

MANIFESTO  
ACADEMIC YEAR 2021/2022

*Sinéad*  
FOR  
EDUCATION



  @SinéadforEducation

*#RightWithRoche*



# About Me:

My name is Sinéad Roche (she/her) and I am running for the position of the UCCSU Education Officer for the upcoming academic year (2021/2022). I am 20 years old and currently in my final year studying BA Sociology and Politics. I am also the current Student Union Representative for the College of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences.

I am running for this position because I believe I have the passion, determination, experience and drive to truly fulfil the position to the absolute best of my ability. This year has been a challenge for us all and truly showed how resilient we are as, not only human beings, but as students. It has allowed me to realise the importance of education and how we, as students, deserve the best standard of academic practice, ultimately pushing me to go for this role.

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**FOR EDUCATION**

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**VOTE #1 On March 29th, 30th & 31st**

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# Experience

Originally born in London, I moved to Kerry at 14 and joined a new school. I was eager to get involved in all aspects of school life, so I joined various committees, such as the Green School Committee. Additionally, I joined the Student Council and was elected as Chairperson by my peers for three consecutive years. The Student Council was very active during this time, I liaised with school managements on matters of policy, I delivered talks to the Kerry ETB Management on the work of Student Council in several schools and as a group, we also ran many initiatives aimed at improving the daily lives of students.

I was also a member of the Killarney Branch of the No Name Club. I joined in my 5th Year and after turning 18, I stayed on as a Junior Adult Leader. As part of the No Name Club, we have raised up to ten thousand a year for various charities by running teenage discos for up to 750 youths in the local catchment area. These events happened every 6-8 weeks and required an immense amount of planning and preparation. As a Junior Adult Leader, I have several responsibilities and projects to implement, such as mentoring, writing and directing Musical Cameos and organising virtual challenges. One of the projects I led recently was the acquisition of the Amber Flag for Mental Health.

I approached UCC with the same eagerness and enthusiasm. I couldn't wait to get involved! During my three years so far, I have been a member of the UCCSU Entertainment Crew since joining in my first year, I have helped organise Rag Week and Arts ball in 2019 and 2020. I was the Gender Equality Representative on the Equality Working Group during my second year. Right now I am currently proudly serving as the CACSSS Rep.

I have always had an innate drive to be a part of the community around me, whether it be school, youth club or college. I truly love being involved in all aspects of student life and being involved in these types of roles has allowed me to implement changes for the betterment of all



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# *What CACSSS Rep has taught me*

Serving as the College of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Studies Representative has not only provided me with an insight into the role and responsibilities of the UCCSU Education Officer but has also further ignited my love and passion for the fairer treatment of UCC students and their academic needs.

I've been delighted to serve and help all CACSSS students' with their issues and problems this year, ensuring that we find the best solutions possible for each individual case and see it through to the end.

In catering to the CACSSS students, I have engaged with fellow college reps in other departments. Through this, I have gained valuable insights and experiences into the other departments and the varied issues and concerns these students face. I have learned first hand that every department has its unique set of challenges and that these often require a different approach to what works in the CACSSS department.

My approach has always been to work with the individual or group to find the best solution, I have always adapted my approach to meet the needs of those I am assisting. I feel that it is this adaptability and personalised approach to problem-solving that will allow me to cater to all students in the many different departments with their varied challenges. As your Education Officer, I promise you the very same. I want to be there to see any academic issue through to the end and help you make the most out of your time in UCC.

# Goals for the Year...

Going into this role I want to set clear and practical goals, to be as transparent as possible. On top of all the troubles students have faced in the past, the pandemic has brought many new unforeseen issues to students. By the end of my term, I want to look back and see that my work has lessened the traditional academic burdens faced by students, but also have tackled the issues that arose due to COVID.

If elected, I want to ensure that your education and the education of future UCC students is continually delivered and maintained to the highest standard and I hope that my goals will do just that.

## **My Main Goals and Plans**

- Recording of Lectures
- College Reps and Class Reps
- Communication and Feedback
- Placements
- Casework
- UCC Skills Centre
- Welfare and Education
- Appeal System
- Library Opening Hours
- Satellite Campus Facilities
- International Students
- Applying for Postgraduate and Masters
- Mature Students

# Recording Lectures

Over the next year, we are going to see a shift to a more blended approach to learning. This will include both online and on-campus learning. This leads me to my main goal of maintaining the practice of recording lectures. Within the university, we have seen that lecturers can provide high-quality online content including lectures, both live and recorded. While we all want to move back on campus, why should all this end?

For many years, students and past Education Officers have campaigned for Panopto to be better utilised and the last 12 months has shown us its potential and possibility.

My goal is to introduce and develop a policy that allows for recorded lectures and online resources to remain, alongside in-person teaching practices.

The Pandemic has exposed some systematic flaws. Can we really penalise a student who can't make a lecture because they are expected to stay at home under public health guidelines? What about the student who is afraid to commute now because they live with a high-risk person? No student should be disadvantaged because they are putting their health or the safety of others first. COVID has highlighted an issue that has always been there.

All students benefit from the recording of lectures, COVID has allowed for them to be fully uptaken by lectures and now they need to remain.

No student should be disadvantaged should they decide to stay at home due to COVID, or even if travelling to campus isn't possible. Panopto recordings have been encouraged for years and need to stay, even when we return to face to face teaching.

MY GOAL: Eliminate 'online or in-person teaching' and deliver 'online and in-person teaching'.

# College Reps and Class Reps

Being the CACSSS Rep for this year has truly shown me the importance of College Reps and Class Reps. I want to empower Class Reps this year, by working with the College RReps to really showcase the importance of their roles within the UCC academic field.

Class Reps directly communicate to the College Reps which therefore allows for a chain of communication to the Education Officer. and I want to further develop the online election process for Class Reps initiated by previous Education Officers. This would allow for a more efficient, easier and democratic election, also a chance for all students to vote with the accessible online canvas forum. I will work with the College Reps to make sure Class Reps receive high-quality training and information to allow them to fulfil their job to the best of their ability benefiting all students university wide.

I would make sure there is Class Rep training each semester. Training in the areas such as communication methods between lecturer and student, and make them fully aware of the appealing process showing them the chain of communication and who they must go to when wanting to bring forward an issue. This will create a more efficient system between class reps and lecturers/departments when it comes to issues needing to be raised.

I would prioritise training for Class Reps. I would ensure they receive training in areas such as communication methods between lecturer and student, the appeals process and the chain of communication employed when bringing forward an issue. This will create a more efficient system between Class Reps and lecturers/departments for addressing issues.



# Communication and Feedback

Communication is extremely important in university, especially as a student. This year has seen a rise in issues regarding the level and standard of feedback regarding grades students are receiving from their lecturers.

I plan on creating a scheme that covers the minimum amount and standard of feedback that must be given to students when they are given back marks. If students do not receive adequate feedback the process of them improving is halted and they are left in the dark, this is not practical and needs to change.

Additionally, I want to lobby for greater communication from lecturers to students regarding the number of assignments, their % worth and when they are due at the start of semesters. These need to be delivered to students early on in module learning and across all colleges. This would allow students to manage their time effectively and produce a higher standard of work. Overall, there needs to be greater transparency between lecturers and students and I will work with the College Reps and departments to achieve this goal.

## Placements

COVID has caused nearly all work placements to be cancelled. Medicine and Health placements have been the hardest hit, as for most, it was impossible for them to be conducted online. Students in this area feel forgotten, they feel left in the dark in regards to their future work placements, their career prospects. My goal is to be a voice for these students and be able to reassure them that someone is in their corner, fighting for them.

Students should feel as though their placement issues, conditions and concerns are listened to. I will work with the Communications and Engagement Officer to be a voice for all placement students by making sure that there is clear communication delivered.

If elected, I will conduct a survey of all 4 colleges' work placement programmes to identify the main issues still present and work on deriving a solution that works for all students.



# CaseWork

Casework is a huge part of the role of Education Officer. I have first hand experience of dealing with issues surrounding students in regards to academic practice. As CACSSS Rep this year, I held college clinics where Class Reps and I discussed issues arising in their subjects. I am prepared and excited to be dealing with these issues on an entire university level rather than one college, I love helping people and believe I have no fear in standing up for what the students deserve and listening to concerns to find solutions.

## UCC Skills Centre

Most first years have missed out on the chance for an on campus experience this year and from this have missed out on learning how to learn on campus rather than from a computer screen. Next year, predicting we will see the return of on campus learning, we must prepare second years as well as first year students for this change. I plan to work closely with the UCC Skills Centre to ensure that these students get the skill training they require to fulfil the rest of their degree.

## Welfare and Education

Welfare and education are interlinked. When students are experiencing issues with their mental health their education can suffer, and when issues regarding academic delivery, practice or results arise, one's mental health can suffer. I plan on holding regular meetings with the elected Welfare Officer to have discussions on how we can improve and offer assistance to students revolving around education and welfare, especially around exam and assessment periods.

As well as this I want there to be welfare training available for the Class Reps during their academic training. I will work alongside the Welfare Officer and Entertainments Officers to implement these welfare workshops and training sessions.

Additionally, in correspondence with the Welfare Officer during mental health weeks and during stressful exam and assignments periods, I want to make sure workshops and campaigns are available to aid students.

# Satellite Campus Facilities

Next year we will see the return of more on campus activities and student ongoings. I want to improve the current facilities on satellite campuses. I believe there needs to be a common room in the Western Gateway Building where a microwave and facilities can be stored not out in the open. I want to query and push for this to be available for students on these campuses. This will reduce the need for students to go to the main campus to gain access to these facilities and also allow for a common room area in these campuses like there is on the main campus.

# Appeal and Repeat Policy

Covid 19 and the consequences this pandemic has placed upon third level education allowed for the implementation of the 'Covid 19 No Academic Disadvantage Policy'. This policy means for the year 2020/2021 repeat exams will be uncapped and free of charge, students are allowed to re-sit exams they have already passed to improve their results and lastly there is an increased time period to defer exams. This support provided by UCC will have an extremely positive impact on students due to the ongoing effects of the pandemic. My thought process is why can't particular elements of this policy remain in the following years? We still do not know the long term effects of this pandemic, especially regarding education. I plan on trying next academic year to restructure the appeal and repeat system policy to largely benefit students experiencing disadvantage from the after effects of the pandemic.

The costs attached to a repeat is extortionate and can severely impact students' mental health and financial capability. If elected I want to fight for a policy in the next academic year for repeats and appeals which caters for and takes into consideration the continuing effects of the pandemic, students should not be negatively affected and the policy cannot return to the same standard it was pre covid.

# *Library Opening Hours*

During the current pandemic, the UCC library has remained open even when university libraries in Ireland did not. This was an asset to UCC students and further proves the absolutely essential nature of the library. This semester we've seen the opening hours changed due to level 5 restrictions, and yes for the overall safety of staff and students, we hope that in the following months especially nearer to exam time we will see them expand again. My goal is to continue communication with the library next academic year to return the hours in the library to pre-covid hours following government guidelines.

# *International Students*

One of my goals this year is to ensure that International Students studying at UCC do not feel left behind or not a part of our community. Especially this year I have found they have not received the attention they require and next year I want to ensure there are adequate facilities and information portals available for these students when in UCC. No student should feel as though they are not being considered, so I will try my absolute best to ensure that there are facilities in place so they feel equipped to transition to UCC life as smoothly as possible.

# Applying for Postgraduate and Masters

During the final year of college, you are under immense pressure with college work and then the process of trying to figure out what route you want to take after your degree adds to this stress.

I want to communicate with the Careers Office and gather resources available to students who want to apply for postgraduate and masters and make sure they are available to them early during the year.

Additionally, I want to work with careers services with the promotions of their events, with careers after college a lot of these postgrads and masters look for certain skills and experience which one would usually have to start to take up in first year. I want to make sure first years are made aware of the opportunities available to them after college and how to gain the skills needed for these opportunities certain steps must be taken. I want all this information made available to students and with online forums and meetings becoming so well known to us now we will be able to reach a large range of students.

## Mature Students

It is too common that mature students feel as though they are not represented to the standard they deserve. Talking to mature students this year they expressed that their biggest concerns was that they felt as though they weren't being represented, and feel as though information about their representation isn't being delivered to them. I want to work with the mature representatives in the SU next year to make sure firstly, they are elected promptly and secondly, that mature students are made aware of who their representative is. Additionally, I want mature students to feel a part of the UCC community, they need to feel represented, catered for and included, I work to achieve this.



# Ending Statement

I would love to be elected your Education Officer for the year 2021/2022, I wholeheartedly believe that with my experience and passion I am equipped to represent all UCC Students and their educational needs.

I am extremely grateful to have had the experience of being a College Representative and being a part of the Student Union this year, it's truly shown me the passion I have for helping students through their journey through college.

Thank you for reading my manifesto, it is unfortunate this year I cannot connect and talk to students on campus. If you have any questions about my plans please do not hesitate to get in touch with me on

Facebook: @SineadForEducation

Instagram: @SinéadForEducation

And Vote #1 For Sinéad Roche for Education on March 29th, 30th and 31st

Remember you're #RightWithRoche

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