

UCCSU Executive Meeting

02/12/20

In Attendance: Eimear Curtin, David Giles, Sarah Louise Sexton, Adaeze Ireoma Nwosu, Adam Burke, Beth O'Reilly, Caoimhe McCarthy, Orlaith Geaney, Joel Rajesh, Sinead Roche, Naoise Crowley, Aiden Sheehan, Ross Brennan, Jamie Fraser, Daniel Moloney, Stephen O' Riordan.

Apologies: Nada Ní Chuirrín, Daniel Kelleher.

- Welcome to 3 new officers. Congratulations! - the Post-Grad, International and Mature Student Reps introduce themselves.
- The Exec meets once every 2 weeks - for now it is a Wednesday at 6pm.

Academic Update - 18:08

- The UCC initiative with Minzu University of China has been in the media. It is only a proposition at the moment. Human Rights elements were mentioned. BEES have a programme where they offer collaboration with them. This has been brought up so we can know what people think?
- Question asked on whether there are legitimate links between the university in China and the Human Rights issues and ill treatment? Response given was that there was an external committee to look at it.
- Question asked where in the University of Minzu's structure are the ethical concerns? "Minzu" in English basically means "ethnic university". General concerns from people are around whether it could be serving as a front for a re-education camp of sorts, because of the high number of minorities in the University, such as Uighur Muslims. A lot of the people who leave the University end up as officials for CCP, however, we haven't seen anything that says it definitely is a front. It is something to be discussed and its best to hope that the external committee looks into the details of it.
- Mitigation - in terms of how the supports have changed since last year, such as sitting repeat exams uncapped etc. We are still not happy with it and the lack of clarity surrounding it. We are trying to send the college re-edits to update the website with etc. They don't want it to be too prescriptive and want room for generosity also.
- Email went out from the Interim Registrar and we received no feedback from that. Is that good or bad? Assignments are creeping up on people. More information will be online next week on that.
 - The library and Student Centre are open over Christmas. One or two little things brought up about in-class tests or exams in January. Issues around requirements to have a camera and/or mic on for invigilation purposes. If you hear about that happening, flag it with the Education Officer. If there are any in-class exams after the 18th of December, flag this also as there is instruction not to do this.
- GEM students are invigilated with Teams or Zoom. Test runs are being carried out etc. There is a lot of pressure on students in terms of responsibility in downloading and proving you have a mic/webcam. Question on where students can sit the exams? Some were told that lecturers can't book rooms on behalf of students - how much of all of this needs to be done by students and what can be done by the School to alleviate some of these burdens?

- Response: Medicine is an accredited course so there is a process there that has been confirmed and students are protected. Nothing is clear cut in where responsibility lies; there's not a lot of feedback on who will sit on campus for exams - we haven't heard anything and no feedback so it is hard to fight for it. If there is a situation, reach out to lecturers etc and to the Education Officer. School autonomy comes into this too, as some will proactively sort issues out, some may not. The library isn't ideal but it is there with wifi and silence etc. However, having a camera on and people walking past you - where does the line draw there?
- We will set up a Google Document to hear what issues are coming in with exams and assignments and it will be brought to Business Continuity on Friday - it is a direct line to people who make decisions on exams.
- The Academic Semester email tone was ambiguous but next semester will be somewhat similar to this one. There needs to be as much as possible on campus next semester. The rate of transmission on campus is very low. College Reps - have you had any correspondence? Some express that international students want more in person as fees are high and they want an on campus experience. It would be safe in controlled environments. It is up to individual departments.
- There is a petition going around to encourage the University to hold more on-campus classes. They've asked for SU to back this A lot of lectures that are large may be online for a very long time - labs, tutorials etc could be pushed for on campus.
- Rally against paying full fees this year is mentioned. Asking to help mobilise students in support of their campaign. A Manchester university is mentioned because of their dealings with similar issues. Don't think it is something we could be able to support even if we wanted to. Anything we support has to be in line with guidelines.
- Email to all staff about the second semester was sent out. Lab-based teaching can continue on campus and small-group teaching with measures taken, with approval of the head of college. This is more liberal than it was at the beginning of 1st semester. Talk on timetables for semester two - massive can of worms to be opened.
- What about the people that cannot go back if it's possible - if they are at risk and vulnerable? If it's on campus it must be made available online definitely.
- How do we go about accommodating things on campus that are safe to do so? February earlier this year brought recorded lectures. In-person would be appreciated by International Students. An option to take action is to email the relevant people - heads of schools and departments and colleges - the SU are happy to put our signature to it - consensus that there should be more on campus next semester where possible. Welfare and Accommodation issues that will rise around it needs to be monitored and dealt with clearly.
- Regarding the petition to have on campus classes - the fear would just be that if we seemed to be supporting it and then guidelines completely change.
- In regards to CACSSS - we don't think there's a push for on campus tutorials - the issue is they aren't live and therefore, students can't have a live conversation. The issue is the quality they are receiving. If it's online it needs to be up to a good standard.
- The Online Learning Survey was more positive than expected - in general, first years don't have many live lectures. Live lectures need to be implemented more.
- It's going to have to be college level solutions to make a change with this. It is unlikely that CACSSS or B&L will be on campus all together. Lower level solutions are what students need to be pushing for such as communication. The email made everything blanket and it's vague for staff

too. Mention of prioritization for 1st years and final years. It is vague for everyone which allows them to make decisions that may not be best for students.

- Actions : Google Docs for issues with exams to be shared with everyone and then the issues will be brought to the meeting on Friday. Vague and cynical lads.

RAG Charity Voting - 18:46

- A Google Form is going to be sent to everyone on the Exec where you fill in your preferences for charities from 1 to 20. Then this will be sorted by the Entertainments Officer and the Commercial and Fundraising Officer. Depending on the results, the vote will be decided from this form or else brought to council if it is highly contested by a lot of charities.
- Decision made to let everyone read about the charities in their own time and put in their votes before this Friday at 6pm.
- When picking charities, try to keep Government Funding, Locality and size, if they've been a RAG charity before in mind.
- There is no such thing as a bad charity, just make sure your decision is thought about and that you choose who you want to.
- Distinction made that society charities are representing their charity and that their charity will receive the funds if selected, not the society itself.

AOB 18:53

- Issue raised with the exams during midterm lockdown. Mature students are at home with kids and may not have anyone to mind them. Anything that can be done about that? If things can be solved at a local level it would be better than a long university process. If people present to you with issues, get onto the rep and then us and we will bring it up to a higher level.
- Also, we have a Child Care Subsidy here. For info email welfare@uccsu.ie. There are strict thresholds in it but that's an avenue you can direct people towards.
- If you have an issue, having it in writing for the Education Officer is great. Send on an email with issues and facts and it will help a lot.
- There is no real playbook for Union. Crossover is there but you aren't going to learn everything and every year is different. There is a discussion on creating a structure for the SU, for who goes to what meetings etc. SE are looking at it with a PhD researcher. We don't have to accept what they suggest of course and it may take a couple of months. Points made that council minutes are not published but are available to everyone and anyone who wants them. Will GB publish theirs? Anyone can access the Council Microsoft Teams and see the minutes etc.
- Question raised if this is part of the governance review? No, it's something different. Different from UAIP. This discussion on the structure of the SU brought up Clubs and Societies as well. The last one for governance review focused on Clubs and Socs to get policies right with finance and health and safety; a lot was left to be done. Maybe being put on the back burner.
- With this new one; a question was asked about what the conversation was with Clubs and Socs? They were asking about our processes as an SU and the Clubs and Socs. Generally about how we do things and how the council works and how we communicate with students. Focus group of students suggested.
- Student involvement and responses - Instead of using surveys and forms, there are apps that let you upvote i.e. thumbs up or thumbs down. Students may not like forms when you don't really

see the feedback. There may be more enthusiasm with upvoting and it is faster. It also may work well with the SU forum. Communication and Engagement Officer to possibly work on this.

Discussion about his room and decor.

- With the review of the SU's structure - did they just decide to do this themselves? - It is hard for SUs coming in and can be different from year to year and there isn't a playbook - it is looking at experience and governance. This is how the Union operates with the university and interacts. We will see what comes back.

- The HSE are doing mass testing before Christmas. May be available and valid to some here.

Looking at getting it in UCC itself.

Meeting finished at 19:16.