



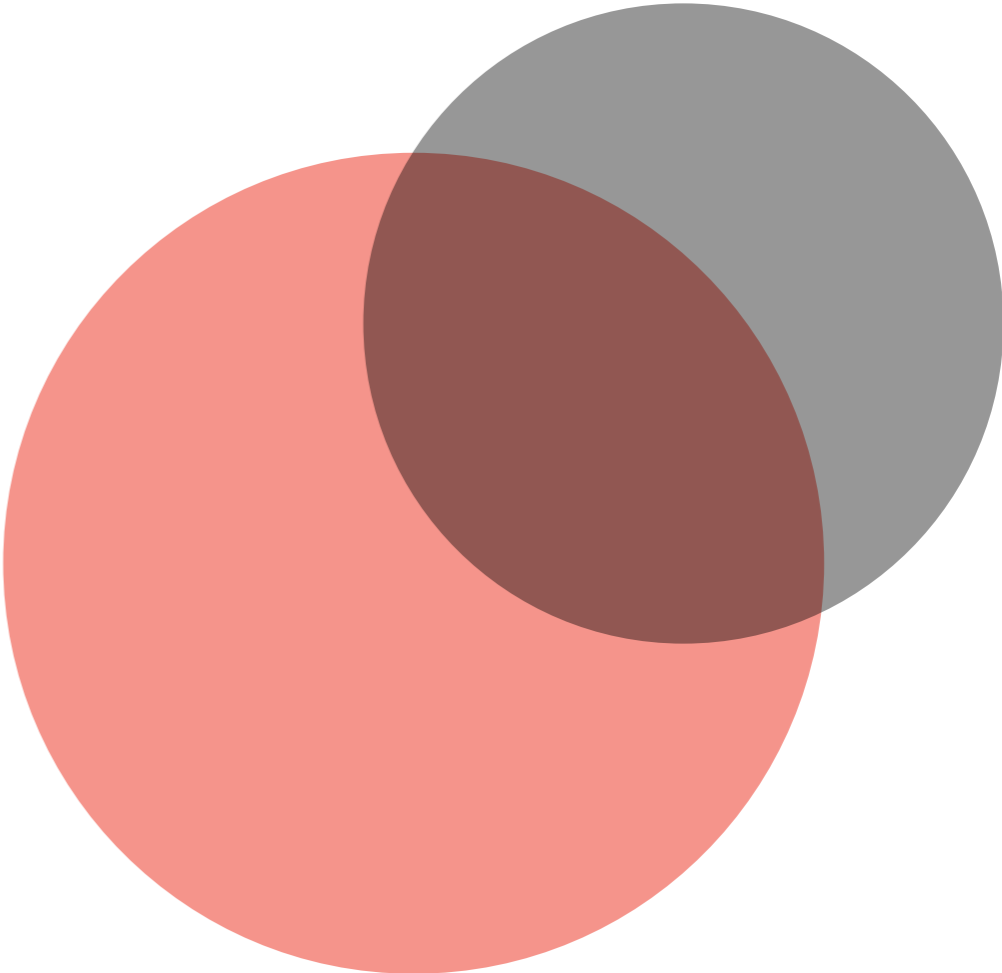
ANNUAL REPORT

2021/22



ANNUAL REPORT

UCD **STUDENTS' UNION**



ANNUAL REPORT

INTRODUCTION

Message from **The SU President** 4

OVERVIEW

Annual Report **Introduction** 6

Structure **Organisation** 8

About **UCD Students' Union** 9

Board of **Directors** 9

DEMOCRACY

Class **Reps** 10

UCDSU **Council** 11

CAMPAIGNS & OUTREACH

Return **to Campus** 15

Student **Accommodation** 17

Student **Supports** 18

Students and Staff **Against Commercialisation** 19

"It's Not Me **It's UCD**" 20

Pre-budget **Submission** 20

Gender-based **Violence** 21

Review of **Abortion Legislation** 21

Workers' **Rights** 22

National **Maternity Hospital** 23

COP26 23

Palestine **Solidarity** 24

Decriminalisation **of drugs** 24

EDUCATION

Library **Funding** 27

Library **Refurbishment** 27

Graduations **2021/22** 28

Exams **2021/22** 28

Student **Finance** 29

Mid-Term **Survival Packs** 29

Phd **Conference Fund** 29

Student **Visas** 30

Career **Development** 31

WELFARE

Great **Donate** 33

Re-imagining **Mental Health** 33

Partnership with **UCD AFC and Jigsaw** 34

SHAG **Week** 36

Harm **Reduction** 37

End **Period Poverty** 37

ENTERTAINMENTS

Charity **Empower the Family** 38

ENTS **Discount Cards** 38

ENTS **Workshops** 38

Mind, Body & **Soul** 39

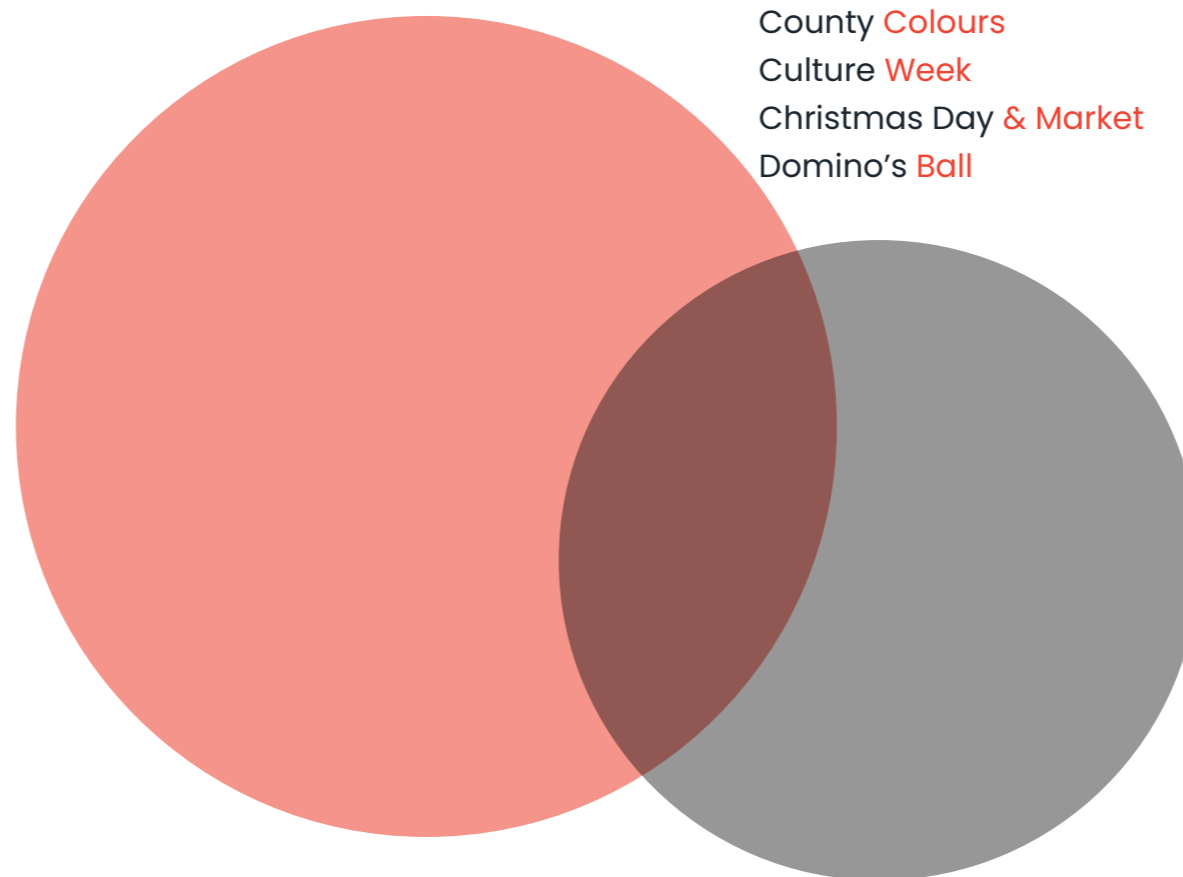
Battle **of the Bands** 40

County **Colours** 40

Culture **Week** 40

Christmas Day & **Market** 40

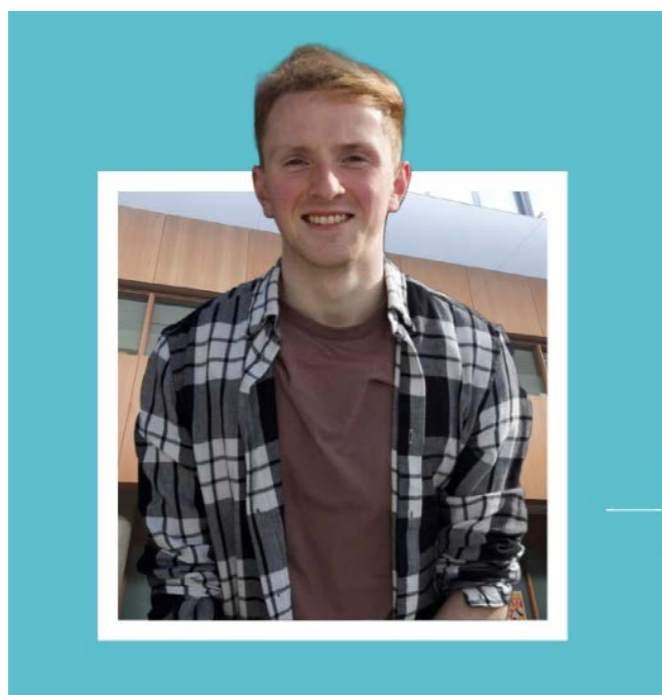
Domino's **Ball** 41



2021/22

WELCOME FROM
THE SU PRESIDENT

Ruairí Power



I had the privilege of being elected President of UCDSU at a time where students were just beginning to return to campus as COVID-19 infection rates declined. Our major focus was integrating as many people as possible into the Union structures and increase awareness among students as to how we can advocate on their behalf, and enable them to drive effective change for themselves.

We worked hard to successfully strengthen relationships with trade unions, political figures and units within the University. Similarly, we dealt constructively with University Management where possible, while also resisting the creeping commercialisation of UCD which threatens both the quality and accessibility of third level education.

I'm proud of the work of our team in both engaging students with the Union and securing several key wins.

We received a commitment to the replacement of the laissez-faire 2017 National Student Accommodation Strategy with the development of affordable "cost-rental" accommodation on college campuses, drew attention to the role of local authorities (Dublin City Council in particular) in converting student accommodation to short-term student lets, secured an expansion of SUSI eligibility for students impacted by distance calculation changes and held the largest protest demonstration on a the Belfield campus since the austerity era. The year also saw successful social events and fundraisers taking place, and hundreds of students being supported directly by the sabbatical team.

Student demands for high quality events and bespoke personal supports can present difficulties in managing resources, we had to walk and chew gum at the same time by keeping a steady focus on campaigning for broader structural changes. Our team was mindful of the roots of the student movement, and recognised that political activism must remain a core function of Students' Unions. The skyrocketing cost of living necessitates far greater buy-in from the student body going forward, and continued strengthening of links with trade union representatives.

As engagement with student activism on a national level has reached a low ebb and the threat of integration into university structures looms large, I am hopeful that this year's team will continue to build on a platform of widening the tent and empowering students to fight for equality of access to Higher Education, and tackling social inequalities.

RUAIRÍ POWER

Molly Greenough

President 2022/23

president@ucdsu.ie



I'm honoured to be leading UCD Students' Union this year and grateful to our members for trusting me to do so. Our students have been brilliant throughout the course of the Covid-19 pandemic, having demonstrated incredible grit, determination, and flexibility amid such uncertain times. As we navigate this first year back fully in-person, I hope students are able to dive head first into all UCD has to offer— from academics to athletics clubs and societies to the SU. The team and I have been hard at work planning a jam-packed year of events geared towards helping students get the absolute most out of their year, whatever way they choose to shape their student experience.

That being said, we can't ignore the difficulties students face in the best of times, let alone in the midst of an accommodation catastrophe and the worst cost of living crisis in decades. The Union has a vital role to play in demanding better for students at a local level and nationally.

As the largest stakeholder in any university, student interests should be at the heart of every decision made in the higher education sector. More broadly, it is a turbulent time for all within the UCD community and higher education, worsened by years of underfunding within the sector and the overall commercialisation of higher education.

Despite these difficulties, I would like to take this chance to extend our warm wishes and sincere thanks to every individual and entity across campus who UCDSU is proud to partner with in order to advocate for student-centric policies, as well as those who we work closely with to advocate for a fairer and more just society. We wouldn't be able to do the work we do without your support and partnership.

I am a firm believer in the importance of the work that UCDSU does in the context of UCD and beyond. My team and I are already hard at work to build on the strides made by our predecessors and in particular, by last year's team, which I am extremely proud to have been a part of. I hope that you will enjoy reflecting upon the work done by the Sabbatical Team of 2021/22. It was a privilege to work under Ruairí's leadership and alongside Carla, Darryl, Aoife, and Sarah.

Once again, I'd like to extend my thanks to every person who supports the work of the Union. I look forward to the opportunity of updating you on all that's accomplished by the team in the 2022/23 academic year.

Is mise le meas,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Molly Greenough'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

ANNUAL REPORT INTRODUCTION



An Emerging Pandemic Perspective

This report details the activities undertaken by UCD Students' Union in preparation for and during the 2021-22 Academic Year. If last year could be characterised as making the most of a really tough set of circumstances, then this year most definitely felt stuck somewhere in between those tough circumstances and a vision of what was once very familiar pre-pandemic.

It was a year spent navigating the threat of Coronavirus while establishing the organisation's on-campus presence once more. For our members new and returning, there was arguably even more uncertainty about their immediate future than there was in the wake of the last financial crisis. While 2021-21 naturally saw almost all of the public focus fixate on COVID-19, the staggered return to campus brought with it a return of the 'bread and butter' issues that the student movement locally and nationally simply must address. If students and young people in particular are to navigate a broken and unaffordable education system, the worst housing crisis in the history of the State and the very present threat of climate breakdown then students' unions must at long last come of age.

“ UCDSU is proud of its history of advocating for a fairer and more equitable education system both on-campus and nationally. ”

The SU has a unique dual role in that it works in partnership with the University to form part of a quality student experience, and in representing the unfettered voice of students and holding the University accountable where necessary. As the organisation embarks on a new strategic cycle, UCDSU intends to build on almost half a century of making an impact within the UCD community and wider society by staying true to our motto, which is “Empowering students”.

ABOUT UCD STUDENTS' UNION

2021-22

Founded in 1975, UCD Students' Union is the democratic, student-led vehicle through which UCD students advocate for a fairer and more equitable education system both on-campus and nationally.

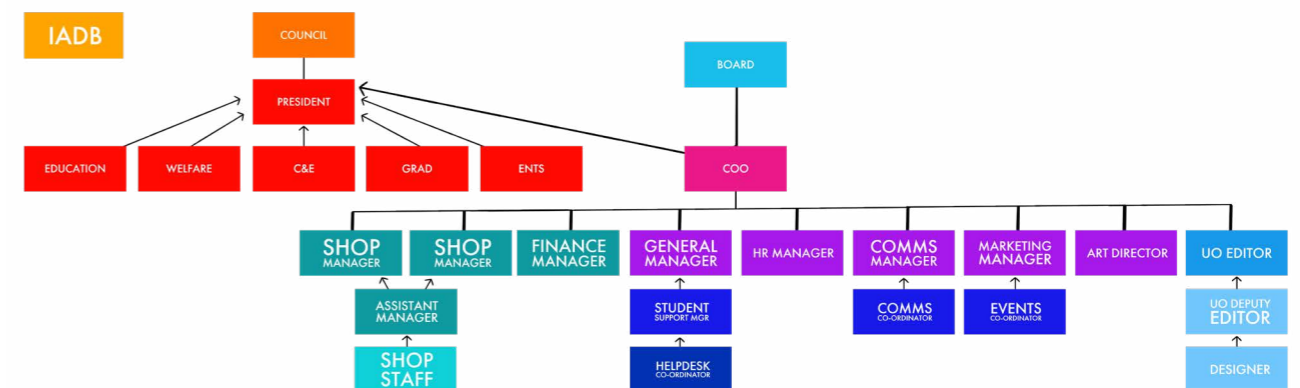
role in the societal change demanded to ensure that our members can live in a fair and just society. The SU's vision for higher education and the student experience is one that is accessible for all, regardless of status or background.

The SU, through its elected officers and network of class representatives, represents the unfettered on all matters affecting their student experience, inside and outside the lecture halls.

As per Article 5 of the UCD Student's Union Constitution, the CLG exists to ensure prudent financial management and oversight of the Union. It is comprised of an Independent Chairperson, the UCDSU President and a number of directors.

Locally, we work within the university's frameworks as the officially recognised representative of the 33,000+ registered UCD students on issues such as course content, exam regulations, disciplinary regulations and how the University spends its money. Nationally, the SU has a proud tradition of playing an active

The current membership of the UCDSU CLG Board is: Bridget O'Donoghue, Conor Anderson, Elaine Russell, Gerry McNally, Joanna Siewierska, Leanne Caulfield (Chair), Matthew Rose-Nel, Orla Barry Molly Greenough (Ex-Officio as current SU President).



UCDSU
DEMOCRACY

This section of the Annual Report details the wide range of campaigning and outreach spearheaded by the 2021/22 Executive Team. It demonstrates the extent to which UCD Students' Union is committed to supporting every step of the student journey.

To wrap up term, UCDSU ran a reflective survey of Class Reps from 2021/22, allowing the organisation to better understand how class reps identify with and interpret their role. This will allow the SU to deliver better training and provide more professional, ongoing support to the Class Rep system. Furthermore, it is desired that this will aid in retention and allow for greater participation from students who have not come through the CAO route.

While there is room for improvement in terms of how the SU provides on going support to Class Reps, overall Class Rep satisfaction is high. From 54 respondents, 43% of Class Reps from 2021/22 gave their experience a '4', while 24% gave it a '5'. Over 70% of respondents returning to UCD for the coming academic year would consider running again over 80% of respondents would recommend running for class rep to someone looking to get more involved in college life.

DEMOCRACY
CLASS REPS

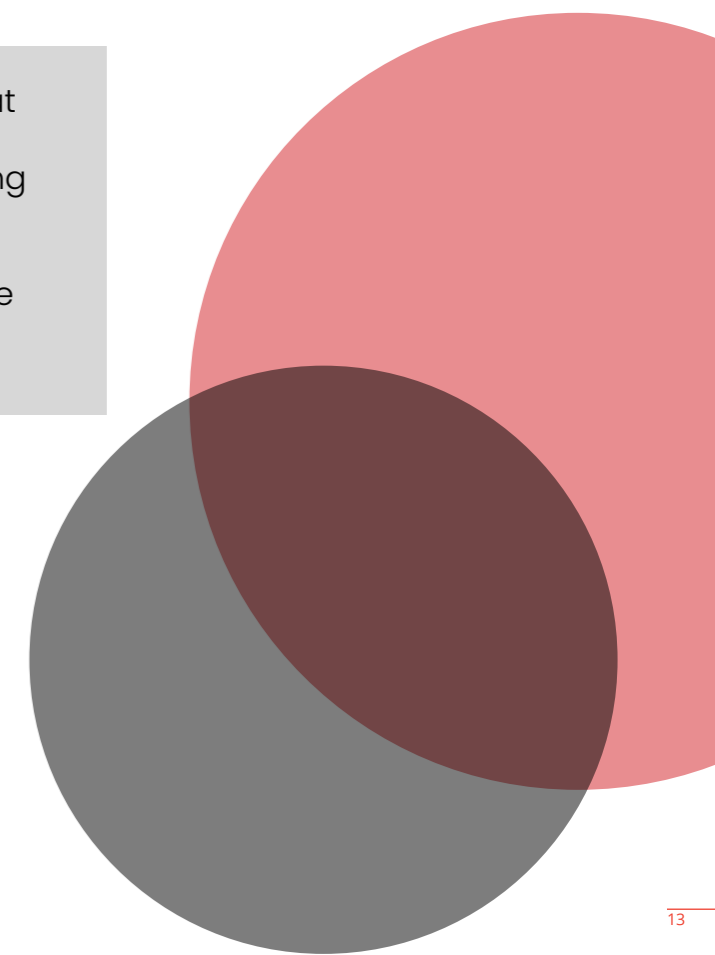
Returning to the on-campus experience brought with it a raft of challenges, no more so than with the organisation's desire to maximise member participation. UCDSU believes in the importance of a democratic campus and therefore must itself place a heightened value on democracy amongst the UCD student body.

Our annual drive for the election of Class Reps forms the basis for the entire year. They are elected at the beginning of each academic year by their peers to represent different courses, schools, and stages across the UCD student journey. They receive training to ensure that the student voice is at the heart of life in UCD, both inside and outside the classroom. Class Reps also sit on UCDSU Union Council (which meets every 2 weeks during term) to represent the views of their classmates, to help to steer Union policy and to hold the elected Officers accountable. Class Reps who receive training by UCDSU are best placed to ensure that students get the chance to provide feedback on the university's academic and quality assurance mechanisms and to escalate issues to the Sabbatical Team should the matter require it. The organisation is committed to building on this strong tradition and ensure that the student voice can shine through every aspect of the university's delivery of higher education to students.

DEMOCRACY
UCDSU COUNCIL

Following the election of UCDSU Class Reps at the beginning of October, the 2021/22 UCDSU Council session kicked off in earnest. Following a period where meetings had to take place entirely online, this year's session opted for a hybrid model where people who were unable to attend could still partake digitally.

The following motions on the next page were passed following debate by UCDSU Council in 2021/22.



The following motions were passed following debate by UCDSU Council in 2021/22:

Motion Subject	Mandate
Boycott of the Irish Times	That UCDSU joins the boycott of The Irish Times.
Boycott of the Irish Times	UCDSU will not share, promote or distribute any articles published by The Irish Times including on social media.
Boycott of the Irish Times	UCDSU will not stock, advertise or work in any commercial way with The Irish Times.
Boycott of the Irish Times	That the Sabbatical Officers consider the affect The Irish Times has had on trans students when providing any future comment to them and that they work with other Student Unions on a coordinated approach to this issue.
Boycott of the Irish Times	That the President revert to council should the rhetoric in The Irish Times deteriorate.
Boycott of the Irish Times	With respect to the provisions of the UCDSU constitution (i.e. section 7.7), if the Trans Writer’s Union’s demands are met an item for approval may be brought to council by the President to end the boycott.
Boycott of the Irish Times	That the Sabbatical Officers write to Paul O’Neill, the editor of The Irish Times, to communicate UCDSU’s stance.
Provision of Food Bank	That the UCDSU sabbatical team, particularly the President and Welfare Officer, work alongside relevant external and internal authorities to support the implementation and maintenance of a food bank.
Raising Awareness on the Use of Segregated Waste Bins on Campus	That the UCDSU sabbatical team, particularly the President and Campaigns & Engagement Officer, work alongside relevant external and internal organisations to educate students on the proper use of segregated waste facilities.

Raising Awareness on the Use of Segregated Waste Bins on Campus	That the Environmental Campaign Coordinator and Campaigns & Engagement Officer utilise the SU’s social media to achieve this.
Support for the decriminalisation of the recreational use of drugs and legalisation of cannabis	That the President, Campaigns & Engagement Officer, and Welfare Officer actively lobby and campaign in support of decriminalisation of the recreational use of drugs and legalisation of cannabis for recreational and medical use along with relevant organisations such as Students for Sensible Drugs Policy (SSDP) and NORML Ireland.
Signing up to the National Housing & Homelessness Coalition	University College Dublin Students’ Union will sign up the National Housing & Homelessness Coalition so long as they stand within the principles of UCDSU.
Signing up to the National Housing & Homelessness Coalition	The Campaigns and Engagement Officer and President will work with and promote the campaigns by National Housing & Homelessness Coalition.

CAMPAIGNS & OUTREACH

Union Council has mandated UCDSU to involve the UCD student voice in a range of civil society campaigns. This section of the Annual Report details the wide range of campaigning and outreach spearheaded by the 2021/22 Executive Team. It demonstrates the extent to which UCD Students' Union is committed to supporting every step of the student journey and demonstrates the broad range of issues that UCD students care about and want to see action on. UCD students have long stood side by side with other parts of society to push for needed change. The 2021/22 Academic Year

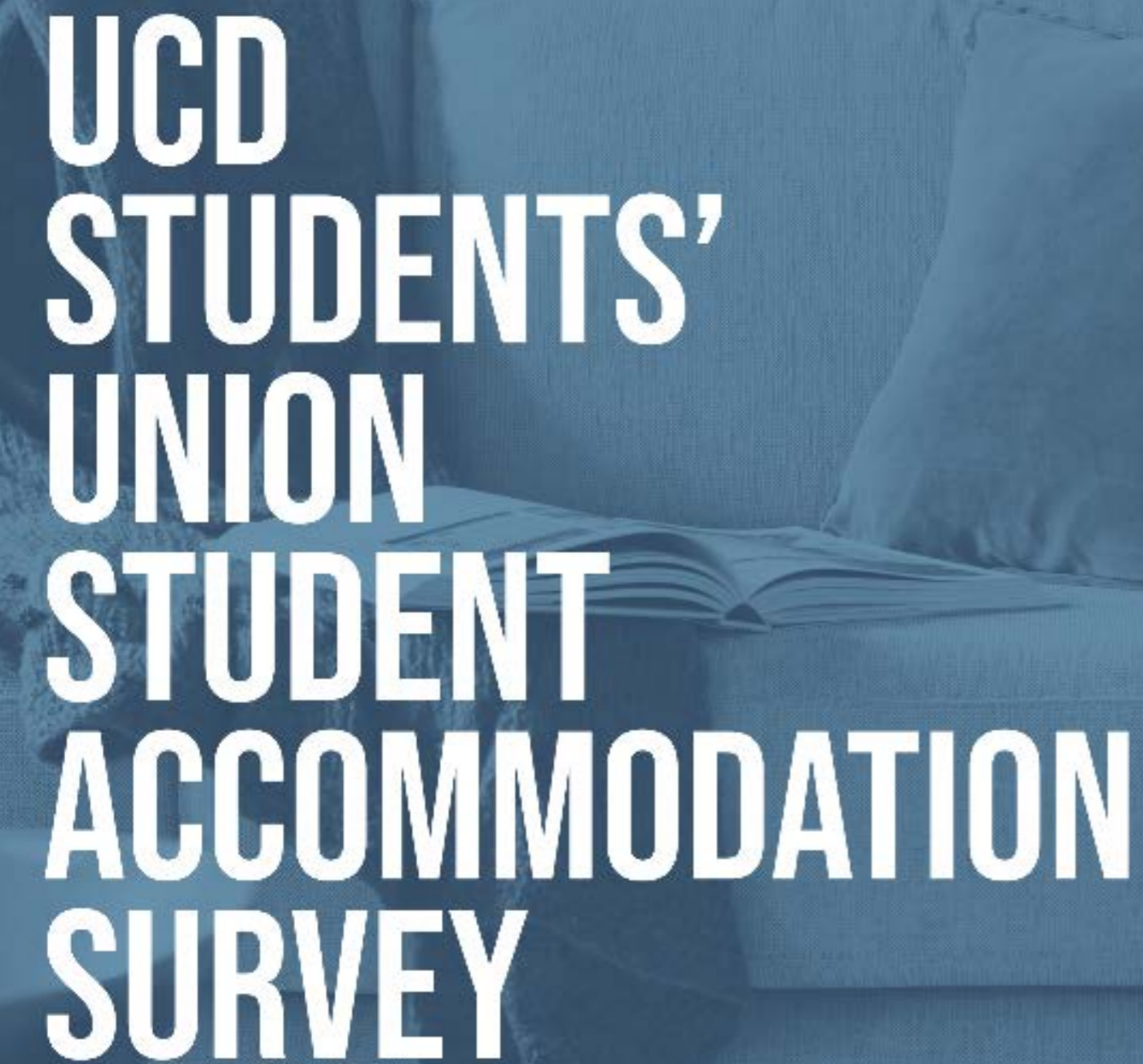
RETURN TO CAMPUS

The return to campus has been a major challenge for everyone in the UCD community and of course, for the critical mass of students whose college experience has been confined to a computer screen for the better part of two years. In September 2021, we partnered with [insert UCD entities here] in welcoming UCD students back to campus. For many returning students, this was their first foray into an on-campus experience. When we felt that the Government was dragging its heels over preparing for the return, we wrote to Minister Harris to stress the need for clarity regarding the return to UCD campus. We called for the publication of clear guidelines so that students could plan effectively for the upcoming term.

During Orientation Week, our team of Officers and volunteers interacted with over 30,000 students at our stalls, events and in lecture addresses [confirm figure as it seems awfully high]. We met students with what felt like an endless supply of freebies and goodies sourced from partnering with the likes of KIND bars, Lucozade, FM 104, Trebor Mints, Durt Vintage Clothing, 48 Ireland and Domino's Pizza.

While UCDSU was proud to play a role in ensuring that the UCD community response to the pandemic and staggered return to campus, the organisation has grown aware of the need to jump-start the student experience. There is no escaping that every facet of college life is still suffering a degree of overhang from COVID-19 and that this brings with a whole raft of challenges for the organisation and for every other entity within UCD and the wider higher education landscape, particularly in respect of engagement.

The so-called 'normal' that those used to the on-campus experience long to return to is not something that will be familiar to a majority of UCD students. Large parts of this academic year were navigated with COVID-19 protocols and public health restrictions still in place. In the Spring, UCD Students' Union joined calls by the IFUT trade union to support the continuation of the mask-wearing requirements for the remainder of the academic year in teaching settings. Throughout the academic year, we also distributed in excess of 20,000 antigen tests to the UCD community. Looking ahead to 2022/23, UCDSU's newly elected team is already confident that the groundwork laid by all across the UCD Community in 2021/22 bodes well for building on this engagement reset.



UCD STUDENTS' UNION STUDENT ACCOMMODATION SURVEY

STUDENT ACCOMMODATION

- Successive UCD Students' Union teams have been to the fore in campaigning for a change of approach in respect of the availability of suitable housing that can support students who come to UCD and hope to shape their futures. This took place in many forms during the 2021/22 Academic Year and the fight took place on-campus as well as nationally.
- The Students' Union kicked off term time by stating its opposition to purpose-built student accommodation being converted into short-term tourist accommodation. Following some shady correspondence from the CEO of Dublin City Council, in which he suggested in bad faith that students' unions get involved in the building of accommodation, the Executive led a number of students to a protest outside the DCC Headquarters on Wood Quay. This brought about an interjection from the Minister for Further & Higher Education Simon Harris, who agreed with UCDSU that dismissive and sarcastic comments do not help matters. Government progress has been nowhere near fast enough for UCD students but this was one of a number of clear signs that the student perspective on this issue is starting to make sense and that gradually, policymakers are losing faith in the developer and market-led approach to student accommodation. As per our Council policy, UCDSU also fed into the efforts of the National Housing & Homeless Coalition throughout the year.
- The volume of peer-to-peer support offered to students in relation to their accommodation did not see a drop off at any point in the year. While many cases just required one meeting or one connection with another service, over 350 of these required more than one meeting with our Welfare Officer and Accommodation Support Officer. Officers also worked hard to understand the experience of students living in on-campus accommodation. Regular information sessions on sourcing accommodation were also held, both in-person and online. Further to this, we were constantly taken aback by how many students tuned up to our Town Halls on the student experience as renters and commuters.
- Such was the scale of the accommodation crisis in December 2021 that the SU opted to roll out a survey to students. The results and the feedback were beyond what we could have possibly imagined, with students in all sorts of living arrangements reporting that their current accommodation, or the pursuit of it, had had a negative impact on their education, their student experience, and their mental health. The results of the survey are included in an Appendix at the back of this report.

963 students

Reimagining
Mental Health:
The Art of Living
in Challenging
Times

UCD
STUDENT SUPPORTS

UCDSU is continually exploring how our peer-to-peer support offering can work even better with support networks on-campus. Our ability to give relevant, timely and appropriate peer-to-peer support is based on a tradition of working in partnership with the various student support entities within the University. Further to this, our representatives work hard to stay attuned to the performance of the university in this space and spent much of the 2021/22 Academic Year advocating for an increase in vital supports, such as that of the UCD Counselling Service.

STUDENTS & STAFF

AGAINST COMMERCIALISATION

Every day, UCDSU is working in partnership with the University in a whole range of capacities, such as upholding standards in academic and quality assurance, the rolling out of strategic plans and the harnessing of a quality student experience. The organisation's preference will always be to work in partnership wherever possible, while maintaining our tradition of speaking out where we feel like our and the University's vision for higher education and the student experience do not align. In 2021/22 we were proud to advocate and campaign alongside the staff representative trade unions in UCD, articulate a need for UCD and higher education in general to reverse the creep of commercialisation and ensure that the needs and interests of staff and students come first.

**DECOLONISING
IRISH ACADEMIA**



"IT'S NOT ME,
it's UCD"

On Valentines' Day, UCDSU hosted a protest along with the UCD staff unions in a showcase of love for the University. The protest called on the University Management Team to take action on issues raised by successive teams of elected Officers. Over 400 students turned up outside O'Reilly Hall to hear speeches from students, Postgraduate workers and lecturing staff in order to highlight some of the changes needed in order to rekindle the love affair between members of the UCD academic community and their university.



GENDER-BASED
Violence

In the wake of the tragic murder of Ashling Murphy in January 2022, and to stand against gender-based violence as a community, UCD Students' Union and UCD Staff came together to organise a vigil against gender-based violence on campus. It's our hope that the UCD community can continue to come together around this pervasive issue.

PRE-BUDGET
Submission

The team issued a call out to students asking them what they would want to see in a UCDSU Pre-Budget submission and then went about putting it together. In it, UCDSU called for the following:

- Administer affordability criteria for all future Housing Finance Agency allocations, with a minimum of 50% of constructed builds ringfenced for means-tested cost rental accommodation.
- Doubling capital investment through HFA to €150 million.
- Replacement of the national Student Accommodation Strategy (2017).
- Commencement of a 3-year emergency rent freeze.
- Convening of a review group to examine/update provisions of Urban Regeneration and Housing Act (2015) and the introduction of an immediate vacant property tax.
- Implement Kenny Report recommendations on compulsory purchase of hoarded land.
- Expedite updated Residential Land Availability Survey.
- Creation of a custodial model Deposit Protection Scheme.

REVIEW

Abortion Legislation

UCDSU made a submission to the legislative review of the Termination of Pregnancy Act (2018). Guided by a policy voted in by our Class Representatives at a 2022 Council meeting, our Gender Equality Campaign Co-Ordinator Niamh Scully took the lead on a consultation of students to feed in to our submission. We were assisted by Amy Hassett of Disabled Women Ireland and Dyuti Chakravarty, PhD Candidate in the UCD School of Sociology. Our submission highlighted the requirement for full decriminalisation of abortion in all circumstances, abolition of the mandatory 3-year waiting period, equitable regional access to services, secular provision of care in public hospitals and expansion of telemedicine options.



EMPOWERING YOUNG WORKERS TODAY - WITH LOUISE O'REILLY TD

THURSDAY 11th

4 PM, RED ROOM

For our keynote speaker this year, Louise O'Reilly Sinn Féin's Spokesperson on Enterprise, Trade & Employment will be addressing UCD Students' Union on how to empower young workers today



UCDSU ANNUAL UNION WEEK

WORKERS'

Rights

2021/22 was a year in which the elected team foregrounded the natural link between our rights as students and our rights when we venture into the workplace. In June, we supported a protest against exploitation on the Government Pathways to work scheme. UCDSU joined the call for the Government to implement the full 10 recommendations of the JobBridge Report and ensure that all employees on the scheme are provided with a living wage.

In November, UCDSU supported a demonstration organised by the Irish Nurses & Midwives Organisation (INMO) calling for the publication of the McHugh Report on compensation for students on placement.

Despite all the calls for proper payment made throughout the pandemic, student nurses and midwives are still grossly undervalued by the State and the SU will continue to stand with them. Any (overdue) pay increases must be backdated to properly compensate students who have worked throughout Covid-19 in our hospitals. Any (overdue) pay increases must be backdated to properly compensate students who have worked throughout Covid-19 in our hospitals. November also saw our Trade Union Week take place. As part of this, we ran an 'Introduction to the Irish Nurses & Midwives Organisation' session, a talk on 'Young Workers & Unions' and welcomed Louise O'Reilly TD (Sinn Féin and former SIPTU Official) to give an address on 'Empowering Young Workers Today'.

NATIONAL

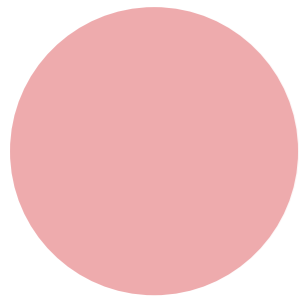
Maternity Hospital

UCDSU joined the 'Our Maternity Hospital' campaign committee in December 2021. The engagement on our side was headed up by the Campaigns & Engagement Officer, whose focus was primarily on connecting the issue to students and the wider UCD community. UCD will have a role in providing students for placement here, as the maternity hospital is connected to UCD through its ties to St Vincent's Hospital. UCDSU supported the campaign by aiding in two demonstrations, providing P.A. systems and speakers attending over 10 committee meetings and printing a significant amount of their leaflets, posters and banners. The UCDSU President also spoke at a demonstration.

COP26

Global Action

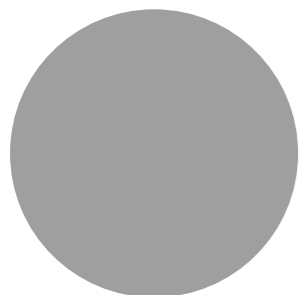
As term kicked off, climate activists across Ireland were beginning to mobilise for a day of Global Action ahead of the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference, more commonly referred to as COP26. Our Campaigns & Engagement Officer attended a number of meetings between August and November, was appointed to the organisers group and was made a chief steward on for the day of action. The UCD Campus was postered for the day of action and a crew of around 40 UCD students were involved with raising awareness around campus the week before it. Part of a class project around sustainability contributed most). The Campaigns & Engagement Officer also spoke at the media launch and on behalf of students at the rally, which was attended by roughly 5,000 people. UCDSU made a donation of €500 to the coalition to cover the



PALESTINE

Solidarity

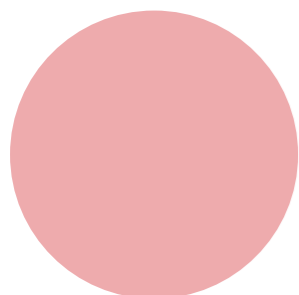
As part of our mandate to support the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement, members of the team attended a demonstration outside of the Dáil in June calling for an end to the forced demolition of Palestinian homes and ethnic cleansing in Silwan.



DECRIMINALISATION OF

DRUGS

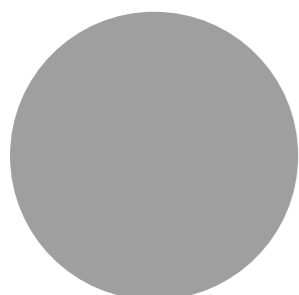
In line with UCDSU policy, we supported UCD's chapter of Students for Sensible Drug Policy at a peaceful, pro-cannabis demonstration in August 2021.



STUDENT

VISAS

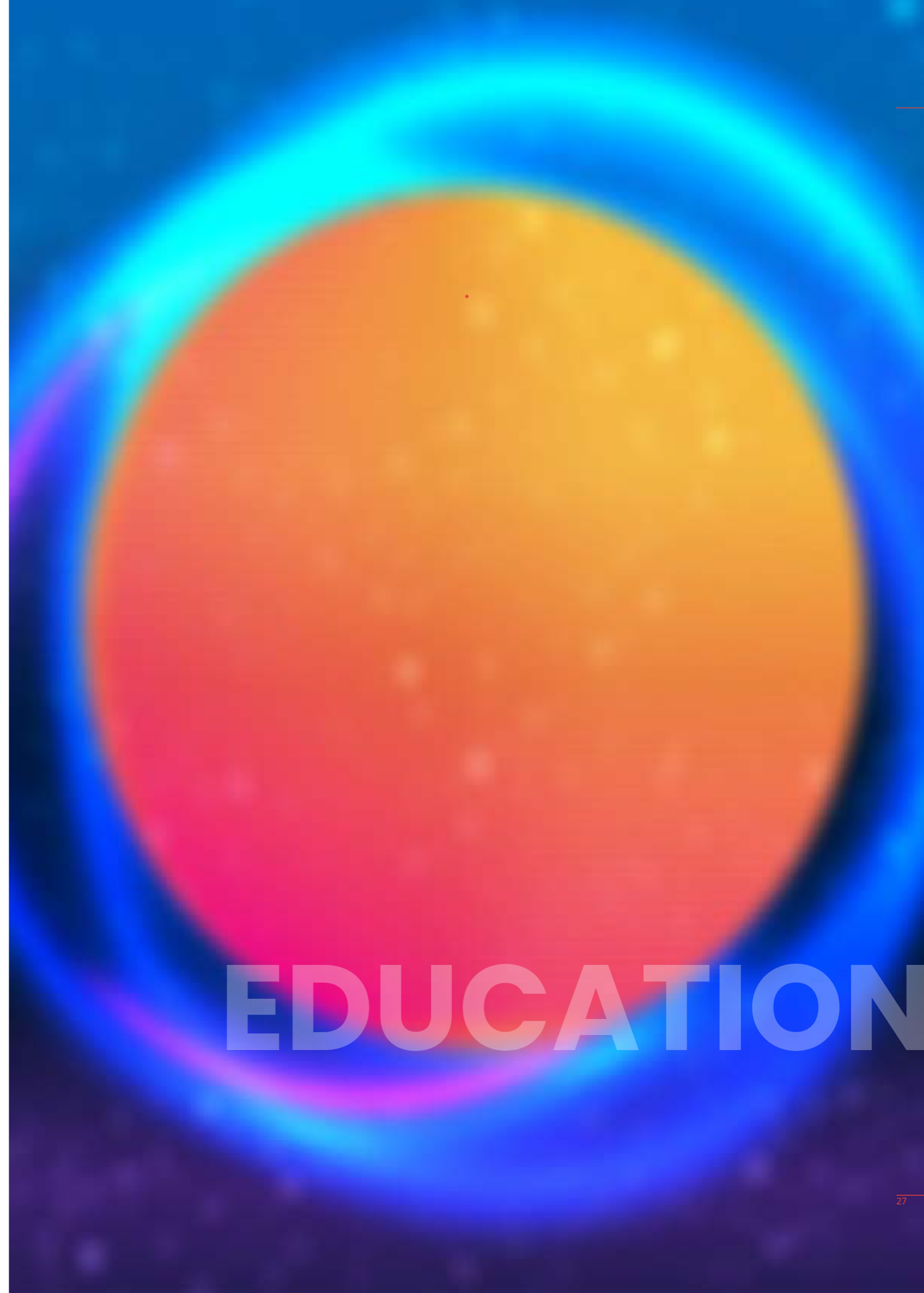
Sabbatical Officers held a number of meetings with different members of the Students' Union about the issue of student visas. While this mainly affects the ability of some students to source employment directly after finishing their course, the team also discussed ways in which we can continue to lobby government so that these students are also free to put themselves forward for full time roles in the annual UCDSU Elections.



SUPPORT FOR

UKRAINIAN REFUGEES

Upon seeing the horror of the war in Ukraine unfold, UCDSU lent its support to an anti-war demonstration organised by students on-campus. UCDSU also supported Vostok SOS, a Ukraine-based non-governmental organization (NGO) dedicated to assisting areas of conflict within Ukraine, through our Ukrainian Drive in the UCDSU Shops.



EDUCATION

Library

21/22

LIBRARY **FUNDING**

One of the first tasks for 2021/22 Sabbatical team was to work with UCD Library to push the University to increase their funding in order to ensure that the Library could continue providing adequate opening times for students and online access to relevant journals and academic sources.

During the pandemic, the library, as one of the few open units on campus, became a lifeline for students who needed somewhere on campus to study and do their work, as well as for those at home who needed access to digital sources in order to complete their studies for the year. Knowing how central fit-for-purpose library resources are for student success, the Sabbatical Team pushed for an increase in funding to ensure the library could continue to support UCD students throughout the 2021/2022 year. With the library being such an important part of campus life it is vital the SU continues to push for greater funding and attention to be paid to this unit.

LIBRARY **REFURBISHMENT**

UCDSU were invited to be a part of the UCD Library Refurbishment project. The Education Officer and Graduate Officer sat on the relevant working groups and worked with the Library in order to ensure that ample student feedback was used to help inform the design process; including the type of seating arrangements and materials students wanted to see.

The Refurbishment project is a good example of the work UCDSU can do with relevant student focused units on the campus such as UCD Library to get student feedback and opinions to ensure their plans centre the student voice. The hope is with a successful refurbishment of the third floor other projects will begin on other floors in James Joyce and in other libraries across the campus to ensure students are being given the best resourced library they can.

EDUCATION

GRADUATIONS

2021/22

In the summer of 2021 the Sabbatical team received a number of emails and queries from students about the 2021 graduation ceremonies. The SU President spoke regularly with the President of UCD in order to communicate what we were hearing students wanted to him and to ensure we were giving students the most up to date information about the ceremonies as possible. UCDSU were also involved with the working group which organised a reunion on campus for those who did not get an in person graduation ceremony in 2020 which was held in June of 2022 with a speeches in O'Reilly Hall and a celebration afterwards on campus. Graduations are a vital and symbolic part of a students time in UCD so it was important that the SU worked with the university to ensure both events were successful.

After 2020 saw little to no graduations for students, the Students' Union worked alongside the President of UCD to make sure that in 2021, those that completed their degrees would receive the day they deserved. Over 1500 students were conferred. We also worked with the conferring unit and alumni unit to ensure that those from 2020 would also get a celebration. In June 2022 UCD, would go on to stage a big celebration on campus for everyone who's graduation was impacted by COVID-19.

EXAMS

2021/22

With UCD returning to on-campus teaching, the return to in person exams in the RDS was expected. In the lead up the trimester one exams in December 2021, COVID-19 cases began to increase and the question of whether or not to continue with in person exams or move to online exams was debated across campus. Sabbatical Officers raised concerns we were hearing from students to members of the university staff from those in the Assessments Unit and members of management such as the Registrar. With cases continuing the rise many exams went online but the issue of what was to happen if a student who still had one of the few exams in person contracted COVID-19. The Sabbatical team pushed to ensure that the emergency COVID-19 specific extenuating circumstances policy would be as wide reaching as possible and ensure that it would cover those who contracted COVID-19, were close contacts or suspected they had the virus could avail of the extenuating circumstances alongside those who were vulnerable to COVID-19 or lived with other vulnerable and high risk people. UCDSU worked to ensure students got up to date and accurate information throughout the exam period through using our social media channels and through individual contact we had with students.

By its very nature, the Students' Union is there to help support and guide students during exam periods as they represent potentially some of the most stressful time for our members. UCDSU works hard to provide a presence before, during and after exam season, which starts with the Library breakfasts, where the team handed out nutritional food and stationery to students during the study period and answered a whole range of queries. With a return to on campus activity in 2021, we were able to bring back our Library Breakfasts during revision week. They were hugely successful.

This year we brought in vouchers that students could use in the SU shops. Finally, once again, UCDSU played a key role in helping students get from campus to their exam on time by running buses at no cost to them. This is a hugely valued service that allows students to maximise time on-campus in preparation for exams taking place in the RDS.

STUDENT

FINANCE

Throughout the year, the Sabbatical team dealt with numerous cases of students who needed help dealing with issues relating to their finances. At the beginning of the new team's term, the President was contacted by a student who, following receipt of the Pandemic Unemployment Payment (PUP), had been pushed out of his normal SUSI bracket. Due to SUSI altering how they calculated their adjacent and non-adjacent rate, this student had been reclassified as adjacent and so stood to lose out on money from SUSI. The President made representations to Minister Harris in order to get a guarantee that those students due to lose their PUP in September 2021 would not be penalised by SUSI and he also wrote to SUSI in relation to the student being reclassified as adjacent. UCDSU were able to get a guarantee from SUSI that students who had been reclassified as adjacent for the coming year would retain their non-adjacent status.

MID-TERM

SURVIVAL PACKS

In trimester two, the Education and Welfare Officers, along the Students' Union's Mental Health Campaign Coordinator Míde Nic Fhionnlaioich to create and hand out mid-term survival packs, filled with all the essentials that students need to help them to hit all of their deadlines. We also put a leaflet with lots of information on different supports across campus and outside of campus they could turn to should they need to. We worked with our Oifigeach na Gaeilge to ensure these leaflets were bilingual also.

PHD

CONFERENCE FUND

This is a fund that was set up by The Graduate Officer that is given to PhD students that attend conferences. These can become expensive for students that they may not be able to afford. This is a small bursary towards it. Over the last 3 years there have been 90 conference funds given out.

2021/22

STUDENT
VISAS



International students must have a visa to stay and work in Ireland. Unfortunately there are multiple issues within the system. Along with the UCD Global team, UCDSU made a number of representations to the University and to Government on this during 2021/22. Students who have just graduated must wait approximately 3-4 months to get their next Visa, meaning they are only able to work 20 hours per week until they can attain a graduate Visa.



There is also another issue for PhD students in respect of their Visas and any spouse they might want to live here. Unfortunately they are unable to work on the type of visa that is currently given which is an issue for their families. It is unsustainable for them to stay here in Ireland. The Students' Union continues to seek a resolution for this. Both of these issues are long standing and will need continuous work.



We held many networking events in collaboration with societies and units within UCD. For instance, at Christmas we held a Christmas Jumper, Cookie and Coffee event with the Mature Students' Society. This saw around 30 people attend with their Christmas Jumpers on. It allowed people to meet in a fun way.



Two of our most successful were in the two weeks following the two week break in trimester two. These were advertised as welcome back style coffee mornings and we used Election branded cups in order to draw attention to the upcoming executive elections. Coffee Mornings are a simple but effective way to help the team engage with a lot of students on the ground in a short time, and to target them at specific times when they are encountering potentially stressful periods.

CAREER
DEVELOPMENT

Career development is key for students both when they are in UCD and after they leave, as students can use the service up to two years after they graduate. Throughout the year we worked with Gradguide, a company which works to help students and graduates gain employment in different companies mostly based in the tech sector through mentorship and events.

Bridging the employment gap —

Career guidance, mentorship, and graduate recruitment platform.

for grads for mentors for employers

We also ran Jobs Week, in which we worked with the liked of UCD Careers Network on CV writing workshops and offered free headshots to students on both the Belfield and Smurfit campus. The headshots were so popular that we chose to run them again later in the trimester. Jobs Week would go on to be one of our most successful event weeks, demonstrating that students are interested in career focused events.

JOBS WEEK

HIRING

Events, interviews, headshots & more

We also ran a number of events specifically targeted at Postgraduate taught and research students throughout the year. Our wine & cheese nights proved immensely popular, as did the trips to Kilkenny and Glendalough, which were arranged by the Graduate and Entertainments Officers.

UCD SU

POSTGRAD

WINE and CHEESE

NOVEMBER 17TH 6-8PM

O'NEILLS (UPSTAIRS CLUBHOUSE)

WELFARE



**the great donate
is back**

Dates:
Friday 6th 1-4PM
Thursday 12th 1-4PM
Friday 13th 10AM-4PM
Monday 16th 1-4PM

As part of the Great Donate, we are collecting a range of items. A full list can be found below but in general if its kitchen equipment, cutlery and hangers we will accept it.

Plates ~ Bowls ~ Mugs ~ Glasses ~ Jugs ~
Coffee Press ~ Lunchboxes ~ Chopping boards
~ Pans ~ Pots ~ Colanders ~ Laundry Bag ~
Cutlery ~ Hairdryers ~ Hangers ~ Canned
Goods





**REIMAGINING
MENTAL
HEALTH:**
THE ART OF LIVING IN
CHALLENGING TIMES

REFLECTING ON THE NATURE OF RELATIONSHIPS
FROM LOVERS, FRIENDS, FAMILIES AND BEYOND

**LOVE
&
LOSS**

TUESDAY FEBRUARY 15TH
1-2PM IN THE FITZGERALD DEBATING CHAMBER

Pizza will be provided
afterwards!



Great **Donate**

Every year students donate things that they cannot bring with them home when they leave residences and UCDSU redistributes it to students the following semester. This has proven to be an immensely popular endeavour that we were happy to see the full return of as the pandemic receded. Time and time again, our Great Donate initiative makes a really positive impact on students settling into residences for the year ahead.

Reimagining **Mental Health**

We'd like to sincerely thank Dr. Triona Byrne, Caroline Ward, and the entire counselling service for collaborating on this series of discussions throughout the course of the year. UCDSU and the UCD Counselling Service collaborated to hold a series of events, which took the form of lively and interactive talks and conversations on issues pertaining to student mental health, wellbeing and resilience. We believed this initiative was timely, following on from the pandemic and restrictions which brought the challenges we face into sharper focus and have made us question ourselves and reflect on how we choose to lead our lives.

The sessions were designed to be a friendly environment where students could join in on non-pathologising, non-judgemental discussions with other students, with counsellors, student representatives and relevant guest speakers. It is also served as an opportunity to meet other students with similar concerns and interests.

The programme of events included:

- Loneliness and Disconnection: Forming Friendships, integrating and reintegrating into College life post-Covid Isolation
- Love Island: The Tyranny of the Perfect Body
- Anxiety: Friend or Foe? (during Exam Time and Beyond)
- Logged in and Switched off: Surviving the Internet and New Technology
- Love and Loss: Reflecting on the Nature of Relationships
- How to Shift from Surviving to Thriving as a Mature Student

Partnership with UCD AFC



Being a campus that is fully supportive of the mental health of students and young people is an aspiration shared by everyone in the UCD community.

UCDSU was proud to partner with UCD AFC, Europe's only University football club that plays in a top division of a domestic league, and Jigsaw, a mental health charity with a mission to make sure that every young person's mental health is valued and supported.

The partnership sees JIGSAW and UCDSU displayed on the front of the home jersey, along with the launch of new club sponsorship packages where 50% of all sponsorship associated with the collaboration with UCDSU will be donated by the club to JIGSAW in support of the critical services they offer.



GOOD SEX 101
with Dr Caroline West

WEDNESDAY
3RD NOV
5-6PM
ZOOM

UCDSU



ALISON SPITTLE

4EVR ALONE

BIG SEXY COMEDY NIGHT

UCDSU EVENTS

KEVIN MCGAHERN

HARM REDUCTION SAVES LIVES

HARM REDUCTION

Harm reduction was an issue that was key to members of the team. It refers to a set of practical strategies aimed at reducing negative consequences associated with drug use. The intention of the campaign was to provide students with information regarding drug use so if they decide to take drugs, they do so in the safest manner as possible. It was something that the team wanted to get out appropriately and in line with the reopening of nightclubs across the country. So UCDSU continued the "Start low, go slow" campaign that the HSE had put together.

SHAG WEEK

It was the first Sexual Health Awareness & Guidance (SHAG) Week back after the pandemic, meaning we could make a real impact highlighting the importance of sexual health and wellbeing to the student body.

We hosted a range of activations and events, both in person and online. Workshops we hosted included: Kink 101 with Aoife Murray (where students could learn about risk aware practise and learn about the world of BDSM), Good Sex 101 with Dr Caroline West (core emphasis on consent and active communication and its links with having good sex), and Pride and Pleasure with Aoife Murray (a gender/sexuality inclusive sex toy workshop). We also had activations in from the Dublin Rape Crisis Centre and Active*Consent. The highlight of the week was our 'Big Sexy Comedy Night' which included a sexual health quiz where students could win sex toys for correct answers and performances from Alison Spittle and Kevin McGahern.

End Period Poverty

No one should have to go without sanitary products. We are working to eliminate period poverty by providing free pads and tampons.



END PERIOD POVERTY

UCDSU created a pilot scheme which saw them give out 5000 period products, this built the foundation to move this to the next phase. The Students' Union plus members of the working group put a business plan together for UMTSEG this was accepted to move to UMT, in June of 2022 UMT agreed with the business plan and gave the working group money to invest in dispensers and sustainable period products for the UCD community.

Entertainments



CHARITY **EMPOWER THE FAMILY**

The Sabbatical Team, led here by the Entertainments Officer, worked very closely with Deborah, the founder of Empower the Family during 2021/2022. This spanned from running a number of fundraising days on campus such as our Drag Brunch, as well as online fundraisers. The SU's Graduate and Entertainments Officer also helped to develop Empower the Family's first volunteer programme for UCD students and provided assistance to both the development of its Fundraising and Social Media strategies. The Entertainments Officer also developed the new Empower the Family website.

DISCOUNT **CARDS**

ENTS Discount Cards
These proved extremely popular, with over 5,000 distributed to students during the first three days of Orientation. Our Entertainments Officer managed to get some fantastic deals from the likes of Escape Dublin, AntiSocial, Happy Endings, Griolladh, Elephant & Castle, Farmer Browns, Tramline and Camile.

ENTS **WORKSHOPS**

Throughout the year, a wide variety of workshops were run in order to cater to as many tastes and interests as possible. Highlights included:

- DJ Workshops
- Cooking Workshop
- Self-defence
- Cocktail Making
- Mindfulness
- Tai-Chi

MIND, BODY & SOUL **MBS**

MBS is a re-occurring series of events that UCDSU stages in order to promote mindfulness and ways of alleviating stress during term time. A mini-MBS was held in the first trimester before the main series in the Spring. UCD students availed of all sorts of activities, ranging from mindful drawing to Yoga and Balance classes. Over the course of the 2021/2022 series, we also ran plenty of talks; Endless Spiral Podcast, I'm Grand Mam, How to Sleep Better, Supporting your friends with Samaritans, Ending Diet Culture with Nathalie Lennon. On the fitness front, students got to experience HIIT with Nathalie Lennon and Tai Chi with Dave Delaney, among others.



BATTLE
OF THE BANDS

Run in collaboration with the UCD Musical Society, we hosted a really successful Battle of the Bands in the Clubhouse. Unfortunately this was a back-up venue that was needed. Due to adverse weather conditions, our planned 'Big Night on the Quad' could not go ahead. Despite this, a great night was had as UCD's finest talent went head-to-head in front of a sold-out crowd for the chance to play at the Sea Sessions Festival.



COUNTY
COLOURS

Then there was our County Colours night, always a popular one for students to show off their county pride and engage in some light tribalism. Culture Week wrapped up with more donuts than one could imagine during our 'Fat Thursday' event. This is a Christian tradition in some countries marking the last Thursday before Lent.

CULTURE
WEEK

We were proud to work with a number of culture-oriented societies to run Culture Week this year. Our Eurovision event saw UCDSU team up with Belfield FM, Arab Society, French Society, Hispanic Society, ISS, German Society, An Cumann Gaelach, Trad Society, Japanese Society and the Erasmus Student Network for a night of performances from a wide variety of cultures.



CHRISTMAS DAY &
MARKET

The UCDSU Christmas Day Market took brought a festive spirit to the UCD campus ahead of exam season. In collaboration with the Food Society, Hispanic Society and the Africa Society, the students of UCD got a chance to listen to some wonderful carol singing while sampling some tasty holiday foods and drinks, while also getting the opportunity to try some different festive foods from other cultures. In the spirit of giving back, there were also a lot of prizes to be won which included a FitBit Versa 2, tickets to see the Script and a €100 Ryanair Travel Voucher, just to name a few. This was an overwhelming success with many students coming down to the Market and engaging with other students and societies. This was another very good example of a successful collaborative event between societies and what it can do to enhance student life.



DOMINO'S
BALL

The Domino's Ball took place in the Royal Marine Hotel at the end of March in collaboration with the Food Society and Domino's Pizza. This was the return of a very popular event in UCD with many students hoping this would be a highlight event of their year and it didn't disappoint. With a theme of "The Roaring 20's", students were encouraged to dress in their most 'Gatsby-esque' attire and get their dancing shoes on! Tickets included a three-course meal provided by Domino's. Students turned out for some good food, good music and a good time. A ball always gives a student a much needed chance to dress up to the nines and gives them a much needed night to unwind and have a good time and the Domino's Ball enabled them to do just that. It will be a popular return in March 2023 when it returns!

