



Council Meeting Minutes AY 2024/2025

Semester 1, Week 3 – 24th September 2024

Agenda

1. Minutes & Apologies
2. Matters arising
 - 2.1. Startups and Wind Downs:
 - 2.1.1. New Society – Pool
 - 2.1.2. Wind Downs
3. Clubs and Societies Budgets and Finances
4. Advice & Advocacy Department Presentation with Nicole
5. Meet your student officer team
6. C&S Fair Feedback
7. Scholars
8. What's on your mind?
9. AOB

Dervla Ryan went through the house rules and advised that the meeting was being recorded for the purpose of minutes

1. Minutes & Apologies

- 1.1. Minutes:
 - Proposed by: Jack Trehy (History)
 - Seconded by: Cuán Hayes (Games Society)
- 1.2. Apologies:
 - People Before Profit Society

2. Start-ups and wind downs

- 2.1. *Wind Downs*
 - 2.1.1. Good deed society
 - 2.1.2. Astronomy society

2.2. *Start Ups*

2.2.1. Deferred to Week 5.

3. Clubs and Societies Budgets and Finances

- 3.1. Dervla explained that the total budget for clubs and societies this year is €400,000, the same as last year, despite rising costs due to the cost of living and growing club memberships. Since expenses are increasing, but the budget remains fixed, it's important for everyone to carefully consider how the funds are allocated. When approving new clubs or funding requests, it's crucial to ask the necessary questions to ensure they are well-prepared, as approving too easily can affect others who need funding. Resources like money and space are limited, so thoughtful decisions are essential. If clubs feel they need more funding, they can push us to advocate more strongly with the university for additional financial support, which is already being worked on but is open to pushing harder if needed.
- 3.2. Aisling mentioned recently losing funding sources like the Enablement Fund, which was available for clubs and societies, it was about 40,000 euro that clubs and societies could have availed of. This is a number of years ago, and when Bank of Ireland were on campus, they had an agreement that they would spot use 40 grand a year sponsorship towards clubs and societies based on when they applied for it. We also lost the arts and sports fund.
- 3.3. Aisling - The postgraduate student's union are developing, which is encouraged, but as a byproduct, then their council voted to reduce the funding they give C&S, which, we can't say, no, you can't develop. The university, from my perspective, have no problem wheeling out the videos of you doing all your work and your activities and everything to attract students, but they don't understand that that costs a lot of money. Busses alone this year, we might just put together the cost from the budgets that was spent just on busses this year. It's ridiculous. Every cost is going up, and we still have the same amount of money, and it's becoming a real problem.
- 3.4. Aisling encouraged everyone to be vocal in demanding more funding from the university, highlighting that C&S is a major attraction for students, yet the cost of supporting them continues to grow. Aisling also emphasized the need to use the council space and the discussions tab to advocate for what's needed and consider how to allocate funds carefully.
- 3.5. Aisling – Anyone can contribute to the discussions tab - there was one about coaching expense, which people felt were too low, but it didn't go anywhere. And maybe it's transport, maybe it's, hosting into varsities versus traveling to them. Whatever it is, the discussions to have is a good space to use.
- 3.6. Katelynn Cremin (Dance UL) - raises concerns about the disparity in funding between societies and clubs, suggesting a rule to ensure a fair distribution.
- 3.7. Aisling responds - while clubs may spend more and seek sponsorships to boost their income, societies often don't fully utilize available funding. For example, in past years, €7,000 was allocated for societies through soulfest, but only a small portion was used, despite efforts to encourage participation. Aisling suggested that societies could benefit from workshops, such as a treasurers' workshop, to help them explore ways to increase both their income

and expenditure. The budget system is the same for everyone, but engagement from societies is crucial for fair distribution.

3.8. Aisling - Paul Lee has been doing some work in the background. We are looking to get a meeting and just sit down with the senior management team, because I don't think they understand what we do to the level of what we do, and they don't understand how much money we've lost, there's 200,000 euro of a shortfall there. Meaning we could put another 200,000 euro in, and you just about get what you asked for.

3.9. Aisling – I think something down the line, which a lot of people aren't going to like is we're going to have to look at how many overseas trips. It's too many per year, per club or society, should it just be one or two. If it's a competition that you have to travel for an Intervarsity. there's very big difficulty in going to senior management saying, We can't afford to get busses to Belfast, but this club went away six times last year. So it's kind of not really measuring up, and as a council, we really need to look into. We want to really show them how difficult it is for you to be doing your stuff with limited funds, and how much you could do if you had how much the amount that you need.

3.10. Aisling mentioned leaving finances in the agenda for the next council meeting to have a more in-depth conversation. To bring them to senior management.

4. Advice & Advocacy Department Presentation with Nicole

4.1. Dervla announced that Nicole couldn't make it at a last minute and was asked to do the presentation.

4.2. Dervla Introduced Shane and Nicole as the advice and advocacy team who handle student complaints, financial aid, academic queries, accommodation and general advice and support.

4.3. They have student appointments all week. They have inbox hours as well. If you have any question whether it's related to student life or just your life in general, academics, it is a fantastic place to go.

5. Meet your student officer team

5.1. Ronan (student president), Dervla (Community Officer), Síofra (welfare officer), and Sean (academic officer).

5.2. Ronan and Sean were unable to be present.

5.3. Síofra - I'm here to help you with anything to do through physical health, sexual and mental health. You can find me in my office or the Student Center. I work very closely with advice and advocacy.

5.4. Dervla - I've introduced myself already, but outside of C&S, I'm the

primary representative for equality, diversity and inclusion, interest of students,

and just general engagement, especially with religious and ethnic minority groups.

- 5.5. Sean is your academic officer. Whether it's undergraduate, postgraduate, PhD, masters, anything, part time courses, he's the guy to go to in terms of your academic concerns.

6. C&S Fair Feedback

- 6.1. Dervla – I wanted to give you guys the open space to give any C&S fair feedback, where something you thought went well, something that could be done better or improved on, or any ideas you might have for next year or next semester
- 6.2. Victoria (Unknown C&S) - Can we get earlier notice about information for the C&S fair?
- 6.3. Dervla - yeah, absolutely. We can take that on board, and we'll talk with the C&S department, and we can see if we can get that email about a bit earlier. It's been a bit of a structure change within CNS, so we have a new member, so we're still bringing that kind of out.
- 6.4. Aisling - Just for purpose of handovers, The C&S Fair is always Wednesday, week one every year. Our calendar of events doesn't change. So, hustings are week seven in Semester two. The C&S ball is always Week eight, Semester two. We can send out more notice, but if you want to put that in your handover documents so that you don't run into that next year, thanks.
- 6.5. Katelynn Cremin (Dance UL) - I really appreciated that it wasn't a sign up, that every society or club got their own space, that there was no registration. I also appreciate that it was numbered pods which helped people who might have been a little bit lost.
- 6.6. Dervla - We had a Wayfinding map this year, which was really handy for students who are first years, especially. I'm glad you found that useful.
- 6.7. Jack (history society) – A lot of students didn't know anything about do I need to have an account on the Wolves? How do I sign up for a society? How do I get our Wolves account? I don't know how much first years are being told but maybe an email could be sent out with all that information?
- 6.8. Aisling - if anyone has any feedback on how to get the word out there more. So, we're out there in the courtyard throughout the day. It's in all the intro talks to incoming first years. We put it on the website, we put it on social

media. So we're kind of, we, I agree with you. We're just kind of at a loss on what to do to tell people.

6.9. Dervla - I think, it is hard with first years, because they're getting so much information. I completely agree with you, it is so hard to get the specifics. I understand myself doing the C&S Fair. Most of it is helping people sign up, and that's quite time consuming. I'd be happy to listen to any feedback that would help us engage students like that. And if not, I can come back to the to the new executive, which was elected last week, and we can chat about brainstorming that kind of idea.

6.10. Noreen (Basketball Club) - Basketball club had a great experience at the C&S fair.

6.11. Katelynn Cremin (Dance UL) - suggested making the C&S fair more accessible for students with disabilities, such as starting earlier and providing quiet spaces.

6.12. Aisling - So what we did the last two years is we bought good ear defenders and had a room off the track where, if you did get overwhelmed, you could have ear defenders, and there were sensory toys in there, so a quiet space. What we did this year as well is Lisa and Jana organized two people to count. How many are there each hour, so that we could identify a sensory friendly hour. So exactly what you're saying. But it just didn't happen this year because we don't know when the best time is, and we are trying to line it up and have discussions with OPC and Computer Society that, what time could it be ready at? Could be started earlier and start 3:00 to 6:30 rather than 4:00 to 7:30 and then have an hour or even 45 minutes dedicated to there's no music going.

7. Scholars

7.1. Dervla seeks feedback on hosting C&S events in the Scholars Club, noting some issues raised last semester.

7.2. Milly (Musical Theatre) - Had a couple of negative experiences but encourages giving them another chance.

8. What's on your mind?

8.1. Jack (history society) - You mentioned you'll be strict about having one core committee member and one non-core committee member on each committee. For smaller societies with very few non-core committee members, how will this rule apply to us?

- 8.2. Aisling - Its minimum one of the two must be core, if there are two core members, that's even better.
- 8.3. Conor (fencing) - There's no opportunity for clubs and societies to operate an open networking session throughout the year. I know you mentioned previously that towards the end of the year, there's another event where you have a bunch of food and we have a chance to network and discuss this, but we don't really have the opportunity to network in the periods before that.
- 8.4. Aisling – Games Society are working on a discord service where it will be for committee members. They're trialing it.
- 8.5. Brendan (computer society) - we have a discord setup there's slowly bringing people into it. It's not a great system at the moment, but if you want, you can join. I plan to have a topic on the council in a few weeks time about it, but there's other stuff in the background that's going on that want to get done first.
- 8.6. Aisling asked by show of hands, if we set up something in the common room in the student centre similar to what we did after the admin seminar out for networking, how many do you would find it beneficial.
- 8.7. The result was high.
- 8.8. Aisling - we'll find a date that works, and we'll book the common room the student centre, get some pizzas and some cans of drinks, and you can just network.
- 8.9. Aisling also mentioned that the drop ins on Tuesday from 2 to 4 and Wednesday from 10 to 12 in the C&S room is a great way to network.
- 8.10. Rachel (environmental) - gave an update that the Society is recovering from a difficult period with low membership and a small committee
- 8.11. Katelynn Cremin (Dance UL) - Is it possible to collaborate with more than one club or society for events, especially for charity purposes?
- 8.12. Dervla - Yes, you are allowed to collaborate with multiple clubs or societies. Just ensure that you inform the office for logistical purposes, like insurance and event safety.

9. AOB

10. Dervla- as we transition to the new student centre, we're going on to a new booking system called momentous. I just ask that all club and societies or committees will you just check that your generic email on your site is up to date, because that's the email the bookings instructions were sent to. So, we have a new booking system now, so just make sure everything's up to date.

