

Officer Report  
of the Social Sciences Faculty Convenor  
of Maynooth Students' Union (MSU)  
to Student Senate



Carrie O'Neill

Social Sciences Faculty Convenor  
Tionólaí Dhámh na n-Eolaíochtaí Sóisialta

PERIOD OF WORK: 1<sup>ST</sup> JULY 2022 – 1<sup>ST</sup> NOVEMBER 2022  
EMAIL: [SOCIALSCIENCE@MSU.IE](mailto:SOCIALSCIENCE@MSU.IE)

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Haigh a chairde!

I hope you all had a **great** and **productive** study week, along with a **well-deserved rest** (I know I did at least!)

Just for the **purposes** of an **introduction**, my name is **Carrie**. I am the **Social Sciences Faculty Convenor** for this year. I am currently a **final year student** studying **International Business & Chinese Studies**. For a bit of **background** into my **representative journey**, I started out as an **Academic Representative** for **International Business** and was in that role for both **first** and **second** year. I was the **Charity Senator** last year, along with being the **second Deputy Chairperson** during the **Sixth Session** of the **Student Senate**... Thanks for that one Gavin!

I would like to say how **honoured** I am to be here writing my **first ever officer report**. To be honest, I'm still **getting used** to having to write one and I am still **settling** into my **role**, and it is frankly quite **terrifying** as well. However, since the **start** of our term in **July**, I have been **working hard** with **assisting** our **full-time officers** with orientation week, planning the recruitment process for Academic Representatives, working on the student handbook, etc.

To my fellow **Executive Officers** – Niall, Alex, Kealan, Lucas, Kyla, Gavin, Craig, Sneha, and Giovanni - I am **looking forward** to seeing all the work we can and will achieve this year. Especially with **everything** the team has been doing over the last the few weeks.

To the returning senators, **welcome back!** I look forward to seeing what you all bring to the table this year. To the new senators, as terrifying as it can be, **don't be afraid to be vocal** and go for **any** of the positions that come up at senate. Finally, to my Academic Reps, I am excited to get you work with you and to support you all throughout the year, and **congratulations** on getting elected!

Finally, a special **thank you** to the LGBT+ Senator, **Ben Holmes**, and the Active Citizenship Senator, **Jessica Lennon**, for keeping me on my toes and for being great moral support!

If you have **any burning questions** regarding the work that I do, my **email inbox** is always **open** ([socialscience@msu.ie](mailto:socialscience@msu.ie))! Thank you all for taking the time to read through my officer report 🌟

Wishing you all a fantastic academic year!

Le grá,

Carrie (she/they) x

Image Description:

A **photo of me** outside the **Arts Annex** with the background of the bushes.



## CONSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Article **10.1 – 10.5** of the **MSU Constitution** sets out the constitutional responsibilities of the MSU Social Sciences Faculty Convenor. I have outlined my constitutional responsibilities below and have commented on my progress in fulfilling them.

### *List of Constitutional Responsibility:*

- 1. The Faculty Convenors shall be the primary means of communications between the students and student academic representative in their Faculty and the Executive. In particular the Faculty Convenors shall be responsible for raising awareness of issues specific to their respective faculties in all appropriate for a including the Student Senate and Executive Meetings.**

Academic Representatives have been elected. I have assisted with multiple Academic Issues including but not limited to:

- Assignment overload
- Lack of clarity with assignment briefings
- Issues with the delivery of class content

I have emailed lecturers on behalf of students and assisted academic reps with curating emails for them to send to lecturers.

I continue to be a support for my reps and students in the faculty if any issues arise.

In relation to feedback, I've had lecturers respond well to feedback provided by both myself and reps, and have taken the feedback into account. This has helped lessen the stress that the students are facing in their modules.

**2. They shall be responsible for the recruitment of Student Academic Representatives within their own faculty.**

I have **worked alongside** the VP Education, Alex Balfe and the Academic Representation Administrator, Seán Masterson, to discuss different ways to **recruit** Academic Representatives.

I have met with the VP Education and Academic Representation Administrator multiple times to **discuss the progress** of Academic Representative Recruitment.

- I have **compiled** a list of **lectures** from my Faculty and my own classes.
- Each day I would **analyse** the Academic Representative **Call of Business** report to **focus** on the **key courses** that may not have a representative going forward.

**3. Each Faculty Convenor shall arrange for a Faculty Assembly meeting to occur in their respective faculties normally six times per academic year, normally with three meetings per semester.**

The first meeting of Social Sciences Faculty Assembly took place **on October 21<sup>st</sup>** during Academic Rep Training.

**4. The Faculty Convenor shall be the Chairperson of their respective Faculty Assemblies.**

I **chaired** the first meeting of Social Sciences Faculty Assembly on **October 21<sup>st</sup>**.

**5. A Deputy Chairperson and Secretary shall be elected from the Faculty Assembly at the first meeting for the year.**

I have elected a Deputy Chairperson and Secretary at the first meeting of the Social Sciences Faculty Assembly.

The Deputy Chairperson is **Aoife Hynes** and the Secretary is **Sarah Lindsay Swan**.

**6. They shall, where practicable, undergo training during the summer months as organised by the Union.**

I have **participated** in Executive Crossover and Officer Training in June.

## MANIFESTO INITIATIVES

While running for Social Sciences Faculty Convenor, I outlined several manifesto pledges. Throughout my term I will make progress on each of these promises to the best of my ability.

### *List of Manifesto Initiatives:*

#### 1. Social

- a) Promoting **campaigns & initiatives** and **encouraging** academic reps to get involved.
- b) Informal **team bonding** sessions for Academic Representatives as such **tea/coffee mornings**.

#### 2. Equality (Accessibility & Diversity)

- a) Ensure that all **documentation** is **accessible** for students and academic reps.
- b) Continue to have a **blended** option for students who are not on campus.
- c) Work with the VP Welfare & Equality to create a working group/forum/advisory panel to promote diversity in leadership roles.

#### 3. Empower

- a) Encourage the Academic Representatives in the Social Sciences Faculty to go for other roles / positions if they are thinking of running for them.
- b) Ensure that the Academic Representatives **elected** as members of the **Student Senate** are made known to fellow representatives.

- c) Encourage members that sit on the MSU Students Senate to take part in the '**Senate Updates**' section of the Social Sciences Faculty Assembly meetings.

#### **4. Activism**

- a) Promote **activism** within the Social Sciences Faculty Assembly by having a segment dedicated to Academic Reps to bring any issues or campaigns related to activism.

#### **Social**

**Promoting campaigns and initiatives and encouraging academic reps to get involved.**

- I will be **promoting** any **campaigns** and **initiatives** through the Social Sciences Faculty **Assembly group chat**.
- I have **promoted** the **#WheresMyLevy** campaign through my Social Sciences **email** and through the **group chat**.

**Informal team bonding sessions for Academic Representatives such as tea/coffee mornings.**

- I will be working with the **VP Education** and the **Faculty Convenors** with organising this.
- I have spoken to the **Academic Representation Administrator** about the **feasibility** of holding a coffee morning for Academic Reps.
- I plan to **utilise** this for a **future meeting** of the Social Sciences Faculty Assembly.



## **Equality (Accessibility & Diversity)**

**Ensure that all documentation is accessible for students and Academic Reps.**

- This manifesto point is in line with the **regulations** of the '**Accessible Documentation**' Mandate.
- I will ensure that all my **officer reports** and **documentation** that is **distributed** to Senators and to Academic Representatives are following those **guidelines**.

**Continue to have a blended option for students who are not on campus.**

- Due to the Faculty Assembly meeting during Academic Rep Training being **in-person**, I **could not** facilitate a **blended option** for this meeting.
- However, going **forward** for **future** meetings, I will be **facilitating** a **blended option** for my reps.

**Work with the VP Welfare & Equality to create a working group/forum/advisory panel to promote diversity in leadership roles.**

- This is currently in the **planning process**. I will be working alongside the **VP Welfare and Equality** on the creation of the **Diversity Panel**.
- I have been **working alongside** the **LGBT+ Senator**, Ben Holmes, on a **potential plan** for the panel.

## **Empower**

**Encourage the Academic Representatives in the Social Sciences Faculty to go for other roles / positions if they are thinking of running for them.**

- I **encouraged** reps to go for **roles** within **the Social Sciences Faculty** such as the **various committees** and roles.

- However, there are currently **two vacant** seats on the **Student Charter Committee** within the **Social Sciences Faculty**.
- I will **be encouraging reps** to go for the committee at the **next Faculty Assembly**.

**Ensure that the Academic Representatives elected as members of the Student Senate are made known to fellow representatives.**

- During the **first meeting** of the **Social Sciences Faculty Assembly**, members of the faculty **elected** their Faculty Senators.
- The **Academic Representatives** that **were elected** onto the Student Senate are: **Aoife Hynes, Elizabeth Mccolgan, and Michelle Gorman**.
- The **Academic Representatives** that **currently** sit on the Student Senate are: **Conor Cronin** (Independent Senator), **Michael Comer** (Community Senator), **Vivek Allampally** (Charity Senator).
- I have circulated a **document** via **email** to the Academic Reps **highlighting** the **list** of the **Reps elected** at the meeting.

**Encourage members that sit on the MSU Student Senate to take part in the 'Senate Updates' section of the Social Sciences Faculty Assembly meetings.**

- At the **first** meeting of the **Social Sciences Faculty Assembly**, we elected the **three academic** reps that would sit on the Student Senate.
- The list of Academic Reps that sit on the Student Senate in the paragraph above.
- As the **first sitting** of the **Student Senate** has **not met**, there was no Senate Update required.

- Once the **first sitting** of the **Student Senate** has taken place on November 9<sup>th</sup>, I will be **encouraging** Academic Reps that sit on Senate **to provide** the **'Senate Update'**

## **Activism**

**Promote activism within the Social Sciences Faculty Assembly by having a segment dedicated to Academic Reps to bring any issues or campaigns related to activism.**

- I will be **promoting** any **activism initiatives** through the Social Sciences Faculty Assembly **group chat**.
- There will be a **dedicated segment** for **activist issues** during future meetings of the Social Sciences Faculty Assembly.

## **MOTION & MANDATES**

There are many motions & mandates that require participation from my role. Throughout my term I will make progress on each of these motion & mandates to the best of my ability. Below is a list of all active motion & mandates that require my participation, with updates on my progress with each one.

### *List of Motion & Mandate:*

1. Active Engagement in National Climate Justice Protests
2. Accessible Documentation
3. Irish Language Campaign Visibility
4. MSU Position on Publicly Funded Education
5. Neutrality in other Student Union Elections
6. Action on Decriminalisation of Drugs Referendum
7. Voter Registration

### **1. Active Engagement in National Climate Justice Protests**

I plan to attend any Climate Justice protests where I can.

### **2. Accessible Documentation**

I have ensured that my first Officer Report is in an accessible format for students by:

- Using the **font Calibri**
- Using **font size 14**
- Using **1.5 line spacing**
- Providing a **description** of any **images** included
- Using **bold** for important points

### **3. Irish Language Campaign Visibility**

I will try my best to use my **cúpla focal** when I can.

I have the use of Irish for the following:

- In my **Email Closing and Signature**
- In the documentation such as my **Officer Report.**

I will be continuously learning Irish again alongside my other language studies.

### **4. MSU Position on Publicly Funded Education**

No work has been done on this yet.

### **5. Neutrality in other Students Union Elections**

I have remained neutral in other Students Union Elections.

### **6. Action on Decriminalisation of Drugs Referendum**

No work has been done on this yet.

### **7. Voter Registration**

No work has been done on this yet.

## ACADEMIC REPRESENTATIVES

As Social Sciences Faculty Convenor, it is my duty to ensure that academic representatives are elected. Below you can find an update on my progress with this duty.

### Academic Representatives Elected

*I have elected **65.6%** of the Academic Representatives in the Social Sciences Faculty.*

Here is the **breakdown** of the Academic Representative figures in my Faculty:

Category	Seats		Potential Seats Filled		Nominations	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Overall	302	100	183	60.6	265	100
SS	122	40.4	80	65.6	118	44.5

- The Academic Representative **Recruitment** campaign began on Tuesday, September 20<sup>th</sup> to Monday, October 3<sup>rd</sup>. Throughout this period, I was **actively recruiting** Academic Reps.
- I **promoted** Academic Rep **Recruitment** on my **personal Instagram** stories over the **two weeks** of the recruitment campaign.
- I **assisted** with the Academic Representative **Recruitment** table under the tent outside the John Hume building and occasionally at the MSU Stand during Clubs and Societies Fairs Day.
- We had **incentives** for students to become an Academic Rep such as a **free** can of **Red Bull** and a pack of **Trebor Mints** if they successfully **nominated** themselves as an Academic Representatives.

- During my shifts at the AR Recruitment table, I **talked** to many **students** who were **interested** in becoming a **representative**, many of which were studying a subject within the **Social Sciences Faculty**.
- I had a **QR code** on the back of my **phone case** linked to the Academic Representative **Nomination Form** as an easy way to **encourage** prospective representatives to **sign up**.
- I met most of my Academic Reps during the Training Sessions on October 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>.
- I will be working alongside the VP Education and the Academic Representation Administrator with filling the vacant seats in the Social Sciences Faculty.

### Training:

Academic Representative **training** is **took** place from **Friday, 21<sup>st</sup> October** to **Saturday, 22d October**.

Here is an overview of Academic Rep Training schedule.

## ACADEMIC REP *Training*

### Friday 21st Oct

- 9:00-Registration, Coffee & Croissants
- 10:00-What is MSU?
- 10:45-What is an Academic Rep?
- 11:40-How to be Taken Seriously?
- 12:30-MU Registrar and Dr Aisling Flynn  
Overview of the Office of the Dean of Teaching and Learning and Student Skills and Success
- 13:00-LUNCH
- 14:15- How to Organise a Class Night Out
- 14:45-Academic Landscape
- 16:05-Faculty Assembly & Academic Assembly
- 17:00-Student Success- Feedback session
- 18:30-Mario Kart and Pizza

## ACADEMIC REP *Training*

### Saturday 22nd Oct

- 10:00- MU - The Experiential Learning Office and Becoming Future Ready
- 10:15- MU, The Writing Centre
- 10:30- MU Moodle Support Centre
- 10:45-Communications & Handling Complaints - Dr. Susi GottlÖber
- 11:30-The Academic Advisory Office - Rose Donovan
- 12:15-How to Negotiate - Dr. Paul Donovan
- 13:30-LUNCH
- 14:30-Taking Collective Action
- 15:30-What Makes a Good Academic Rep - VP Academic Affairs, Union of Students, Ireland

## **COMMITTEES**

I have listed the committees that I am a member of and have tried to give a description of their remit and some of the activities they undertake. I have also listed my contribution to these committees below.

*Committee that the Social Sciences Faculty Convenor is a member of:*

1. MSU Executive
2. MSU Student Senate
3. MSU Social Sciences Faculty Assembly
4. MSU Academic Assembly
5. MSU Academic Representation Review Committee
6. MSU Student Engagement and Feedback Committee
7. MSU Student Charter Committee
8. MSU Constitutional & Representation Review Committee
9. MU Faculty of Social Sciences
10. MU Social Sciences Teaching & Learning Committee

### **MSU Executive**

*The Union Executive acts as a collective authority and are responsible for the day-to-day operation of the Union. The Executive has the power to take necessary decisions in between meetings of the Student Senate.*

- I have attended **all** meetings of the MSU Executive.

### **MSU Student Senate**

*The governing body of the Union is the Student Senate. The three core functions of the Senate are to formulate Union policy, mandate members of the Executive, and hold the Executive accountable.*



- The first sitting of the **Seventh Session** of the Student Senate was due to take place on **October 26<sup>th</sup>**.
- However, the first sitting has been postponed to **November 9<sup>th</sup>** due to unforeseen circumstances.

### **MSU Social Sciences Faculty Assembly**

*The Social Sciences Faculty Assembly provides a forum for discussions on all issues relevant to the education, welfare, and student experience for students in the Social Sciences Faculty.*

- The Social Sciences Faculty Assembly met on Friday, October 21<sup>st</sup>.
- I have circulated a **doodle** poll for **Academic Reps** to fill for the next meeting which will be held after the first meeting of the Student Senate.

### **MSU Academic Assembly**

*The Student Academic Assembly provides a forum for all academic representatives to provide feedback and advice on academic-related issues to the VP Education and the Faculty Convenors.*

- The MSU Academic Assembly met on **October 21<sup>st</sup>**.

### **MSU Academic Representation Review Committee**

*The Academic Representation Review Committee advises the VP Education on the effectiveness and development needs of student academic representation.*

- No meetings of the MSU Academic Representation Review Committee have taken place.

### **MSU Student Engagement & Feedback Committee**

*The Student Engagement & Feedback Committee reviews the mechanisms for students to provide feedback on the quality of their educational experience.*

- No meetings of the MSU Student Engagement & Feedback Committee have taken place yet.

### **MSU Student Charter Committee**

*The Student Charter Committee reviews and develops the Student Charter between MSU and Maynooth University.*

- No meetings of the MSU Student Charter Committee have taken place yet.

### **MSU Constitutional & Representation Review Committee**

*Established by the MSU Constitution and the Student Senate to examine the Constitution to be in a position to advise the Student Senate of the need for any changes it deems necessary, and to review and develop the representative structures of the Union.*

- No meetings of the MSU Constitutional & Representation Review Committee have taken place yet.

### **MU Faculty of Social Sciences**

*The Maynooth University Faculty of Social Sciences deals with all business relating to the departments of the Faculty. The Faculty makes decisions and recommendations on a range of internal and academic issues.*

- I **attended** my **first meeting** of the MU Faculty of Social Sciences on **September 5th**. I did **not provide** any **important** remarks throughout the meeting as I wanted to **gain perspective** on the functions of the faculty.
- I **attended** the **second meeting** of the MU Faculty of Social Sciences on **October 17th**.
- The next meeting of the MU Faculty of Social Science is due to take place on **November 28th**.

### **MU Social Sciences Teaching & Learning Sub-Committee**

*The Teaching & Learning sub-committee is a purely advisory body that gives recommendations to the Faculty. These recommendations are in relation to new academic courses, modules, and programs. The committee also discusses the standard of teaching and learning more generally in the Social Sciences Faculty.*

- The MU Social Sciences Teaching & Learning Sub-Committee has not met yet.
- The meeting date of the T&L Committee has yet to be decided.

## **GENERAL ACTIVITIES**

The work of Social Sciences Faculty Convenor is not just confined to constitutional roles and manifesto initiatives. There is a wide variety of activities undertaken by me in the execution of my role. I have given a comprehensive list of these activities below.

*List of some of the main other general activities undertaken:*

1. Before Office – USI Congress
2. Orientation
3. #WheresMyLevy Walkout
4. MSU Bye-Election Polling Day
5. #WheresMyLevy March to Riverstown

### **Before Office – USI Congress**

Before I began my term as the Social Sciences Faculty Convenor, I attended USI Congress (Comhdháil) in March 2022, after my election as the SS Faculty Convenor.

USI Congress is an annual student led conference where student union representatives and their delegates attend to pass motions and to vote for the new Coiste Gnó. I attended Congress as an Observer with the MSU Delegation, and I spoke on the motion on EMpower, for delegates to have this important event in the policy manual for the VP Equality & Citizenship.

### **Photo description:**

Photo of me (with pink hair) at USI Comhdháil in March, talking about my experience with attending EMpower and why Delegates should pass the motion.



## **Orientation (Week of September 19<sup>th</sup>)**

During **Orientation**, I was quite **proactive** within the **SU** and the **University**, between **Academic Rep Recruitment** with the VP Education and the Faculty Convenors and being an **Orientation Leader**. Over the week of Orientation, I **assisted** with **Freshers' pack** preparation and handing packs out to incoming **first year** students as they were leaving their SU talks. The incoming first year students received a great MSU branded bag with many goodies to get them through their first week of college.

## **#WheresMyLevy Walkout**

On Thursday, **6<sup>th</sup> October**, **MSU** organised a student wide **walkout at 11:11am** due to the **disappointment** felt by all regarding the **cancellation of the student centre**. I attended the walkout and also spoke about my own experience with the lack of student spaces and the frustrations of not having adequate facilities while on campus.



### **Image description:**

Me standing on the bench outside of John Hume during the #WheresMyLevy Walkout speaking into the megaphone.

## **MSU Bye-Election Polling Day**

During **polling day** (Tuesday, 18<sup>th</sup> October), I **assisted** the team with **encouraging students to vote** in the **MSU Executive** and **Student Senate** elections.

I **managed** the **Polling Booth** located in the **Foyer** of the **MSU Club** with the Communications & Campaigns Support Coordinator, Tyran.

## **#WheresMyLevy March to Riverstown**

On **Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> October** at **11:11am**, MSU organised a student led march from **John Hume** to **Riverstown House** on **South Campus**, the **office** of the **MU President**. This **march** was to **hand deliver** the **petition** that was signed by over 2,000 students. I assisted with the march as a Steward to ensure that all students attending are keeping safe, especially when crossing from **North Campus** to **South Campus**.

### **Image Description:**

**Photo of me** wearing a hi-vis & holding the MSU

Flag during the March to Riverstown protest.



## MEETING SCHEDULE

Below is an indicative schedule of meetings that I have attended. This is shown to portray how often I have meetings and the level of consistency with which these committees meet at. There are also many meetings needed outside of those committees.

### *Meeting Schedule:*

- **Week 3 (11/07/2022)**

14<sup>th</sup> July – 10:00 – Carr Communications Training

15<sup>th</sup> July – 14:00 – MSU Executive Meeting

- **Week 5 (25/07/2022)**

29<sup>th</sup> July – 14:00 – MSU Executive Meeting

- **Week 7 (08/08/2022)**

8<sup>th</sup> August – 14:00 – Education Planning Meeting

9<sup>th</sup> August – 14:00 – Activities Meeting

12<sup>th</sup> August – 14:00 – MSU Executive Meeting

- **Week 9 (22/08/2022)**

22<sup>nd</sup> August – 10:00 – MSU Executive Photos

25<sup>th</sup> August – 15:00 – Charity Partner of the Year Shortlisting Panel

26<sup>th</sup> August – 10:00 – Student Handbook Review

26<sup>th</sup> August – 14:00 – MSU Executive Meeting

- **Week 10 (29/08/2022)**

29<sup>th</sup> August – 09:30 – Plan of Work

31<sup>st</sup> August – 09:30 – MSU Executive Plan of Work Consultation

1<sup>st</sup> September – 16:00 – Handbook Review

- **Week 11** (05/09/2022)

5<sup>th</sup> September – 15:00 – Faculty of Social Sciences Meeting

7<sup>th</sup> September – 11:00 – Student Success Action Plan Workshop

- **Week 12** (12/09/2022)

13<sup>th</sup> September – 10:00 – MU Orientation Leader Training

16<sup>th</sup> September – 14:00 – MSU Executive Meeting

- **Week 14** (26/09/2022)

26<sup>th</sup> September – 17:00 – MSU Executive Meeting

30<sup>th</sup> September – 14:00 – MSU Executive Meeting

- **Week 16** (10/10/2022)

10<sup>th</sup> October – 17:00 – Officer Report Training

14<sup>th</sup> October – 14:00 – MSU Executive Meeting

- **Week 17** (17/10/2022)

17<sup>th</sup> October – 15:00 – MU Faculty of Social Sciences Meeting

19<sup>th</sup> October – 13:00 – Meeting with Ben Holmes

21<sup>st</sup> October – 16:00 – MSU Academic Assembly Meeting

- **Week 18** (24/10/2022)

24<sup>th</sup> October – 10:15 – Meeting with VP Welfare & Equality



24<sup>th</sup> October – 17:00 – MSU Executive Meeting

25<sup>th</sup> October – 16:00 – Meeting with Steph Collins and Ben Holmes

26<sup>th</sup> October – 18:30 – Meeting with VP Welfare & Equality and Ben Holmes

## **EXPENSES CLAIMED**

To ensure that I am transparent and accountable for my expenditure below is a list of all expenses that I have claimed.

*List expenses claimed:*

I have **claimed no** expenses.