

Executive team meeting.

Apologies from:

Marta Geszczak, Health Sciences College Officer,
Sophie O'Leary, Arts Humanities and Social Sciences College Officer,
Tadhg Ó Maoldhomhnaigh, Oifigeach na Gaeilge.

Present

Sabbatical Officers: Conor Anderson (CA), Leighton Gray (LG), Sarah Michalek (SM),
Ruairí Power (RP), Hannah Bryson (HB), Carla Gummerson (CG).

College Officers: Míde Nic Fhinnlaoich (MNF), Liam Coyle (LC), Corey Power De Jong
(CPDJ), Lauren Maunsell (LM), Lucy Reid (LR), Emily Moore (EM)

CA: Let's begin with officer updates.

CA - Conor, Med students went live today. We did a press release, Conor will be speaking to a student who will give an interview to the Irish times. Conor has already spoken to the Daily Mirror and to Newstalk. He needs to update Smurfit students about the campaign too -
Conor will loop Liam on this topic.

- The Smurfit is not as far along their campaign as the Med students, but on the same path.
- Masters of Social work - this would fall under Lauren, Sophie and Carla - they also want to run a similar campaign as the Med students.
- There's one other one!
- So one school is live, one is getting ready to go live and a third is gearing up to go live.
- If anyone has further questions, let Conor know!

LG - another vet med student has been in touch on this campaign too, asking to get involved

- Leighton launched discord, with Sarah's help
- Met with TENI, and with Mick Barry (who wants to talk about a bill about nationality for immigrant children born in Ireland).

RP - Labour Youth will definitely be a good group to be involved in! It's an important legacy campaign of Cormac O'Braonain.

SM - Lots of workshops going on! The next one will be at 7 pm on zoom about making cocktails/ mocktails.

- LinkedIn optimisation workshop on Thursday.
- Posted about the new giveaway today and announced the winner of the last one.
- Jigsaw - on raising money, they are doing walking challenges to raise money. It's great, but we are already supporting the UCD 100, so they're very similar.

LR - yeah, a lot of clubs in UCD have just launched their Movember challenge - so, it's not likely people will want to join additional challenges.

SM - yeah, might leave it until later in the semester. But they are one of our chosen charities, so we should support them.

RP - in the meantime, we could do a basic raffle to raise a few quid this semester, and save the physical challenges for semester 2!

HB - maybe we can raffle off some left over vouchers from class rep training? If there are any left.

RP - I'll update now as well - Emily and some other students have been in touch with me worrying about going into lectures when they don't feel safe. He has a formalised email prepared for Jason Last, and he'll link in with Emily tomorrow on it.

CG - what kinds of classes are these?

EM - it would be mainly the lab components.

CG - just as a forewarning - these are seen as in line with the regulations. It's like the counselling placements in social work, they have to come in.

RP - the government has left space for discretion, and Mark Rogers has let schools make decisions themselves - but, the government advice is clearly saying that if something can be done at home then it should be. So, this is a big issue.

HB - keep me in the loop on this, so I can also raise this on committees.

RP - I'm also organising and promoting Dr Caroline West workshops - and another workshop about anxiety. A lot of students are coming to me about housing, I've a bit of a backlog on emails but doing my best. We have mental health content in the pipeline, and doing well on the disability front - accessible changing facilities, and they will be getting accessibility consultants in for any building refurbishments.

CG - starting my office hours for non-Smurfit students. I'm organising an event for post grads, for the 18th November, and a get together for post grad class reps.

- And more that will be in my Council report!

HB - I had 25 students contacting me about programme boards, it's good because we have about 32 seats. I want to sit down with the college officers and decide what to do about each programme board, so I'll be sending emails about that. I've already sorted the college of business with Liam, except for one seat that we've kept vacant to try and fill it with a girl, for gender diversity.

- Working with businesses is on hold for now due to COVID
- One thing that came across to me from class rep training is the quality that students are getting - some modules are doing super well, others not.
- A big issue for students is not being able to disconnect - lecturers email at all hours, even on bank holidays

RP - Jason Last said that we should make a submission to the UMT Education Group

HB - students mental health is being affected, they won't be able to study.

LG - one more thing, all the questions about by elections! Waiting for the Returning Officer to suss the situation out.

EM - I've been dealing with similar stuff that Ruairi and Hannah have been talking about, and due to hold a college council during the week.

HB - governors of UCD, we get an annual report on quality assurance - if we have questions which we want included in it, this is the time to think about it because the report is drafted in March.

LM - both myself and Sophie have been working with the class reps, preparing meetings and getting to know each other. They are organising stuff for Halloween to lift spirits, which is really nice. We're going to be setting up a meeting for them for an hour before council each week so they can ask us anything.

- One problem is trying to get the contacts of all of the class reps - I think we have about 3 /4 of them.

LG - I'll send that on to you!

LC - I've gotten onto the undergraduate business program board and filled the other seats. There is one opening left, so I'll try to encourage some girls to apply.

- Some of the students are finding the recorded lectures very beneficial - they're accessible, you can watch them at your convenience and pause and play at will. Some lecture recordings aren't being saved properly, so this needs to be addressed.
- Some more feedback is that students are finding break out rooms very beneficial, so that's good feedback to share in other colleges too. They're also enjoying interactive polls.
- There is a problem with students having multiple MCQs in a day - assessments and assignments can be rushed through in timetabling and that's an ongoing concern.
- Email bombardment at peak times too - Monday mornings can be mad.

LR - finding her feet and trying to reach out to people in the three schools. She's made contact with Ag students and Ag soc. Still struggling to find all of the relevant class reps, so a bit of help would be great! And to add my details to the website.

- I've reached out to the relevant student advisors too
- I've chatted with the new environmental campaign coordinator.
- I want to make sure that the hiccup that happened with a story on instagram doesn't happen again, so that we can foster a positive relationship with the Ag students.
- If any campaigns or posts are coming from the SU related to Agriculture or food, it would be great if they could be consulted with me just to make sure it's fact checked and fair in how it represents the sector. So I've joined the eco soc group and we're all connecting to share the same message.

LG - just wanted to say again that it was my bad!

LR - it's fine, this is an issue going on everywhere. It's just about trying to get accurate information out that's representative of the Irish context as well.

SM - I'd be very interested to work with Ag soc as well, so please do keep me in mind!

LR - yeah, Ag soc is on the ball and I've let them know that we have a bit of a budget available to support student activities. So yeah, I'll keep ye connected.

MNF - I can give an update next - so yeah, the law school seems chill and things are going okay. We had a college council and no major problems or complaints have come through. Erasmus seems to be smooth so far, people are reaching out to their host institutions.

- With programme boards, it's going along.
- Class reps are trying to organise events - they were wondering if they can make use of the SU zoom account.
- Issues with accessing materials and books and what not through online databases, so pushing away there.
- Everything else is Gucci!

CPDJ - one rep came to me saying that they had a serious problem and that they would go straight to Hannah, so hopefully that's alright.

- I have a fb group for all the reps - but the young reps don't like fb and the older reps don't like discord, and no one likes whatsapp - so that's something to figure out!
- Everything else is kinda okay.

LR - what is a college council exactly?

MNF - it's a meeting with the class reps in your constituency and to suss out what's going on and to prepare for programme boards and stuff.

EM - and need to be organised twice a semester!

CA - you can't fail, you can only succeed in this role! Drop me a line on fb messenger. For all of this stuff, you're all volunteers so I want to make sure you remember, you are students first and college officers second. Don't get stressed out.

- Anything to add?

RP - a quick one! Darryl Horan was talking about the nurses and he works with mandate, he asked would we be interested as an SU to run a panel discussion about unpaid nurses/ midwives/ radiographers. He has some speakers lined up and is linking in with Melissa Plunkett, and we are looking to support them. Will keep you updated!

EM - on that point, did you see the petition with student radiographers in UCD?

RP - might have missed that one! But I know they are active right now.

EM - yeah, there's one going around with some of my friends in second year of radiography, I can send it on to you!

RP - for sure, get us in touch! Woo

LC - something I wanted to bring up too, the extenuating circumstances blanket over UCD - what's UCD's stance on that?

- There was a lot of talk about arrangements or rules in place - well, we're in week 6 now and students are wondering what kind of protection will be there for them. The situation is the same as last semester, so I do think protections need to be in place.

CA - I've been sort of monitoring that fb group for no detriment - the movement is quite slow there. No one is emailing me and there has been no chatter among the higher ups in UCD about implementing anything.

- And ultimately, last year the policies that came in were not fully protective.
- So, my read on the situation is that students are maybe disillusioned, or they don't think it will be worth the fight

LC - I think they presume that the protection which was brought in the last time is there, but that's not the case.

- And from our staff student forum, it seems that students are struggling more than last term. The workload is heavier, it's more demanding when it's all online. So, maybe we should get UCD to send an email to all lecturers to make sure that they are once again lenient!
- There is a lot of anxiety out there. We need protections in place.

LR - I was just going to confirm - this links to the point on the inability to disconnect as well.

EM - yeah, a lot of students are coming to me as well, totally over worked, no proper disconnect, lecturers not being flexible at all.

- It's happening across the board, so I don't know what we can do.

CA - well, we can start making noise about it again and kick things into gear.

- I can email the registrar again to discuss this, and Jason Last.
- I don't believe that no detriment will be possible this term.
- I will say that we could get the covid 19 assessment guidelines, similar to the last ones, passed. But then again, did they work properly or not?
- I can also throw a post into that fb group.

RP - just to add a few points, after the last meeting we had with the deans and registrar.

- No detriment won't pass academic integrity was their line last time
- They have data to show that grades were up - but that doesn't necessarily mean that the policy worked, maybe lecturers were just more lenient.
- And, there does seem to be frustration in the group directed at the SU. We need to be very careful how we communicate, and not over hype what is achievable.

LC - it's week 6, if we act now, we're in good time to achieve something for students.

- I'm hearing that students are not motivated, they are disengaging and struggling to keep up. They haven't had any time in-person with their courses, and it's so clear that anxiety is growing. We need to act soon.

RP - just to add as well that the UMT and sabbats have a tricky relationship. If we could add signatures from college officers to a letter to them as well as the sabbats, it would be helpful!

LC - And a recommendation - look to other students unions and see what actions they're taking!

RP - I haven't seen anything recently on this subject.

EM - I have a mate doing physics in Trinity and they seem to be facing similar issues as we are - I will ask him if his SU are addressing their lab issues too!

RP - I will schedule that call for tomorrow at 1 pm, we'll reserve it for an hour and a half but try and get it done in an hour.

CA - Okay, if we have no further business, I will call this meeting to a close.