

AIS ALUMNI WINTER NEWSLETTER



Welcome

A warm welcome to the **Winter Edition** of the AIS Alumni Newsletter.

The days might be getting shorter, but the list of things happening in the world of the AIS Alumni certainly isn't!

This month's newsletter brims with news of upcoming opportunities to showcase your talents, share your experience, and, of course, to connect with your fellow alumni. We hope you'll share in our excitement for all that is to come!

As always, be sure to follow our socials to keep up to date in real-time and remember that we are endlessly keen to hear your stories of striving and success, so don't be shy to drop us a line or tag us in your posts!

Gemma Kent, Chair of Engagement Sub-Committee



AIS Alumni Creative Writing Competition

We recently launched the fifth iteration of the AIS Alumni Creative Writing Competition and can't wait to receive your entries.

Based on feedback from Alumni, we have changed the structure of this year's competition to make it **easier** and **more accessible** to enter. The word count has been reduced to **600 words** for the flash fiction section, and we have added an exciting new poetry section with a limit of **20 lines**.

Be sure to mark Saturday morning, **7th of December**, in your diaries for the annual Creative Writing Workshop. At this free online workshop, award-winning authors Donal

Ryan and Sarah Moore Fitzgerald will share some creative writing advice and pointers ahead of the competition.

All competition information is available [here](#) and if you have any questions in the meantime, please email us at alumni@allirelandscholarships.com



2024 Winner Personal Reflection - Surnaí Molloy

"Winning the AIS Alumni Creative Writing Competition last spring was the most wonderful encouragement for me to keep writing. Having only recently set out to be a writer full-time, it really affirmed my decision. This was especially so as my two winning pieces were completely different (one was about experiencing vulnerability as a woman, and the other story was about a mouse).

"When I spend my time writing, I find it really easy to doubt the worth of what I'm doing. Having achieved recognition academically before, investing in creative work can feel indulgent, especially as it is so often unacknowledged. In light of this, even the existence of this award is a glorious validation of writing.

"It was a total joy to receive this award, and the entire experience has boosted and buoyed my writing practice even months later. On top of all this, the prize itself meant I could afford to get a puppy called Baloo, who now keeps me company while I write."

Surnaí Molloy, Winner of the Roger Downer Creative Writing Award 2024



RDS Higher Options

The All Ireland Scholarships Alumni Association was delighted to exhibit at the Irish Times Higher Options Exhibition in the RDS for the second consecutive year from 25th to 27th September.

Higher Options is Ireland's largest education expo and provides an opportunity for up to 30,000 students, teachers, parents and education providers to discuss further education and training opportunities for life after secondary school.

It was a pleasure to speak to so many enthusiastic young people about their future and in doing so build awareness for the All-Ireland Scholarships. We also spoke to many teachers, parents and guidance counsellors and had the Minister for Higher Education, Patrick O'Donovan TD drop by! We are most grateful to all of the volunteers who shared their personal stories and experiences at our stand and allowed us to exhibit for the three days.

We look forward to Higher Options 2025 and would love to see more Alumni join us on the stand from 17th to 19th September 2025.

EmerRose Kealy, Chair of Outreach Sub-Committee

AIS Alumni Mentorship Programme: Soft Launch!

We are incredibly excited to announce the launch of the All Ireland Scholarships Alumni Mentorship Programme!

The aim of this programme is to leverage the incredible pool of talent that exists within our community to provide professional guidance and insight to our Alumni across a range of sectors and stages of education.

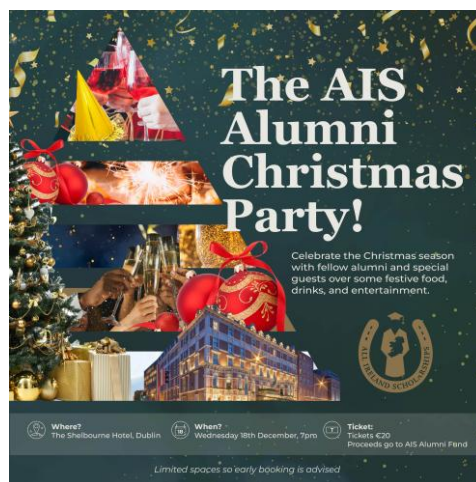
To help us ensure this new programme reflects the needs and expectations of our community, we will be running a pilot phase with 10 pairs of mentors and mentees, commencing in Spring 2025, before we roll the programme out to a wider pool of Alumni later in the year.

Keen to help us shape the future of this exciting new programme? We'll be inviting expressions of interest later next month, so keep an eye on your inbox (and maybe keep an ear out at the Christmas party too...!).

We hope this new initiative will be an invaluable opportunity for participants to connect with fellow Alumni and share their experiences in a new and exciting way. We can't wait to build it with you!

Gemma Kent & Alison Martin, Members of Engagement Sub-Committee

SAVE THE DATE - 18th December 2024



AIS Alumni Christmas Party: Personal Reflection

As we await this year's AIS Christmas party, I look back on the excitement of last year's event. From scientists discussing their lab findings to soon-to-be-doctors sharing their experiences of hospital training, as expected, the party was filled with lively conversation and fun. I connected with many Alumni, each one friendly and eager to share their story. One highlight was speaking to Alumni who helped send Ireland's first satellite into space. Another highlight was listening to Johnny Sexton, the Guest of Honour on the night, speak candidly about his career.

To make the night even more magical, the party was accompanied by good food and music. I also didn't pass up on the opportunity to take photos of my snazzy outfit in the big fancy mirrors of the Shelbourne Hotel!

The first time I went to an AIS Christmas party, I was quite nervous because I didn't know anyone. But my fellow Alumni welcomed me with open arms and now I look forward to getting caught up in the festivities every year. So, of course, I'm already planning my outfit for this year's Christmas party. And I hope to meet many new people again this year!

Marta Geszczak, Member of Engagement Sub-Committee