



CROWLEY *for*
PRESIDENT

#TheNaoisUnleashed

UCCSU Manifesto 2020/21

INTRODUCTION

Hello, my name is Naoise Crowley and I hope to be elected UCC Students' Union President for the coming year. I am currently the Students' Union Welfare Officer, having been elected last March.

Running for election last year, I came from an unconventional background for a Students' Union candidate, having had no prior involvement in student politics. In many respects, I was simply an ordinary UCC student, without an agenda, running with ideas of how to improve some of the gaps in student experience (for all students) that I saw during my first few years in UCC. To this day, I retain the same passion and drive for improving the general wellbeing of all UCC students as I did when I first entered office on July 1st, 2019.

If elected, I will strive to better represent you and make UCC a fairer, more accessible institution that prioritises the wellbeing of students over profit.

I hope to be a strong, progressive voice that utilises the position of President to implement policies that will work to put students' best interests at the heart of UCC, ensuring swift access to mental health services, holding the college accountable for the decisions it makes and leading UCC towards becoming a community accessible to all.



CROWLEY *for*
PRESIDENT

#TheNaoisUnleashed

MENTAL HEALTH

I have a vision of a UCC community that puts the mental health of its students first, a community where people feel safe to speak about their mental health, and a community where those who need help have swift access to quality mental health supports. I want to lead UCC towards becoming a University that prioritises the mental health and wellbeing of all students, irrespective of background or circumstance, ensuring no one is left behind.

- I plan on amending the UCC Assessment Strategy to to guarantee two automatic ‘deadline extensions’ per semester, as seen in the ‘Self-Certification Model’ adopted in the UK. Firstly, this will provide flexibility with deadlines, allowing more effective management of stress. **Vitaly, this will also free up spaces for counselling sessions, reducing waiting lists significantly.**
- Through a meeting scheduled to take place with the Minister for Higher Education, I hope to be a strong voice in **advocating for an allocation to hire three additional full-time (FTE) counsellors in the college.** If successful, this could create hundreds of additional counselling sessions throughout the year, drastically reducing the time spent waiting for a counselling appointment.
- With 25% of Irish students being diagnosed with a mental health difficulty while in college, I want to ensure swift access to mental health services. **With the measures I have spoken about I aim to reduce counselling waiting times to 1 week or less by the end of my term as President.**



CROWLEY *for*
PRESIDENT

#TheNaoisUnleashed

MENTAL HEALTH

- Following on from this year, I will work with the Welfare Officer to continue running various campaigns aimed at tackling the stigma surrounding mental health, ensuring we move towards becoming an open, stigma-free community where people feel safe to speak about their mental health.
- This year, I met with representatives from HSE's Crisis Textline Ireland to help bring a 24/7 support textline to UCC students (Text 'UCC' to 086 1800 280). I want to increase awareness of and expand this service in partnership with the HSE to ensure that every UCC student in need will always have somewhere to go, at any time of day.
- I will dedicate a portion of the SU budget to funding external counselling sessions for students who need a counselling appointment outside of UCC in the short-term. I believe we have a duty of care to the students we represent to ensure access to mental health supports in UCC, and this measure is a practical step that can guarantee access in the short-term.
- By providing regular SafeTalk and ASIST workshops I hope to guide UCC towards becoming a more 'suicide aware' community.
- I want to work with Student Health in order to increase the number of exam stress workshops run and extend them throughout the year to apply to assignments.

CROWLEY *for*
PRESIDENT

#TheNaoisUnleashed

ACCOMMODATION & HOUSING RIGHTS

I want UCC to take a strong and proactive position on the housing crisis facing Cork at present. I have been highly critical of what I consider to be a 'dysfunctional private rental market' in both local and national media throughout the year. As far as I'm concerned, UCC should be taking a leading role in tackling the rental crisis as opposed to adding to the problem. I want to tackle this crisis directly and head on.

- By engaging with college officials, I want to commit UCC Campus Accommodation to becoming a genuine 'not for profit' organisation, reinvesting any surplus into improving facilities and more importantly, lowering the prices for the next year.
- Working with Cork City Council, I hope to identify vacant sites that could potentially be used by UCC to convert into affordable accommodation and counteract the lack of student accommodation, bringing down prices across the city.
- Continuing on the work we have done in opposing UCC Campus Accommodation increase, I will work towards securing an imminent cancellation of the 3% increase in addition to a three-year rent-freeze.



CROWLEY *for*
PRESIDENT

#TheNaoisUnleashed

ACCOMMODATION & HOUSING RIGHTS

- I plan to work with Threshold, USI and policymakers to **bring in a deposit return scheme, ensuring your deposit money cannot be taken by rogue landlords.**
 - Through the development of a UCC Students' Union scheme, I want to set up a system whereby we can blacklist landlords who have been shown to take advantage of students, preventing students from being exploited in the future.
- **I plan to develop a Students' Union Housing Committee.** Irish housing legislation is complicated and with a hectic college schedule, many students do not have enough time or resources to bring cases to the RTB, allowing a gap for landlords to exploit students. The function of this Committee will be to eradicate all barriers to enforcing your tenancy rights:
 1. To consider cases brought forward by UCC students, investigate whether the landlord has broken the law, **empowering students to enforce their housing rights.**
 2. **To cover the cost if a student cannot afford the cost of taking a case forward,** ensuring any UCC student can take a case, regardless of financial situation.
 3. **To represent students in disputes in the event they do not have the time/resources necessary to take a case.**



CROWLEY *for*
PRESIDENT

#TheNaoisUnleashed

TRANSPARENCY & BETTER REPRESENTATION

- I will run UCC Students' Union on the simple principles of transparency, democracy and openness, holding the college accountable for every decision it makes.
- Having had an important role in reversing the €200 capitation fee for incoming first years, I will continue to be a strong voice in resisting any further attempts to increase fees in addition to working on a national level towards restoring college fees to pre-2012 levels (€800 per year).
- By reimagining UCC Student Council, I want to make it more accessible to all, allowing a more diverse range of viewpoints from class reps and all UCC students, those who bring vital first-hand knowledge to the table.
- I will look to ensure that the University and the Union clearly publish all accounts as public institutions funded by the taxpayer.
- To better represent and engage with people who feel underrepresented in the UCC community such as postgrads and mature students, by providing a more direct and open platform to communicate issues.
- Having trialled the 'Satellite Welfare' initiative this year, I hope to extend this to include all officers on the Union, making time to meet with those on satellite campuses who cannot make it over to our offices on main campus due to time constraints.



CROWLEY *for*
PRESIDENT

#TheNaoisUnleashed

CAMPUS FACILITIES

As students, we pay a significant amount of money to attend UCC. I firmly believe that we should be getting the best value for our fees, and that as such the facilities around college should be of the highest standard.

- Using the money generated from the 2019 referendum, I will introduce a **Common Room in the library**, fully equipped with microwaves in addition to tea & coffee making facilities, providing a space where you can take a break from study and recharge at any time of day/night.
- I will ensure there are microwaves in all buildings, particularly off main campus, improving food options and allowing students to save money.
- Having been involved in the plans for the new vegan restaurant on main campus, I will work hard to ensure that it is an **allergen friendly space on campus** and that the food options are adequate and affordable.
- Working with the Restaurant Committee, I will lobby to extend the opening hours of **Brookfield Café, Western Gateway Elements** and various other restaurants on satellite campuses as well as bringing a €4.20 option to every UCC restaurant.
- To work with the college to improve the current use of space, such as converting the green area by the Glucksman into an open space available to all students for socialising.
- By collaborating with Healthy Campus Ireland, I hope to provide more water fountains across all campuses.



CROWLEY *for*
PRESIDENT

#TheNaoisUnleashed

STUDENT FINANCES

The cost of attending college has never been higher in modern Ireland. Having worked hard this year to help students struggling financially, I want to continue to implement measures which will help to put money back in your pocket.

- Following on from this year, I will **expand the UCC Students' Union FoodBank** to ensure support is available to the increasing number of students experiencing financial hardship.
- Working with the Commercial Officer, I hope to set up a **UCC lift-sharing app** where students contribute towards fuel costs of the driver, providing an efficient and mutually beneficial way of commuting to college.
- Working with UCC Green Campus and UCC Envirosoc, I hope to explore the possibility of creating a **'UCC Library of Things'**, allowing students to borrow and share goods as opposed to buying them outright.
- I will continue to lobby proactively towards increasing the SUSI grant to reflect the cost of living in 2020 and additionally return the distance for maintenance to 45km rather than 24km.
- By campaigning for reform of the current SUSI thresholds to change in line with the reality of attending college in 2020, I hope to ensure more students from middle-income families can access grant supports.



CROWLEY *for*
PRESIDENT

#TheNaoisUnleashed

STUDENT FINANCES

- I want to set up a Students' Union employment scheme in collaboration with UCC Careers and UCC Plus+, providing training courses for students to upskill and improve employability.
- I plan to allocate extra resources to the 'Student Hardship Fund' to support those struggling to keep up with the cost of living while in UCC.



CROWLEY *for*
PRESIDENT

#TheNaoisUnleashed

ENTERTAINMENTS

- I will work with the Entertainments' Officer to **organise a UCC Festival in the heart of the campus at the end of the exams period**, with the headline event being 'Rave in the Hub'.
- I hope to revamp RAG week by bringing top level artists and more stands on campus, creating a vibrant, festival atmosphere throughout the week.
- With the creation of a 'UCC Library of Things' I hope to create a platform that **would allow students to exchange items of clothing such as dresses for college balls** rather than buying a new one each time.
- By creating a 'UCC Sober Soc' which will run non-alcoholic events, I want to provide a platform for those who want to socialise without alcohol.
- Working with the Commercial & Fundraising Officer, I hope to **increase the charitable work that the Union carries out**, providing resources to tackle the key issues affecting students such as mental health and financial hardship.
- I hope to bring local companies on campus to provide free haircuts/free eyebrow styling/make-up on Freshers' Week, RAG Week and College Balls.



CROWLEY *for*
PRESIDENT

#TheNaoisUnleashed

PLACEMENT GOALS

#FairWorkFairPay

- By working closely with individual departments to ensure that students are allocated placement opportunities within reasonable commutable distance from either UCC or their family home, ensuring no student pays double rent. (This is the very first thing I will do if elected).
- I hope to work with key actors within the HSE and the trade union movement to change the dynamic of placement in UCC. I will campaign strongly for paid placements for the many students whose courses do not currently receive any remuneration, particularly those in 'caring roles' and those in Health and Science degree programs.
 - Through engaging with the Finance Committee, I hope to ensure travel expenses are provided to all placement students in UCC to help alleviate the extra cost burden associated with going on placement.
 - I want to explore the possibility of revamping pre-placement exams (such as for those studying BIS) to weight more credits to the placement than exams, potentially eradicating RAG week exams.
 - Through collaboration with UCC Student Health, I hope to ensure links between the college and partnering organisations to ensure those on placement or on Erasmus/exchange are adequately supported.



CROWLEY *for*
PRESIDENT

#TheNaoisUnleashed

EDUCATION GOALS

- Using NUI Maynooth as a precedent, I will lobby to ensure all students have **one uncapped repeat exam** to account for the fact that anybody can have a bad day under the pressure of exams.
- Working with the Department of Medicine and Health, I plan on **extending the opening hours of Brookfield library** as well as exploring the possibility of **expanding the laptop loan scheme** there too.
- Working with the Student Records and Exams Office, I will look to **extend the deadline for choosing modules from two weeks to four weeks**, giving you more time to consider and choose modules you are interested in.
- I hope to explore the possibility of replacing Neptune as an exam venue, by locating a site closer to the University.
- By setting up a meeting with the Student Records and Exams Office, I want to ensure that no student has two exams on any given day.
- I want to explore the possibility of allowing students to take one 5 credit module each year in a non-academic environment (such as promoting positive mental health and self-esteem, activism in the community and also for playing a sport). This initiative is in place in numerous EU countries, and I think it could real value to the lives of students who engage in the programme, by learning tangible, important skills outside of a lecture hall.



CROWLEY *for*
PRESIDENT

#TheNaoisUnleashed

WELFARE

- By working with Healthy Campus Ireland, I hope to work towards making UCC a campus that promotes a healthy relationship between our mental and physical health, both of which are undoubtedly interconnected.
- By continuing the #AskConsent campaign ran this year in partnership with Cork Sexual Violence Centre as well as expanding Bystander Intervention to as many students as possible, I hope to promote a better awareness of sexual relations on campus.
- Acting on the recommendation of the Rapid Response Group (RRG), I will continue to lobby the college towards implementing a scientifically-backed drug harm reduction as well as implementing a drug policy, ensuring protections for those who choose to engage in drug usage.
- By working with Student Health and various organisations within society, I hope to provide for a better understanding of addiction, providing advice and support to those who need it.
- UCC's 2017 Isolation Report showed that approximately 1 in 5 UCC students are experiencing 'social isolation' at any given time. I want to take a new approach by organising 'SU socials' where people can meet up and chat in a non-judgmental and relaxed environment on various locations around campus.



CROWLEY *for*
PRESIDENT

#TheNaoisUnleashed

CONCLUSION

I'm running for election because I'm passionate about the issues affecting UCC students at present

With a strong knowledge gained from my time as Welfare Officer and charity work within the local community, I strongly believe that my ideas can help bring significant positive change to all aspects of life in UCC.

UCC is a community, a community that I want to ensure feels connected to its Union. I want to better represent you and be a strong voice by holding the college accountable for its actions. I hope to make UCC a fairer, more accessible institution that prioritises the wellbeing of students over profit, putting us, the students, at the heart of our UCC community.

I humbly ask for your support in voting Crowley #1 for UCC Students' Union on March 9th, 10th and 11th.



CROWLEY *for*
PRESIDENT

#TheNaoisUnleashed