

EDI BULLETIN

Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences



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Welcome from the Dean

Professor Helen Kelly Holmes, Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences



I am delighted to welcome you to the inaugural issue of the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Bulletin. The purpose of the bulletin is to keep the faculty updated on the implementation of the AHSS Athena SWAN Action Plan and to highlight other EDI activity taking place in the faculty. The introduction of the bulletin reaffirms our commitment to advancing equality, diversity and inclusion, as evidenced by our recent Athena Swan Bronze award and the appointment of an Assistant Dean dedicated to advancing EDI issues at a strategic level across the Faculty. It is so encouraging to read in the bulletin about the advances that are being made in all areas and activities across the Faculty. We are not perfect, there is much to do, and we have a long way to go, but the publication of this bulletin and the collection and showcasing of EDI initiatives as a means of spreading information and good practice is one more step along the path.

Athena SWAN Update

AHSS secured a Bronze **Athena SWAN** award in 2020. The Athena SWAN Bronze award recognises that the faculty is working to promote gender equality and to address challenges particular to the faculty and discipline. The award commits the faculty to implementing a four-year action plan to address the challenges identified during the self-assessment process.



Action 3.1 required a review of the membership of the AHSS Athena SWAN Self-Assessment Team (SAT). A call was issued to Heads of Department to nominate new members (two representatives per department/school). The SAT requested HoDs to re-nominate one existing representative and to nominate one new representative. The current members of the SAT are Ann Marcus-Quinn, Alan Cusack, Alistair Malcolm, Brendan Halpin, Carol Huguet, Chris McInerney, Colin Quigley, Helen Kelly Holmes, Helen Phelan, Lydia Bracken, Mariano Paz, Niamh NicGhabhann, Oonagh Grace, Ross MacMillan, Stephanie O'Riordan, Andrew Shorten, Yvonne Cleary.

We wish to sincerely thank the outgoing SAT members who have completed their terms: Catherine Martin, Fergal Quinn, Kathleen Turner, Rachel Murphy, Rina Carr, Tom Lodge.

Athena SWAN Attitudinal Survey

Action 3.3 of the AHSS Athena SWAN Action Plan commits the SAT to conducting annual attitudinal surveys with AHSS staff and students important to regularly collect feedback and monitor progress as actions are implemented. In light of the changing environment created by the COVID 19 pandemic, the SAT committed to issuing the first surveys within the first year of the Bronze award. To this end, the SAT wishes to invite faculty to participate in the AHSS Athena SWAN Staff Attitudinal Survey 2021. The purpose of the survey is to gather information on how staff are adjusting to remote working during the COVID 19 pandemic and to identify any supports that may be needed. The data gathered from the survey will be assessed by the SAT to ensure that the Athena SWAN action plan remains responsive to current conditions.

To understand the challenges for each group, some demographic questions and questions about where you work are included in the survey, but the sensitivity of this data is recognised, and these questions are optional.

All responses to the survey are anonymous. The survey will not link you to your response systematically. Please note, however, that it may be possible to infer your response from any commentary you may give.

The survey responses will be collated to highlight issues with remote working particularly equality and diversity issues that need to be addressed by the Faculty. Reports created will only be for groups of at least 10 respondents to ensure anonymity.

The survey should take no more than 10 minutes to complete. AHSS staff have received the link to the survey by email.

Training and Policies

Many of the Year 1 Athena SWAN actions relate to training and ensuring awareness of policies. These include the following:

Action	Notes/ Follow up for staff
Action 5.4: Make the completion of induction training compulsory for all new FAHSS staff.	All new staff should ensure that they complete induction .
Action 5.12: Ensure that all FAHSS staff are aware of the UL paternity leave policy and take official paternity leave when entitled to do so.	The UL Paternity Leave policy is accessible here .
Action 5.13: Ensure that all FAHSS staff are aware of the UL parental leave policy and are updated on any changes to the policy.	The UL Parental Leave policy is accessible here .
Action 5.14: Ensure all HoDs are aware of and adhere to flexible working entitlements and policies.	In December 2020, Caroline Lynn, AHSS HR Business Partner, presented to Faculty Board on leave policies and flexible working. That presentation can be accessed on SharePoint .
Action 5.20: Monitor the completion of compulsory dignity and respect training and follow up with any staff member who has yet to complete the training.	All staff should ensure that they complete dignity and respect training. See the HR Training Schedule for details of upcoming training.
Action 5.21: Make the completion of online unconscious bias training compulsory for all FAHSS staff.	Unconscious Bias On-Line Training can be completed at any time and is accessible here .
Action 5.28: Provide transparency with regard to the appointment of senior committee members	Committee chairs should notify staff by email of all new committee appointments and the appointments process used.

Athena SWAN is a standing item at AHSS Management Committee and Faculty Board. The AHSS Athena SWAN SAT wishes to remind faculty that Athena SWAN should also be a standing item on all departmental meeting agendas.



Faculty EDI Activity

Launch of the Graduate Certificate in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

On the 16th of February, the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences held a virtual event entitled 'A Conversation with EDI leaders in UL' with nearly 100 internal and external attendees present on the day. The event focussed on EDI initiatives led by both UL staff and students and included topics on race, gender, neurodiversity and mental health. The event was chaired by Dr Lydia Bracken, Assistant Dean, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and Course Director for the Graduate Certificate in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.



The **Graduate Certificate in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion** was also officially launched at this event by UL President, Professor Kerstin Mey, where she commended the Faculty for its work on this exciting programme and initiative. The Graduate Certificate is a one year, online, part-time programme that allows learners to develop an interdisciplinary understanding of equality, diversity and inclusion and explore strategies for change within their organisation.

For further information on the Graduate Certificate, including a detailed programme information video, please click [here](#).

Election of Dr Norah Burns to the Executive Board of the National Women's Council

In November 2020, Dr Norah Burns of the School of Law was elected to the board of the National Women's Council (NWC). The NWC was established in 1973 and represents 190 member groups across a diversity of sectors, backgrounds and geographical locations. The NWC's mandate is to take action to ensure that the voices of women in all their diversity are heard. Dr Burns was nominated to run for election by the Irish Women Lawyers Association. Dr Burns will serve on the executive board and the subcommittees on governance and new membership.



New Module developed by Dr Chris McInerney on Social Justice and Public Administration

The recent AHSS Athena Swan Bronze award emphasises that Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in a university setting requires action on a range of fronts, not least in what we teach. To this end, we are introducing a new module on the theme of Public Administration and Social Justice, which is now available to 4th-year students on the Public Administration and Leadership stream of the BA Arts.

This module builds on an extensive literature on social equity and public administration, especially in the US, that has encouraged higher education institutions to explicitly incorporate issues of justice, equity, equality and human rights into their programmes, especially their public administration offerings. While comparable encouragement is less visible on this side of the Atlantic, this module takes up the challenge.

So, why should there be a specific focus on public administration and social justice? George Frederickson, one of the early architects in the US of a public administration and social equity movement, has contended that governments and their institutions, including public administration, 'systematically discriminate' in favour of the privileged and against 'minorities who lack political and economic resources'. He, and others, argue that unless public administration systems work to redress discrimination, they will instead eventually become agents of repression. Many of us will be able to identify examples of where this happens. This is not to say that all public administration institutions practice discrimination, but all certainly need to be more overtly conscious of their potential to discriminate and of the ways that they may do so in practice.

This module has two main aims. It first seeks to equip students with some conceptual understandings of social justice, equity, equality, oppression, and social exclusion to provide them with the tools for critical analysis. With these, it is hoped that they can engage differently with the world around them. The module also presents students with examples of ways public administration in practice acts either to promote social justice or further embed inequality, discrimination, and oppression. During the module, students consider concrete social justice issues such as housing, the treatment of Travellers, the asylum process and others, and apply their evolving critical skills within group work settings.



New module: Policing and Human Rights Law in Ireland

The School of Law is delighted to announce the commencement of a new level 8 module on **Policing and Human Rights Law in Ireland**. This micro-credential module is a bespoke training programme for An Garda Síochána and has been accredited by the University of Limerick. This module aims to provide participants with an introduction to the workings and jurisprudence of the European Convention on Human Rights, particularly as it relates to policing in Ireland.



Policing and Intellectual Disability Research

Last year witnessed the launch of a 'UL Medico-legal Research Consortium' - a dynamic research collaboration between Dr Alan Cusack and Professor Shane Kilcommins of the School of Law and Professor Gautam Gulati and Professor Colum Dunne of the School of Medicine at the University of Limerick. The consortium is currently acting as the academic partner for a series of major national research projects, which are being carried out at the interface of policing and intellectual disability in collaboration with An Garda Síochána. These projects include:

- Drafting an easy-read Notice of Rights Form C.72(s) for suspects with intellectual disabilities in Ireland;
- Delivering a pilot disability awareness training programme for students on the BA in Applied Policing and MA in Serious Crime Investigation;
- Acting as a research partner for the rollout of a Crisis Intervention Team on a pilot basis in Limerick city.

All of the above projects are being led by Professor Gautam Gulati and Dr Alan Cusack in collaboration with a range of national and international experts based at the University of Oxford, Trinity College Dublin, National University of Ireland Galway and University College Cork.



Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee

Miriam Phillips, PhD Researcher and Guest Lecturer in the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance, has joined the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee of the Laban/Bartenieff Institute of Movement Studies (an international training program in movement analysis). As part of this, Miriam has completed Level 1 anti-racism training with the organization Humans in Common. For more information, see [here](#).

Mindful Music

UL staff have been taking part in Mindful Music sessions at lunchtime during working hours, initially as part of the AHSS Faculty EDI programme and then rolled out as part of the HR Be Well programme for staff wellbeing. Mindful Music is a form of mindfulness-based music therapy consisting of guided mindfulness-based live music listening combined with simple mindfulness practices (awareness of the breath /body scan/guided visualization). Six Mindful Music sessions were conducted in 2020, and the initiative was developed by a team at the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance led by Dr Hilary Moss. Research is underway on the potential benefit of this initiative on workplace stress and coping. Sessions were held in person and then went online due to the COVID pandemic. We are now measuring the benefit of this initiative in a study for UL staff*. Initial analysis of research indicates that the majority of staff rated themselves as 'tired' and 'busy' when they attended the lunchtime sessions and perceived an increase in relaxation and positive feelings post-session.

Prior to the pandemic, surveys of higher education institutes across Ireland were already reporting that third level educators experience high levels of work-related stress, which negatively impacts emotional wellbeing. The Mindful Music programme was supported as part of the University Human Resource Department's commitment to workplace wellbeing, and it is possible that the musical element appeals to people who find sitting in silence difficult to tolerate and may enable people to focus more easily on the present moment and take time to reflect on how they are and build coping skills. The bottom line is that everyone who attends this initiative is accepted non judgementally, as they are, and we aim for an inclusive activity to support staff at UL to develop coping skills and resilience during this difficult time of the pandemic. Plans are afoot to roll out the initiative to students as well as clinical staff at UHL.

*We would be very interested to hear from researchers who might wish to collaborate. Email Hilary.moss@ul.ie To participate in the current staff study (running Feb/March 2021), please email Sami on 19112084@studentmail.ul.ie

Female Representation at the Bar

Dr Hope Davidson from the School of Law conducted a series of interviews last semester with female lawyers. The aim was to give students an insight into professional practice as they make their way through their degree and towards their chosen career. In November 2020, she interviewed Majella Twomey BL, a barrister on the Dublin Circuit. Majella has had a fascinating career. In the interview, she tells us about her work in family law and international protection, but more importantly, perhaps here she discusses life as a female lawyer and how the bar has changed for the better with more female representation. Majella is a wonderful role model for female students as they think about their future career - and the joy with which she shares her diverse range of work with us makes this a really positive watch for male and female students alike.

Click [here](#) to watch the recording of the interview.

Bridging 'social distancing' with online intercultural conversations

In these times of very limited travel and reduced social interactions with others, language students in the School of Modern Languages and Applied Linguistics have the opportunity to take part, on a voluntary basis, in discussion sessions aiming at reinforcing links between language learners and native speakers and engaging all participants in intercultural exchanges thus contributing to internationalisation (Goal 3, UL@50 Strategic Plan 2019-2024).

The initiative, running since the start of the pandemic in March 2020, sees International students facilitating online discussion groups or individual sessions in their native language for UL language students. Started with a handful of Erasmus students in Spring 2020, the initiative now involves 29 International volunteers, including Erasmus and International students on campus, at home or from other institutions as well as au-pair workers based in Limerick and in the Mid-West Region. Sessions are offered in French, German, Japanese, Spanish and English with facilitators receiving training before embarking in their volunteering experience providing 26 weekly hours of speaking practice and intercultural exchanges with over 100 home students.

This project stems from a similar service offered for the past six years by the Language Learning Hub and usually running on a face-to-face basis, but due to the pandemic, its online iterations have proven to be an important factor in creating or reinforcing links between UL students and young people from different horizons and backgrounds. While giving students opportunities to engage in meaningful conversations and practise their target language(s) as well as providing them with a welcome escape from daily routines, it also promotes International students' integration into the UL community and develops their understanding of Irish culture.

Catherine Jeanneau, Language Learning Hub coordinator and peer-facilitated discussion groups in languages team.



National Review of Risk Assessment Practices Within An Garda Síochána

In June 2020, Dr. Alan Cusack was appointed to conduct a major national review of the An Garda Síochána Custody Record – Risk Assessment Form C.84(A) with a view to identifying areas for procedural reform and improvement in the treatment of vulnerable suspects and detainees in garda custody. The review was commissioned by the Human Rights Unit within An Garda Síochána as part of a wider, Government-led strategy to implement the recommendations outlined in the report of the Commission on the Future of Policing in Ireland in 2018 (Government of Ireland, A Policing Service for the Future - Implementing the Report of the Commission on the Future of Policing in Ireland, 2018).

In his review, Dr. Cusack proposed a series of reform measures which are aimed at elevating Irish police procedure in line with international best practice and human rights imperatives. At the time of writing, these reform proposals are under consideration by the Garda Commissioner, Drew Harris, and it is expected that they will be implemented shortly. Further information about this review and the proposals contained therein can be found in a research paper entitled 'Effective Policing in the Community' which was delivered by Kate Mulkerrins, Chief Superintendent Alan McGovern and Superintendent Michael McNamara at the National Disability Authority National Conference 2021.

Researcher Profile: Roxy Régine Theobald

I am a researcher in Arts Practice and a tutor in contemporary dance at the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance, University of Limerick. My arts practice research entitled 'Inner lines: exploring a diasporic trajectory through dance performance' excavates the puzzlement of my identity and my sense of belonging as a woman of colour in a globalized present. As an ex-pat scholar-practitioner, I investigate my dance practice as a mean of intersectional perspective and participatory engagement. Teaching at IWAMD helps to share my decolonized vision of dance studies within a dance performance programme. My teaching and learning endeavours contribute to diversity and inclusiveness within academia. Thus, the dance class gives students a chance to experience varied bodily expression and diversified dancemaking processes and that allows them to embrace a broader repertoire. Dance practice yields tangible insights about intersubjectivity, from this point of view, dance teaching is crucial to re-envision togetherness and collective mapping of places. 'The Big Sea', my first PhD performance which will be presented on 23 April 2021, tackles these issues across narratives, contemporary dance, music and visual imagery.



Establishment of the European Centre for the Study of Hate

The European Centre for the Study of Hate was established and awarded Priority Research Centre status by the University of Limerick in 2020. Led by Professor Amanda Haynes and Dr Jennifer Scheppe, the Centre builds on the success of, and incorporates, the Hate and Hostility Research Group which has been the focal point for research on hate and hate crime on the island of Ireland since its establishment in 2014. Membership of the Centre comes from three of the four faculties at UL, and it houses expertise in the areas of Sociology (Professor Amanda Haynes and Dr Martin J Power); Criminology (Professor Ross Macmillan); Law (Dr .

Jennifer Scheppe); Education (Dr Aoife Neary); Psychology (Dr Ronni Greenwood); Ethnomusicology (Dr Aileen Dillane); and Business (Dr Jean McCarthy).



The aim of the ECSH is to harness pan-sectoral and all-island expertise to understand hate and prejudice in its various manifestations and develop tools to combat hate. Its remit will include the full spectrum of bias-involved manifestations of hostility: extremism, populism, hate crime, hate speech, discrimination, and microaggressions. and their mobilisation against individuals due to their racialised identity, religion, sexuality, gender identity, or disability, as well as other commonly targeted identities.

The themes which focus the Centre's work are: European Understandings of Hate, Growing Up in an Inclusive Europe, Criminalising Hate, Populism, Politics, and Exclusion, Margins and Marginality. They are structured to establish unique research, teaching, supervision and training packages that will result in the dissemination of accessible, and digestible, world-leading research to an audience of knowledge users and generators.

The objectives of the ECSH are to:

- Develop new interdisciplinary and intersectional knowledge on hate;
- Share cross-sectoral expertise and equip policymakers with tools to combat hate;
- Raise public awareness and deepen public understanding of the determinants, realities and consequences of hate;
- Create a new generation of researchers expert in the field.

The Centre's objectives will be achieved through the coalescence of scholars, civil society actors, policymakers, activists and educators with the shared objective of combating prejudice on an all-island basis. The synthesis of cross-sectoral competencies, knowledge and experience will be directed towards the design of impactful policy and practice interventions.

For further details on the ECSH, see our website: www.ul.ie/ecsh.

Introduction to the Student Life Communities Officer, Chelsea Joyce



As the Communities Officer, I am a representative for all students; in particular, I am a voice for the minority students. These students include Disability, Mature, International, LGBTQ+, Sanctuary and Student Parents. I sit on various committees where I make suggestions on how we can improve the college experience for these particular student groups. My work entails organizing important campaigns and events.

These campaigns are aimed at educating and raising awareness for our students. Some of the campaigns that I will be planning this semester are Diversity and Gender Expression week. For Diversity week we will be doing some great

activities in order to celebrate the richly diverse campus we have here at the University. We will be organizing a Zoom cook along for students to join and try make some new traditional meals that our UL students have. We will also be doing quizzes every day on our Instagram account that hope to educate our students about different cultures within our student body.

The communities position looks at ways to make the campus a more open and inclusive environment, this work is heavily reliant on students conversing with me, for this reason I set up a communities team to discuss crucial changes we can make to improve the campus experience for our community student groups. This team meets every two weeks in order to discuss important suggestions that enables me to bring to the relevant committees I sit on.

I have also been helping roll out the new student life podcast called 'Are UL?' This podcast is very important we hope it will help improve engagement with the students as many are feeling isolated and disconnected from the campus. The podcast interviews will look at touching on relatable topics and interacting with important influencers, and alumni that students will be interested in listening to.

If you have someone in mind for the podcast interviews please email me at studentcommunities@ul.ie



Universal Design for Learning

Some Simple Strategies for Making your Course Materials More UDL-Compliant

As the **UDL guidelines** are very much aligned with what I teach (instructional design and information design), my awareness of UDL goes back a while. However, UDL will always be a work-in-progress, as there are always other ways to make your materials more accessible and usable for students.

Fortunately, UDL offers teachers a number of useful strategies to consider, ranging from relatively simple strategies—such as explaining complex terms—to more advanced strategies—such as offering students choice in the types of assignments they undertake. The remainder of this piece focuses on simple, practical strategies you can incorporate into your day-to-day teaching.

Very simple strategies include incorporating images and tables into your slides so they are not too text-heavy, adding alternative text for all non-text items (e.g. images and figures) to facilitate students using screen reading devices, stimulating recall of prior learning by linking to relevant background materials, and making reference to real-world scenarios to help students contextualise and transfer their learning. You can also do accessibility checks on your Word and PowerPoint presentations (before converting them to PDF) to make them more accessible. If you use a tool like Panopto to record your lectures, you can download an audio/ podcast recording of the lecture (MP3 format), so students can choose to review any combination of PowerPoint slides, the lecture presentation, captions, and the podcast. This kind of approach facilitates students with visual and/or hearing difficulties as well as those who like (or need) to access the materials on mobile devices.

In terms of VLE design, chunking your materials into weekly (or themed) folders facilitates orientation and comprehension. Using a consistent format for your weekly lectures (e.g. lecture overview, lecture objectives, lecture content, lecture summary, and references) helps students become familiar with the structure and focus on the content rather than the design.

Offering students asynchronous and synchronous tools, such as discussion forums and live chat, enables students to pick a mode of communication that best suits their circumstances and abilities (e.g. non-native English speakers tend to prefer asynchronous communication as they can think about their responses before posting). Both types of communication tools facilitate peer learning and a community of inquiry.

Aligning assessments with learning outcomes is essential as it helps students plan their learning and understand the value of the assessments. Making grading criteria clearly visible to students creates an environment where students know what is expected from them. Giving students a chance to submit drafts, and offering constructive feedback on those drafts, facilitates mastery learning.

Once you decide to consciously implement one or more UDL guidelines, it's important to commit to doing them from then on, as students will quickly come to expect it. I recommend applying UDL in small increments, rather than committing to several changes in one go, as it's easier to measure the effectiveness (and less stressful!)

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