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**UL Student Council 2023 / 24**

**Meeting 1**

# **Minutes**

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|  | **Meeting** | **:** | **UL Student Life Student Council** | | | |
|  | **Date** | **:** | **31st of January 2023 (Semester 2 - Week 2)** | | | |
|  | **Venue** | **:** | **Library Boardroom** |  | | |
|  | **Time** | **:** | **6pm** |  | | |
|  | **Members: Maeve Rutledge; Maeve Gilmore; Kieran Guiry; Laura Corcoran; Eoghan O’ Mahony; Niamh Hickey; Maud Keane, Ronan Cahill, Maryam Rida Khan, Ella Fay, Katie Martin, Emma Wright, Roisin Mitchell, Conor McCourt, Mohit Sadarangani, Gareth Moore, Louis Storan, Amanda Moloney, Aldrin Sam William, Ciara O Flynn, Evan Manfield, Drishti Singhal, Ahmed Mirza, Amy McGuinness, James Conner, Charlie Flannery, Roslyn Shaw Kelly, Edel Straum, Ilya Miklashevitch, Kaustubh Katti**    **In Attendance: Siobhán Wilmott**  **Apologies: Jasmine Ryan** | | | | | |
| ***No.*** | ***Items*** | | | | ***Responsible*** | ***Time Allocation*** |
|  | **Welcome to New Members**  Conor McCourt – LGBTQI Councillor  Charlie Flannery – Psychology Rep | | | | **Eoghan** |  |
| **1.** | **Minutes and Matters Arising**  Minutes of Council Meeting – 15th November | | | | **Eoghan** | **8 Mins** |
| **2.** | **Meeting Business** | | | |  | **5 Mins** |
| **a.** | **Hello from SISC**  Nicole introduced herself and her colleague, Shane Laffan. She emphasised that SISC is a free, non-judgemental service that all students can access if they require assistance. They work with the Student Officers to help escalate student concerns to the right places. All students book an appointment to meet in-person or online and they offer sessions either 20 or 45 minutes long. The service is there to help students with academic queries, financial support, accommodation, welfare issues, childcare bursaries, difficulty coping and of course general advice. While not a counselling service, they can help refer you into UL Eist.  She detailed how to access financial aid and advise that the Student Assistance Fund opens on February 7th. She also discussed the financial aid fund that is administered by the University. To access these services, you can book an appointment with Shane or Nicole for their help. | | | | Nicole & Shane | **5 Mins** |
| **b.** | **Executive Reports**  **Student President**  She is working on a rent freeze for North Campus with PCC. She is also working with students who found that there was mould in their apartment after returning from Christmas Break, she is speaking to Campus Life Services about this matter. She is seeking students with entrepreneurial spirits and ideas as she works on her ‘Student Side Hustle Sessions.’ Maeve has advised council that as she has decided to rerun for election, she will not be taking part in any publicity/social media etc., in the interest of fairness. She will be on annual leave for campaign week.  **Welfare Officer**  She has invited people to take part in the well-being focus group, which is seeking student feedback so that a well-being strategy can be thought out with their perspective included. She is planning to run SHARE Week (Sexual Health and Relationship Education) and there will be a series of informative sessions, conversations, and a Heartbreak anthem night in Stables. She attended Governing Authority with Maeve R. She is doing a video series with Shane Davern concerning Student Safety in the run-up to race day.  **Academic Officer**  He advised that there are now 153 class representatives as of Week 1 of Semester 2. He recently sent a personalised email around to Department Heads to encourage the recruitment of Student Reps. He is working regularly to meet with Patrick Ryan on the Student Survey. He is also updating the tutor list on UL Student Life. He is preparing for the class rep forum which is taking place next Wednesday.  **Communities Officer**  She is planning out the Ukrainian Student Engagement event taking place in Week 3 and planning the Sanctuary Student Engagement event in Week 2. She is lobbying Patrick Ryan who is the VP of engagement to try and get the supports these students need. C&S Council is running again for the Semester. She is excited for the Power Panel which will feature motivating women-identifying speakers on why and how one should get involved in Elections. She also met with LGBT+ Ireland Rainbow pathways, where she created contacts with vital services in the Midwest Region.  **Student Council Chairperson**  He chaired council in Week 12 and attended Exec in Week 1 & Week 2 of semester. He took part in Exec training with the Performance Nerds as well as participating in Team Building Activities with the Exec teams of Clubs and Societies and Student Life. He also met with Jasmine, Siobhan, and Jennifer in relation to a creative project that will communicate the work Council does.  **Faculties Officer**  She attended council in Week 2 & Exec in Week 1 & 2. She attended the Exec overnight with C&S. She met with Siobhan to discuss representation & student council vacancies – meeting again tomorrow. She discussed the variety of NStEP training on offer and advised that anyone who is on Council, Exec or a Rep can attend.  **Clubs Officer**  She is actively approving new clubs and societies and approving foreign trips. She is also helping to promote C&S takeovers on the UL Wolves Instagram and is creating a booking spreadsheet to facilitate this for interested clubs and societies. She is taking feedback through a google form to help improve C&S council meetings to be more engaging and improve attendance. She will also be judging the C&S nominations.  **Societies Officer**  As part of her role on C&S Exec, she presented a new C&S Awards format at Council WK1 which is awaiting a decision. She advised that it is the second week of the Clubs & Societies fair. She invited all to come down, show support, and get involved. She attended the first Clubs & Societies Exec meeting of Semester 2. She is working on creating promotional videos. She also interviewed Wolfie.  She met with Siobhan before Christmas to discuss her role further. She also filmed a video for promoting elections which will be finished this week.  **Equality and Diversity Chairperson**  She attended Exec in Week 1 and Week 2. She also attended the leadership training event at the Exec Overnight. She is collaborating with UL global and UL Crafts for a Cultural Expo. She is also meeting with Siobhan and Aisling to discuss re-initiation of Islamic Society. | | | | All | **15 mins** |
| **c** | **Student Centre**  Maeve advised that construction would resume on the Student Centre during the week of St. Patrick’s Day. She is working on a student-wide publication to spread the news. | | | | Maeve R | **5 Mins** |
| **d.** | **Microwaves**  Microwaves are now placed on North Campus and PESS. However, there has been a push back from Buildings and Estates due to health and safety concerns. She is actively working to ensure that these facilities remain as she is collaborating with the General Manager of ULSL and the relevant faculties. Educational materials on how to use the microwaves will be employed in the future. | | | | Maeve R | **5 Mins** |
| **e.** | **Academic Advocates**  Kieran is setting up his Academic Advocates group, who will be his eyes and ears on the ground. He is hoping to use this to get a better idea of student experiences across faculties and departments. There will be roughly a 30 min time commitment and the opportunity to join him at faculty and department board meetings. | | | | Kieran | **5 Mins** |
| **f.** | **Past Exam Papers in STEM**  Ilya advised that exam season for STEM majors is difficult. Due to the nature of their study, it is important to repeatedly revise particular problems until they understand the core concept behind it. Although past exam papers are available there are no solutions or clear answers available.  Edel advised that she has actually brought up this issue in the past. As there are often single modules with different lecturers, one framework for a solution that worked for one lecturer, may not work for the other.  Niamh advised that Ilya may meet with rebuttal from departments. She advised that there is a predilection in certain departments to withhold solutions from past exam papers.  Laura commented that different lecturers have different preferences which can lead to tension around matters such as this. However, she thinks that there is space to discuss this and hopefully come up with a solution amenable to all.  Kieran advised that he is going to look into this matter and figure who the best point of contact is. Edel advised that she will try to help with getting in contact whomever can be of assistance.  Niamh advised that for those who have difficulty finding papers from previous years, that if you search in the bracket for the module code they will come up. | | | | Ilya | **5 Mins** |
| **g.** | **Faculty Rep Election**  Siobhan explained to the floor the role of the Faculty Rep. It is a role wherein you are department representative, but you will also have been elected to represent the views of other department representatives within your faculty. For the induction, herself, Niamh, and Kieran will meet with the elected faculty rep.  Edel advised that you must be available to students and ensure that you have the time perform your role actively and carefully. James also noted that there may be occasions where you will need to work outside of your immediate group and network with others.  Siobhan reiterated the representation structure and explained how issues and ideas feed from the department representative to the faculty representative if unresolved.  Niamh remembered her experience last year with faculty reps and the importance and poignancy of their role and how helpful they were in addressing issues with exams.  Siobhan advised that to be a faculty rep you must be a department representative first. She explained the election rules.  Eoghan began the election process and asked for nominees from Science & Engineering. Niamh proposed and Emma seconded the nominee. Edel Straum was elected.  James Conner put himself forward for the role of EHS Faculty Rep. Kieran proposed and Edel seconded. James Conner was elected.  Eoghan asked for nominees from Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences. No one put themselves forward. This will be touched upon next Council.  Eoghan asked for nominees from Kemmy Business School. Evan Mansfield put himself forward. Laura proposed and Niamh seconded. Evan Mansfield was elected. | | | | Eoghan | **15 Mins** |
| **h.** | **ERB Volunteers**  Siobhan has asked for volunteers for the Election Regulations Board. She advised that the ERB make and amend the rules for the electoral and referenda process. The rules are not made from scratch, but ERB volunteers can amend where see fit and reviewing existing practices. Volunteers ensure that all actions are in coordination with the constitution. Decision-making in the ERB functions on a majority-vote basis. Membership of the ERB is open to all members of the council and it is vital that a member is impartial, unbiased and has no conflicts of interest. I.e., outside contact with candidates. Full-time officers and those who sit on the Board are not allowed to participate and those considering running in the election must abstain. Katie, Rosyln, Amanda, Maryam, and Ilya volunteered. | | | | Siobhan | **5 Mins** |
| **i.** | **Commuter Hub Rota**  Laura advised that the Commuter Hub will run this semester from 8-9 AM from Monday to Wednesday featuring teas, coffees, and breakfast.  As the officers are often engaged in committee meetings around similar times, she asked Student Council members if they would be interested in assisting the running and maintenance of the hub. All volunteers also get to take advantage of the refreshments and have the opportunity to chat with other students. She has created a rota that extends to Week 12 and is asking for students to fill it out with their definitive availability. Edel asked if she can put this towards PVA hours and Laura said she will look into it.  Laura advised that they’ve gotten a large sponsorship from Flahavans, but the project itself is quite expensive. They will be looking in the future to get more support from the University to make this a long term initiative. | | | | Laura | **5 Mins** |
| **j.** | **Returning Officer**  Siobhan advised that a Returning Officer is someone who is appointed to oversee the election process. The returning officer is an external third-party individual who oversees the entirety of the election process to ensure that the count has been done correctly, that supporters lists are accurate, and that all vital information is correct and viable. Daire will be appointed to this position to oversee the upcoming elections. | | | | Siobhan | **5 Mins** |
| **k.** | **Demonstration**  After considering possible avenues to take for a student demonstration, Maeve R and the other student officers came to a conclusion that perhaps it is best to organise and mobilise students around an issue that will be difficult to ignore. She proposed a demonstration against increasing student numbers. She presented a week-by-week plan wherein the experiences of students experiencing hardship often correlated with high student numbers (accommodation, car parking, etc.,) is collected and presented.  She presented three possible options for the actual demonstration, based on different levels of ‘intensity.’ These are (1) a statement and a press release; (2) a statement, press release and same t-shirt colour on the day; (3) a “March for More!” which involve a march around UL with a statement read publicly in front of students.  She asked Student Council to download the slides she presented detailing the demonstration and to discuss it with their constituents as well as with their colleagues on Council. **The deadline for this action is Friday with updates expected for the next Executive meeting, Tuesday 7th.** Further collaboration will require a ratification from Student Council. These actions must be taken within a tight timespan so that Maeve R and the student officers can notify the relevant stakeholders.  Edel asked if Maeve R could reach out to other universities to get an idea of how best to navigate this project. Maeve R responded that she has researched and reached out to other unions.  Another council member posed a question. Unfortunately, due to poor audio, these minutes were missed.  Niamh asked if this demonstration will be discussed with academic staff so that midterms can be adequately scheduled to let students take part. | | | | Maeve R | **20 Mins** |
| **l.** | **Exec Oversight Committee**  In Semester One, Siobhan had mentioned that she is looking for an individual who is willing to oversee the operation of Exec and that it is functioning democratically and as instructed. After putting a request to volunteer to the floor, Ilya, Charlie, and Adele volunteered to take part.  Siobhan advised that anyone interested should contact her.  James Conner asked if the plan going forward is to take on more students. Maeve R noted that the goal is to reach 23,000 in the next five years, with current numbers at 18,500.  Charlie remarked that protest is a good pathway to change. That in order for change to come, people must socially organise.  Andrea asked who exactly we are protesting, to which Maeve R replied that once it becomes clear who determines the setting of student intake numbers, the demonstration will be more effective. She noted that if it is not the University that sets these parameters, then perhaps they will join in the effort.  Laura noted that Clubs & Societies would strongly support this issue as they consistently face issues with space. There have been discussions of imposing a cap on allowed members, but this is not desirable. | | | | Siobhan |  |
| **3.** | **AOB**  Edel advised that there was an emission of gas inside of a lecture hall prompting the lecturer to ask everyone to evacuate. However, many didn’t. Maeve G noted that in any event of an emergency, Campus Security should be contacted. Maeve G asked if this is being investigated. Edel noted that others had remarked they smelled the gas, but no one said anything. Niamh advised that perhaps there should be a safety drill in the university. Edel advised that the smell was extremely overpowering, causing her to exit quickly. She was surprised that other students did not attempt to evacuate.  James Conner advised that there is possibly an uptick in assaults in the country. He asked if there has been any follow up with self-defence classes. Maeve G advised that she has been trying to organise and facilitate self-defence classes, and that if they are held in PESS they conflict with other classes, so she is actively looking for other venues.  Ilya asked if the news about Charity Week has been publicised. Maeve R noted that it has been publicised. She remarked that An Garda Siochana have the power to pull Charity Week and due to feedback that they preferred for it to occur later in the semester to limit complaints, these has contributed to a later starting date. Maeve G noted this is also because there is a decreased chance of cancellation due to adverse weather, and that having it separate from other charity weeks within Limerick is preferred by An Garda Siochana.  Katie remarked the Shane Kilcommins had sent an email around in relation to student safety.  Niamh asked if the Nearly Naked Run will go ahead this year. Maeve R noted that there will be a glow run in collaboration with PESS and UL Sport to support charities and in memoriam of Jacinta O’Brien, a former UL staff member. Niamh asked if there will be event in memoriam of Ashling Murphy.  Edel advised that pubs in town are advertising charities. Maeve R noted that this often happens, but funds are not diverted to charities. | | | |  |  |
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**Duration: 90 minutes Next Meeting: 14th of February 6:00 PM**