



Vote Martina No.1 For WELFARE

I Have Your Student Body Covered!

MARTINA HANLEY
SU WELFARE
OFFICER 2018/19

ABOUT ME

Hi everyone, my name is Martina Hanley, I'm a final year genetics student and I want to represent each and every one of you as your Students Union Welfare Officer for 2018/2019. In second year of college, I joined my first clubs, Trampoline and Equestrian. Through getting involved in these clubs, I became very interested in student issues, and decided I wanted to take on more of a role in the student community. I went on to become involved in the Trampoline club committee in third year as the events officer where I saw the need to bring in a position for a welfare officer on our committee to replace the OCM position we had.

After introducing the welfare officer position to the Trampoline committee I took on the position in fourth year as well as becoming more involved with the Equestrian club as their events officer. Running for welfare has always been on my mind but I wanted to wait until I had the experience and maturity to do the job justice. During my time spent involved in club committees, I have been involved in many charity events including Relay for Life, bake sales for CUH children's charity, a Nearly Naked Bounce for mental health week to promote body positivity, and a Bounce Away Your Blues event to promote using exercise and the positive community spirit of a club in looking after your mental health. This year I have also become involved in the welfare crew. I have the communication and organisational skills for the job, as well as being caring, reliable and non-judgemental traits which I feel would make me be the right candidate for the job.



MENTAL HEALTH

Mental health has always been an important issue for students, and in recent years there has been a huge change in peoples' attitudes towards openly dealing with and speaking about their mental health. However, there is still much more work that needs to be done, and I intend to make it a focus of my campaign to reduce the stigma around mental wellbeing.

I have many ideas on how to tackle this, including making it easier to make an appointment with the welfare officer, or other members of the welfare crew, by implementing an online booking system. This would allow students to select a time to meet when it suits them.

The long waiting list to meet with a counsellor is one of the biggest issues with the current system. I intend to lobby for more funding for counselling services within the university, and to connect students to external support services, such as Pieta House, Aware, and SHINE. This will ensure that each student receives the support they need, when they need it.

I believe it is also essential to introduce a welfare officer on each club and society committee, as well as on the club's exec and societies guild, to help students on a more personal scale and create a better support system throughout the entire college. The entire welfare crew and each of these welfare officers will also attend Safe Talk Training to equip them with the skills and knowledge to help students in distress. We will also conduct interviews to expand the welfare crew, to create a team that is just as passionate and dedicated to students' wellbeing as I am!



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If I am elected as your welfare officer, I will expand both Mental Health weeks, encouraging all clubs and societies to get involved to a greater extent. I would also increase the focus on Body Positivity Week, as I believe this is an extremely important week that is often overlooked by many, in a world where there is increasing pressure on young people to conform to unrealistic standards. The Mental Health weeks would be divided into different aspects on different days to help reduce stigma and create awareness for the different sides of mental health.

Categories such as anxiety, schizophrenia, Bipolar Disorder, Borderline Personality Disorder (which are often developed at 17/18 years old, when students are entering college) are all aspects that should not be overlooked, as mental health is not just about depression.

If elected welfare officer I would like to create an anonymous blog amongst students, where they can share their highs and lows of college. They can describe the obstacles they had to overcome when going through university and give advice on how to overcome them. University is a completely new experience to most, where everyone is thrown in at the deep end. Students don't have anyone to ensure they attended lectures and are coping with the new changes college brings. In order to make sure that nobody falls through the cracks, I want to create a university body that looks out for each other.

SEXUAL HEALTH & WELLBEING

Sexual health is of great importance to all students whether we want to say it out loud or not. Awareness needs to be brought to all students about the dangers associated with STI and STDs. I would hope to promote SHAG week on a larger scale to encourage safe sex practices and ensure all student are aware of the services that are available to them.

I would also try and reduce the cost of cervical and prostate screening and make them available to students under 25. Cervical and prostate cancer are the most commonly diagnosed cancers in women and men aged 15-24 and it is very important that students have the opportunity to access early diagnosis, especially those from higher risk groups.

I will ensure that condoms remain a part of all fresher packs and introduce other forms of STI prevention such as dental dams. These will also be available from the Welfare Office throughout the year.

Tampons and sanitary towels will also be available to all UCC students across campus and not just limited to the welfare office. I will explore options as to how this might be approached and work towards implementing this for the start of the academic year.

I would like to propose that all incoming first years be given a mandatory consent classes, such as the Bystander Intervention Training. While this training is already compulsory for incoming law and nursing students, it would be highly beneficial to be rolled out across all courses. The focus would be on informing students on issues ranging from consent to domestic violence, drinking and drug use. It aims to teach students about the signs to look out for in potentially risky situations and creates awareness around these issues, so students can recognise problematic indicators in their own behaviour.



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Following on from this increased awareness, I would like to implement a 'buddy' referral system where a student can make an appointment with the welfare officer on behalf of a friend. This will hopefully encourage students to seek help with issues they face and prevent them from feeling isolated.

I will ensure that all students know about the Ask Angela campaign. This will help to ensure all students are safe when out on dates in different bars and restaurants across Cork.

If the 8th amendment is passed in March I would like to bring the option to the student body to campaign for abortion rights.



ALCOHOL & DRUGS

Alcohol and drug usage is something as a student we are familiar with. In recent years the drug and alcohol abuse has been on the rise as there are many understandable factors for this. Harm reduction is a big area when tackling the problem of drug and alcohol usage. It is well campaigned each year, but I feel there may be more room for improvement. Promotion of the harmful physical and mental health issues which are well researched and 100% correct should be brought to the attention to every student. This will hopefully make students aware of the detrimental effects these substances are causing to their bodies. Another issue I would like to tackle as welfare officer would be to provide students with concrete, unbiased information on addiction. Many people are addicted to drugs and alcohol and are completely unaware, or choose not to face up to reality. If each student is aware of the signs, they may at least be able to help a friend in need.

There are many support services available on campus, and in the surrounding areas of Cork, that can help people that have become addicted to alcohol or drugs. I feel an alcohol and drugs awareness day has a place on our University calendar. This will enable students to educate themselves on the effects of drug and alcohol abuse from fellow students as well as invited guest speakers. We are all consenting adults and I will not be telling student what they should and should not do; rather I would like to provide students with vital information so that they can reduce the harm they put themselves in and keep students safe in whatever they choose to partake in. Some ideas I have on this issue is to provide drug testing kits in the welfare office as seen in DCU. These kits will allow students to safely test their drugs, to ensure they are not taking substances they hadn't intended on consuming.



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I would hope to link up with the SSDP society to run workshops on how the test kits are used and how to interpret results. My main priority will be the safety and wellbeing of students and I will do all I can to make sure this is protected.

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COMMUNITY SPIRIT

Making UCC a home away from home for all students is one of my main goals.

UCC has a place for everyone; everyone is different, and we should embrace our originality. If I have the pleasure of becoming your welfare officer, I will implement a “UCC Pride” day on campus. For this event, I will link up with the equality officer and the LGBT* Society in making this event one of the most exciting events of the year. This is a day where every person in the LGBTQ* community can walk through campus, out and proud, celebrating their individuality without fear. I feel this event will open the non-LGBTQ* community to all the different types of people in our college community, providing information in a fun and safe environment. The aim of this event is that the level of acceptance for the LGBT* community will improve, not only for a day but for the whole year and beyond.

UCC is home to many people from all different countries and ethnicities. If elected, I would like to run a multicultural day where people from different countries can celebrate their culture and heritage. This will not only allow students to feel more at home in UCC, but will also allow other students to experience different cultures. For this event I would like to link up with the African society, Korean society, and international students’ society, among others, to ensure that this event is as inclusive and fun that it can be.

Accessibility for all students is still a problem in UCC. This is not just limited to projects that require large amounts of funding such as the redevelopments of older buildings, but can also include smaller things to help improve college life for everyone. If elected, I will work closely with the disability officer on ideas like the installation of a phone line in West Wing that connects directly to the secretary of the admissions office.



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This will allow all students, regardless of mobility, to independently manage their own college finances, courses and so on. I will ensure all electronic doors are working in buildings and install a motor into the first door of the disabled toilet on the ground floor of the main rest. Introducing a ramp instead of a step into An Siopa and fixing the elevator in the old bar will also help students with reduced mobility to enjoy all that campus has to offer.

Students who are registered to the Disability Support Service are also suffering due to the fact that the department is understaffed. Many students are waiting too long to be heard and have their issues rectified. As welfare officer, I will lobby for more funding for the DSS department. As we all are aware there are many students who are unhappy in their course choice. If elected as welfare officer, I would work closely with the education officer to promote to students all options available to them, ranging from switching course to deferring a year and so on.





EQUALITY

If I am elected as your welfare officer, I will work closely with the equality officer and the equality working group to ensure that all groups in the college are being represented. As one person, it is impossible to know every issue students face, but through working with the Equality Working Group and other students in the college I can ensure everyone's voice is heard.

FINANCE

As I'm sure everyone can relate to, money can be tight at times as we progress through our college years. However, there is assistance available to help students who are struggling, such as the student's assistance fund. I feel that more work needs to be done to educate students on the services available to them and to break down stigma around asking for financial help. For students who cannot afford to feed themselves on a particular day,

I would like to introduce lunch vouchers which can be used these students in restaurants on campus, to ensure no student would go hungry.

ACCOMMODATION

Problems with accommodation are unfortunately on the rise each year. To help combat this problem, I would like work alongside the Student Residential Services Officer in ensuring that students are familiar with their tenancy rights. This will be done by including tenants' rights leaflets in fresher packs and making them available around campus. To work towards ensuring accommodation is safe, affordable and up to standard, I will encourage students to look for accommodation from the UCC accommodation website. I will work tirelessly with students fighting against problematic landlords to ensure they are treated with respect and their rights are not affected.

CASEWORK

Casework is one of the main aspects of the job when working as welfare officer. If elected as your welfare officer, students will be speaking to me in the upmost confidence. I will ensure myself and my welfare team is trained to the highest standard in key areas such as mental health, consent and first aid. These skills will allow us to engage with students effectively and provide them with the help needed. I will have a non-judgemental attitude towards students, show compassion and understanding, and help them in any way I can. In the case of a situation arising where a student is beyond the help I can personally provide, I will connect them to services which can meet their needs.

OTHER IDEAS

We are all unique individuals; differing in everything from our appearance to our tastes. If elected, I would like to ensure that there is a hot vegan and vegetarian meal option as students with all dietary requirements and lifestyle choices should be catered for.

Class reps are a student's connection to lectures and should all be equipped with the skills necessary for the job. After much discussion with various students around campus, I feel there is a need to bring in a mature student rep to each of the different faculties in the University. This will ensure the rep is familiar with many aspects of the department, and if they are unable to solve a student problem they may pass on the information to the mature student coordinator.



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I would like to thank you for taking to time to read my manifesto. I hope it has encouraged you to vote for me on March 6th and 7th.

I will be the voice of the students and will represent you across campus and beyond. I will ensure that every voice is heard, and no student is forgotten about.

Vote Martina #1 for Welfare on March 6th and 7th!

Vote Martina #1 for Welfare

- ✓ For a non-judgemental, confidential listening ear
- ✓ For a clear vision of plans to break down stigmas around:
 - ✧ Mental health
 - ✧ Sexual health
 - ✧ Alcohol and drug abuse
- ✓ To make UCC a home away from home

