

Union Council the First, 8/10/2018

Chair: Rachel Duffy

Sabbatical Officers: Barry Murphy, Stephen Crosby, Melissa Plunkett, Thomas Monaghan, Niall Torris

Guest Speakers: Dominic O’Keeffe, Jason Masterson, Brian Mullins

Media: College Tribune, University Observer

Fáilte from the Chair of Council

Explanation of her role. Explanation of rules – no swearing, no missing more than 2 councils, use the sign-in sheet but sign your own name only. Standing order raised – announced that council would not be sticking to the agenda for the evening.

Presentation from Dominic O’Keeffe, Head of Student Services

Explanation of counselling and mental health services in UCD. Niteline (peer-to-peer phonline). UCD Student Counselling Service (12 full time staff, having grown from 2 part time 15 years ago). UCDSU (Welfare Officer). Chaplaincy (3 chaplains on campus on call 24/7, deal a lot with residences). UCD Student Advisers (assigned to each school).

Went over the training provided to Duty Managers (DMs) in the Student Centre, same as that provided to the Residential Assistants (RAs) in UCD Residences. Stressed that UCD Counselling Service is a supplementary support service designed to help a student move through their education – not a critical care service like the sort that might be provided by the HSE.

Touched on the long-term plan for counselling services in UCD – maintenance of all service provisions, maintenance of funding and investment level, and increased staffing. Stressed the waiting list being only 2 weeks long, down from 3 months a year ago. Explained the way that the referral service to local counsellors works.

Answered questions from the floor.

Presentation from Brian Mullins, UCD Sport and Healthy UCD

Presentation to be delayed until next council (22/10/2018).

Standing orders back in place.

Agenda altered – Melissa Plunkett gave her report first.

Melissa Plunkett, Welfare Officer’s Report:

- Introduced herself
- Discussed crossover period in June
- Manifesto meetings with Jason Last, Aishling Kennedy-Dalton, Aisling O’Grady
- Orientation Week – organised Deans’ Welcomes.
- Worked Freshers’ Ball
- Class Rep recruitment – spoke to hopeful class reps about what the role entails
- Freshers’ Week – balanced being in the tent with taking student cases

- Met with Sandra Tighe about the Counselling Service
- Met with Consent at UCD about their plans for the year and budget
- Res Review – discussed RA training
- Completed mandatory training – ShoutOut, ASIST, Sexual Assault Disclosure.
- Met with Chaplain Scott Evans to discuss shared initiatives
- Mental Health Week – stressed availability of SafeTalk course places.
- Attended UMT, SEG
- Attended a meeting on Consent and Tackling Sexual Violence in Third Level Institutions
- Working on SHAG events for Semester 1 and 2
- Stressed that student cases are the vast majority of what she does.

Report accepted unanimously.

a) Quorum declared.

Chair gave some advice on drafting motions (must mandate a specific person) and told people to submit motions before 6pm the Monday before Council, or 7 calendar days in advance.

b) Minutes arising as a result of the previous meeting – n/a

c) Matters arising from these minutes – n/a

d) Motions on notice – n/a

e) Motions not on notice – n/a

f) Items for discussion:

Molly Gervin, Medicine 1: What is the University Club?

Barry, responding: University Club is being built because the government isn't funding third level education enough, UCD have no choice but to take in more international students, and take in more sponsorship from alumni, to help fund degree course places for Irish students. Deeks and co. decided a fancy building to wine and dine them in was the best way to do this. Stressed that all Sabbats were massively opposed to the University Club on every board and at every level. Club got pushed through on a split vote at GA, 21-10 in favour of the University Club being built. Students called for protests last semester, but there was a lull over the summer. Deeks has since called for the closure of the Common Room Club in the Newman Building by December 21st. Staff are upset and have asked for Union support in the matter, which the Sabbats have provided.

Cost is €14m, which has an expected payback time of 21 years. Union has been ignored at every turn in their objections to it. Asks for suggestions in how the SU should respond.

Niamh Plunkett, BHLS 3: Believes we should move forward with the argument that we should not be expected to pay a levy for the new exam hall if money that is being used for the University Club could be used there.

Barry, responding: The argument they come back with is that they are doing this to encourage philanthropy and greater levels of investment further down the line.

Unnamed: was there any survey of alumni done to find out whether or not they wanted a UC?

Barry, responding: He saw no evidence of such a survey, despite asking for same.

Charlie Lyons, Art History 1: could it not be argued that there is not enough room on campus for this?

Barry, responding: That was an argument we put forward, but the university claimed that this club would allow them to raise money to fund more education spaces in the future.

Gary Mahon, Science 1: Harvard, Stanford etc have clubs like this which do pull in funding for them – why would it not work in UCD?

Barry, responding: UCD went with the University Club and the new entrance precinct to the government to get funding for this, which is frustrating as it shows that the priorities of both university management and the government are out of sync.

Lucy Dornan, Science 1: If the space is eventually converted into education space, how will it then be funded?

Barry, responding: The university would take that economic hit.

Lisa Murnaghan, Archaeology 2: How do we resist or protest this?

Barry, responding: Capital Projects Development Group is where these projects are discussed and developed, and the SU doesn't have a seat on it. In FRAMC he argues about the costing and finances, but cannot argue against any more than that. Recommends continued resistance to Deeks, but stressed the dangers of upsetting the university management team – can be hard to straddle the line between keeping them onside and keeping students happy.

Robin O'Keeffe, Sociology 1: What can class reps do?

Barry, responding: talk to your classmates about the UC, inform them and find students who are passionate about it, and put them in touch with Tom in order to make a campaign of it.

Tom, out of order: We should out a paragraph together to help class reps explain the situation to their students.

Niall, responding: explained the Common Room Club in Newman as a student society, whereby its committee is democratically elected at an AGM, and it is open to anybody who is paid money by UCD. Niall wishes to fight the idea that all of these things on campus should be brought under the control of Deeks and his yes-men. Emphasised our need to support the democratic nature of the Common Room Club, and row in behind the staff, so that they might do the same for us in the future.

g) Items for noting – n/a

h) Items for Approval – n/a

i) Executive Officer Reports – n/a

Barry Murphy, President's Report:

- Happy with training done in crossover period
- University Observer will celebrate its 25th anniversary this year

- New returning officer and constituency review
- Introduced Rachel Duffy, Chair of Council
- Visited UL Student Life with Tom
- Building collaborations with other SUs
- Voiced concerns around accommodation as chief spokesperson, spoke particularly about digs legislation and lavish purpose-built student accommodation
- Meetings with President Deeks and University boards
- Meetings with the Bursar, talked about cost of on-campus accommodation, and how the SU is funded
- Prepared budgets with Gerry McNally (Chief Financial Officer for the Union)
- Had meetings with college officers about plans for the year and budgets
- Looked at staff structure in the Union
- Sat on the bar committee and fought back against 10 and 20c price increases across the board in August, but failed to get the majority onside in September – asked for feedback at next council (item for discussion)
- Planned bonding weekend and training evenings for class reps
- Refurbished sports shop
- Orientation week welcome talks
- FreshFest/Orientation Week ran well
- UCDSU events initiative to break even rather than make a profit
- Casework with students – looking to get more involved
- March for Choice
- Welcoming Rebecca Carter
- Reviewing Union representation at Uni Board level
- Upcoming plans – presidential debate, response to Budget 2019
- Things he did not get to complete: meeting all the Dublin SUs, finalise class rep training, constitutional review, more campaigns on housing, paint the Union corridor, bond more with the Sabbats
- €76 spent on taxis over the summer

Questions arising from report:

Question from floor (*unnamed*) about UCD letting students like Rebecca Carter into the college this year – how is that to work?

Barry, responding: UCDSU and UCD have decided to push and lobby the State to fund the SEC better to correct scripts faster and get checks done faster, but keep the limit for accepting new students at September 30th. This year is to be an exceptional case.

Report accepted unanimously.

Ed Leonard, Law College Officer: Report taken as read, approved

Stephen Crosby, Education Officer's Report:

- Sits on 30+ boards and committees
- Main work was manifesto brainstorming sessions
- Met with Deans of Colleges to outline key point from manifestos
- FreshFest and Freshers Ball – enjoyed event promotion

- Getting to know people and hand out Wingin' It during Orientation Week
- Outward Mobility Group – board examining ability of students to travel abroad for study, and looking to increase those numbers
- University Management Team meeting in October
- Student Experience Group (SEG)
- Education Group
- Upcoming plans – going to the RDS for the annual Health and Wellbeing Summit, Student Feedback System Working Group, Insomnia Training Sessions, Promotion of Undergraduate Research Showcase
- Achievements vs previous plans – pleased thus far. Snags in email backlog during busy weeks, availability in office.

Questions arising from report:

Gary Mahon, Science 1: Where would you submit the abstract for the Undergraduate Research Showcase?

Stephen, responding: It can be submitted to Stephen directly at education@ucdsu.ie.

Niamh Plunkett, BHLS 3: Negative feedback doesn't seem to get filtered through to lecturers from the end-of-year feedback, and older students in particular refuse to participate because nothing seems to change.

Stephen, responding: said he would bring it to the attention of the working group.

Molly Gervin, Medicine 1: Are bad lecturers in the jurisdiction of class reps?

Niall, responding: Best bet is to come and talk to a Sabbat before going to the lecturer.

Report accepted unanimously.

Tom Monaghan, C&C Officer's Report:

- Marched in Pride
- Visited UL Student Life and Keele University environmental forum
- Campaign co-ordinator bonding and training/brainstorming sessions
- Talked to HEAR and DARE students
- Met with Adrienne from Book-a-Ball
- Gave peer mentor talks and Deans' Welcomes
- NKD pizza deal
- Wingin' It is very nearly gone, huge success
- Fresh Sesh, class rep recruitment, Freshers Week and Ball all gone well
- Social media accounts growing
- March for Choice
- Raise the Roof Rally
- By-elections are his current priority
- PLT sale tomorrow
- Started working on MATE campaign
- Planning Class Rep bonding trip and training
- Organising bands for nights out
- Utilising the inactive ENTS page, and recruiting ENTS reps

- LGBTQ+ and Mature Students Co-ordinators still needed

Questions arising from report:

Gary Mahon, Science 1: Elaborate on talking to HEAR and DARE students?

Tom, responding: Introduced SU, gave an overview of how it works, how to get involved, pushed events and campaigns. Told them that the SU is here to support them.

Gary Mahon, Science 1: If a class rep is kicked out, is there a by-election?

Chair: Yes

Emily Gallagher, Politics 1: Do you need to fill out both by-election forms?

Chair, responding: Yes – one to call the by-election, and one to be nominated for it.

Aoife Bracken, Politics 2: is the ENTS crew/forum open to people who are not currently involved in the Union?

Tom, responding: Absolutely. Would love to get as wide a group of people involved as possible.

Peter Burke, Stage 3 B&L: There should be no by-election for 3rd year empty seats.

Barry, responding: Explained by-election is not a polling process, so takes up little to no time and money.

Niall, responding: By-elections are set out in the Constitution of UCDSU, and arranged by the Returning Officer, not the Sabbatical Officers.

Report accepted unanimously.

Niall Torris, Graduate Officer's Report:

- Casework – 80% or more of his work
- MyWorld2 survey
- Started a radio show with Belfield FM Thursdays and Fridays
- Pushed for a graduate student adviser – looking at a June hire
- PhD student experience – looking for recognition of teaching hours in the form of credit
- Academic regulations – working on a review of them
- Met with Dean Lillis (ULSU) on national issues
- Running a Seanad Registration campaign
- Meeting with NUI Senator Michael McDowell about 7th amendment to the Constitution
- Upcoming – Mental Health week in Smurfit, Seanad Campaign, McDowell, Academic Regulations and University Lobbying, meeting Senator Gerry Horkan

Questions arising from report:

Niamh Plunkett, BHLS 3: can you register for the Seanad if you don't live in Ireland?

Niall, responding: yes, you can vote from abroad (only election where you can do so).

Report accepted unanimously.

Aoibheann Magills, Health Sciences College Officer: Report taken as read, adopted

Niall Donohoe, Engineering and Architecture College Officer: Report taken as read, adopted

Emily Bollard, Science College Officer: Report taken as read, adopted

Amy Mulchrone, Agriculture, Food Science, and Vet College Officer: Absent

Sophie Gibbons, Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences College Officer: Report taken as read, adopted

Sophie Sheridan-Burns, Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences College Officer: Report taken as read, adopted

Alex Bolster, Business College Officer: Absent

Treasa Moloney, Oifigeach na Gaeilge: Report taken as read, adopted

j) Questions on notice – n/a

k) Questions not on notice – n/a

l) All discussions deferred to the instant meeting from any previous meeting – n/a

m) Submission of motions to be on notice for next meeting – n/a

n) Any Other Business – n/a