



Union of Students in Ireland
Aontas na Mac Léinn in Éirinn

Final PG Working Group Meeting 23/06/2020
3 - 4 pm

Agenda:

Present: Sara Dowling (VPPGA - In the attic), Cameron Keighron (NUIGSU), Brandon Walsh (NUIGSU), Barry Egan (TUDSU), Adam Clarke (ITCSU), Kelsey Bruce (NUIGSU), Daniel Sogaolu (TUDSU), Lucien Waugh-Daly (DCUSU), Dylan Mangan (DCUSU), Sean Farrelly (TUDSU), Chloe McMorrow (DCUSU), Moya Browne (TUDSU)

- Welcome and Check-in
VPPGA welcomed all participants and explained the working group and the importance of the same.
- Round table Introductions
All participants introduced themselves, what role they had and a bit about their experience with or hopes of working on PG issues.
- Any MO issues or concerns

- PBS/ Gov response to COVID, PG Asks [VPPGA]
Gave an update on what USIs response to PG asks in the Government response and pre budget submission. This highlighted issues that had been heightened during Covid 19 including increased workloads, stipends, fundings and extensions. Approaches have been fairly institution specific thus far and now a need for a national response.
- Irish Research Council Why Research Matters Update [VPPGA]
Sara's Pride & Joy <3. This came about from the PG symposium where students were invited to present their research in a ted talk style, unfortunately Covid 19 meant the symposium was cancelled and this element was adapted for online purposes and opened up to more researchers to submit videos of their research for a 500e prize. This is helping to build relationships with the IRC. This competition focused on what their research

meant and the impact it could have. Over 80 applications with a shortlist of 14. Applicants were of an extraordinary high level. Thank you graphics/video to launch next week, winner to be announced on June 29th (Sara's last day (Sad)). Due to quality of videos, IRC have announced 2 further prizes of 250e for runner-ups, this has also been confirmed to now be an annual competition. Essentially Sara is great and she should be proud of herself for all the work she put into this also.

- SIPTU Postgraduate Research, Living and Working Conditions Report [VPPGA]

As part of the SIPTU workers right campaign (Started off with a survey last year) data highlighted lots of precarious working conditions faced by PG students across Ireland including lack of pay, access to resources and financial constraints. From the survey and partnerships the PG workers rights charter was created. With the survey, analysis, charter and presentations done to date Sara has compiled an extensive report that can be used as a lobbying document going forward. On the final page of the report it has a list of asks, things that PG students and those working with them have compiled and said are important/necessities. Sara got the report to work on google hangouts (YAY - IT LOOKS SO PRETTY). Some really good stats in the report highlighting the issues and conditions facing PG students.

- Strengths of the Year & What you have learned & What you will pass on to incoming officers on PG matters

Cameron - Advice; Don't assume you understand the issues, talk to PG students, include them in events, include them in orientation programmes, don't assume they know everything. Learned; You cannot fix PG issues in a year, NUIGSU built a foundation of trust with PG students this year but have a lot more to do. Go in with bit ambitions of what you want to do, but be happy by any meaningful engagement you get.

Daniel - Advice/Learned; Bring them into existing structures, create networks for them, ensure you have people to run for the positions in your Union. Make sure you listen to them and include them in these working groups and USI

- Welcome and Introduction to incoming VPPGA Adam Clarke
Adam taking over for Sara, masters student and is going to be incredible :)
- Final thanks & thoughts by VPPGA!
We are going to miss Sara!