard Stokes, CEO of Invent DCU** delivered the keynote speech and set the tone for the event. He congratulated the Irish Technology Transfer system citing impressive statistics that compared very favourably to international benchmarks. He also commented on the challenging times that lay ahead and in particular the need for more progressive policies to encourage entrepreneurship in Ireland. Finally he congratulated Enterprise Ireland for their continued commitment and support in creating new technology businesses in Ireland and urged all the participants to build on the successful foundation.

The event followed the established format of providing a showcase area for each of the technology transfer offices, followed by presentations on twenty leading technologies spread across Life Sciences; ICT; and Manufacturing, Engineering and Energy. DCU was superbly represented by **Dr. Paul Clarke who presented Glycoselective Tools for the Life Sciences Sector (Prolegere)**.

**ProLegere** has developed a range of lectin molecules which can be used for both the analysis and purification of Biopharmaceutical drugs. By enhancing the efficiency and reducing the cost of Biotherapeutic production, these novel tools can help producers deliver safer and more effective drugs to patients. These lectin based tools can also find wider applications in the life sciences including applications in the field of biomedical diagnostics. The team is currently seeking individuals with expertise to help drive the commercialisation of the technology with a view to securing investment to support the Spin out of ProLegere from DCU in 2013.

As in previous years, Sean Sherlock TD, Minister for Research and Innovation was an enthusiastic participant and spoke glowingly of the great research and expertise that was on show.

Enterprise Ireland acknowledged the hard work of the research community through the awarding of a prize in each of the three major research categories. **DCU's Dr. Stephen Daniels** was one of the recipients for his pioneering research and commercialisation work in the Manufacturing, Engineering and Energy category.

While the obvious goal of any networking event is lead generation through one on one conversations with industry participants, there is always great benefit in technology transfer offices meeting up to compare notes, share opinions, discuss issues and generally exchange information. In keeping with this spirit of information sharing, Enterprise Ireland also provided some interesting and provocative speakers in Dr. Bill Lehr, a research scientist at MIT and Dr. Tim Jones Director of the Future Agenda Project. Both spoke of their experiences on new product innovation, which provoked healthy discussion and debate.

The Showcase closed late afternoon, with most attendees acknowledging that it was the best showcase in years and that the right balance had been struck between formal presentations and informal meetings and conversations.

*Pictured above at the Invent DCU Exhibition Stand are L to R: Paddy O'Boyle and Richard Stokes (Invent DCU), Minister Sean Sherlock (TD, Minister for Research and Innovation) and Dr. Keith O'Neill (Director, Lifescience & Food Commercialisation Group at Enterprise Ireland)*