

Manifesto

**Your UCCSU Welfare Candidate
for 2022/23**

Vote Alannah for welfare March 21st and 22nd 2022

A portrait of a young woman with long brown hair, smiling broadly. She is wearing a red cardigan over a dark top and a necklace with a circular pendant. The background is a solid green color with a white curved line.

**Alannah
For welfare**

Alannah 4 Welfare

My name is Alannah O'Connor and I am running to be your welfare officer on the Students' Union for 2022/23. I am 21 years old and in my final year of studying a BA in Politics and English. I am currently the Gender Equality Representative on the SU's Equality Working Group and have spent the year speaking out about gender based violence, and helping to promote gender equality training amongst student leaders, working alongside the EDI unit and UCC Green Campus to introduce free period products across campus, amongst other things.

I am running for the position of welfare officer because I am passionate about helping people and I really want to leave a positive mark on the UCC community. I have a broad area of interests which I feel would be beneficial in this role; this is reflected in my experience. In addition to my role as gender equality representative, I was the founding member and chairperson of my secondary school's green group, I volunteered with the Cork Penny Dinners over a period of 6 months, and I have worked closely with the Crawford Supported Studio, a space for artists with disabilities and specific health or social needs.



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Alannah 4 Housing

- Moving out of home for the first time can be very daunting. I want to create a website that has all of the things you might be looking for when moving out: A link to the UCC Accommodation Search Facebook group, your tenant's rights and responsibilities, how to register with the Residential Tenancies Board, how to apply for the Student Assistance Fund, etc.
- I will raise awareness of the importance of joining a tenants union like CATU amongst students.
- It is not uncommon for students to have negative experiences with their landlords. I hope to work with the Free Legal Advice Centre to connect students with legal professionals who can help them in cases where it is suspected that a landlord has crossed a legal boundary, or any other accommodation related problems they may have.
- The cost of living has been increasing exponentially in the last few years making living out of home less and less accessible to students. I will work with relevant groups and lobby the government to make changes so that students aren't living in fear of not being able to make their next rent payment.



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Alannah 4 Equality

- I will engage closely with the incoming equality officer and utilise the Equality Working Group more to make sure that every minority group in UCC feels accepted and looked after.
- I will continue to work with the EDI and UCC Green Campus to introduce free period products that are made accessible in all of the bathrooms campus wide.
- I will work closely with the Fáilte Refugees Society to help students living in Direct Provision to integrate into the college community and know what supports are available to them.
- I want to introduce more vegetarian and vegan options across campus and expand on the meatless Mondays initiative.



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Alannah 4 Mental Health

- I will liaise with the college counselling services and student representatives to ensure that the needs of students are being properly represented within the service and that all of the needed supports are in place.
- I want to introduce a dedicated councillor who deals specifically with exploring/struggling with sexuality and gender identity.
- The UCC Keep well instagram account was established two years ago. While continuing the good work that has already been done on the page, I plan on using the platform to share more specific information on mental health, the resources that are available both within and outside of the college, and accounts of student's personal experiences when it comes to their mental health to help push the message that you are never alone in what you are going through.
- Stress and burnout are incredibly common not only at exam times, but throughout the whole academic year. I plan on organising regular workshops to help students cope with their academic workload.



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Alannah 4 Mental Health

- I will work with the chaplaincy to bring more attention to their active listening training course 'Le Chéile'. It is a fantastic resource for anybody who wants to be there for the people around them and signpost them towards the help they need.
- I will put a big emphasis on combating loneliness in college. It is a universal feeling that is not spoken about enough and it effects everybody in some way no matter their age or stage of life.
- Sometimes approaching the SU can be daunting. I want to introduce specific welfare training for class reps so that they can be a point of contact and an easy person to talk to for any student who may need to be pointed in the direction of help.



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Alannah 4 Sexual health

- I plan on integrating consent more throughout SHAG week. Consent is imperative when it comes to having healthy and safe sex, this should be reflected in our SHAG week events.
- I will collaborate with the Cork Sexual Violence centre to also provide workshops on consent throughout the year.
- I want to increase the access to STI testing and also run a campaign to make sure that students know they can access STI tests free of charge. Additionally I want to run a campaign around ending the stigma surrounding STIs, and how to recognise them.
- I hope to run workshops which provide the sex education you never got in secondary school. These would be LGBTQ+ inclusive and facilitated by trained professionals.



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Alannah 4 Addiction

- I will work very closely with the Students for Sensible Drug Policy (SSDP) on the topics of safe drug use and harm reduction when it comes to taking certain substances.
- I will also work closely with the sexual health centre to bring the DASH (Drugs, Alcohol, and Sexual Health) van onto campus. The van provides community-wide mobile services such as rapid HIV testing, condom provision, drug and alcohol assessments and support from trained health promotion professionals.
- There is an addiction counsellor in the student counselling services. I want to make this more well known as I think any student struggling with addiction could benefit from counselling.
- There are already Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous meetings held regularly in UCC. I will work to make sure they keep happening and also to introduce support groups for students struggling with a sex addiction.



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Alannah 4 Student Finances

- In many courses it is expected that you spend a lot of money on a number of text books that most of the time you only end up using for one semester. I will lobby the college to ensure that if a book is needed for a course that it is available as an ebook through the library or else the lecturers make the material accessible on Canvas.
- I will continue the great work done by the SU this year with the Foodbank.
- I would like to collaborate with the college to introduce free meal vouchers for the main rest or student centre, potentially distributed through the foodbank as well.



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Alannah 4 You

- While introducing systematic change to ensure the welfare of students is very important, individual case work will be one of my top priorities. I will commit to answering every student enquiry I get and endeavour to help and/or signpost them in any way possible.
- I will always be available to make appointments with students and I will have office hours each week where I will be available for drop in appointments.



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