

CUAN HAYES

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION OFFICER MANIFESTO

Who Am I?



Hi! My name is Cuan Hayes, and I am a Journalism and Digital Media student here in UL. I am from Tipperary originally and have been attending UL for four years.

I have worked on the Student Council Executive this year as the Societies Officer and have discovered a passion for helping students through the Student Council.

You may also recognise me from the Student Centre, where I have been working since the start of last semester; handing out pool cues and answering student's questions. As a commuter student, member of the LGBTQIA+ community, and as a neurodivergent person, I feel that my experiences both in UL as a student and as a member of Student Council, I can help the greater student body, and specifically the minority communities on campus.

As Diversity and Inclusion Officer, these are the main goals I will strive to achieve:

Safety for Minority Groups on Campus

There has been an increase recently in attacks on UL students on campus. These attacks have been physical, verbal, and sexual in nature and mainly target minority groups.

These attacks especially affected international students who remained on campus over the Winter break. While the perpetrators of these attacks were non-UL affiliated, it is still up to UL to provide safety for students.

- My proposal to help with this issue would be, working closely with the Vice President Welfare Officer and the UL Security Department, to build more emergency contact pillars on campus. There are currently **six (6)** of these pillars on campus, however there is both a lack of information on where they are located and a lack of emergency pillars in the center of campus.
- If an incident happened in the middle of campus, it would take a lot of effort from the victim to reach an emergency pillar on time. Ideally, in the center of campus an attack would be very hard to commit due to high foot traffic and good lighting, however there are still times when campus is empty, and this sort of incident needs to be accounted for before it has the chance to happen.
- When speaking to students, most could only name where 2 or 3 of these pillars were on campus, and those who could name 4 of them only said “well I assume there is one on North Campus”.

I will also raise awareness with the Security team in UL about vulnerable students, such as neurodivergent students. I have seen first-hand how some of the members of security have not been equipped with the knowledge they would need to help neurodivergent students in times of distress. There is a large neurodivergent population in UL, and it is unfair on both the students and the security team that security has not been given the knowledge needed to help these students to the best of their abilities.

Cultural Awareness and Representation

UL is a university that consists of students and staff of vast numbers of nationalities, religions and cultures – and this is something that needs to be given greater attention.

UL Global and the International Society have done great work in promoting different cultural events and promoting intersectionality, however the greater UL population is not engaging as much as they should, and the average white Irish student is generally unaware of holidays and religious festivals outside of our own Irish ones.

A key example that I have noticed: Student Officer election week is almost always during the Muslim month of Ramadan. When nominees are running for elections, they usually give out sweets to students. I saw many Muslim students rejecting these as they were fasting, and with more awareness I feel that candidates would have known to have some sort of alternative to food to offer. My team will offer stickers and badges as alternatives, with art on them created by myself and the campaign team, so that the Muslim students that we engage with do not feel left out or unseen.

- I will work closely with UL Global to create even larger scale events to highlight the many different communities in UL and raise awareness surrounding religious practices and cultural activities.
- **The more intersectionality that we promote on campus, the more understanding the general campus population will be to groups that they are not members of.**
- I will also work with the existing religious groups on campus, such as Islamic Society and Christian Union to ensure that all prayer and worship facilities are up to standard, and to ensure that students of all faiths have a safe space to pray and gather with others of the same religion.

I will also focus on support and awareness for the Travelling community in UL. There has been an increase in the number of members of the Travelling community attending UL in the last few years, however I feel there is not enough support and awareness being offered for them on campus. The Travelling community deserves just as much care and support as other minority groups in UL, and I believe they have been underrepresented for far too long. I will form a dedicated Travelling EDI group to meet regularly to discuss what UL can do for their community, and how we can raise awareness and fight the disrespectful stereotypes that are all too often spread around campus about this group.

SAMPLE ANSWER

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Name Changes for Students.

I will push for easier systems of name changes for students in UL. As someone who does not use their birth name, I am personally affected by this issue. I have managed to get my name changed on the UL Wolves website and on Brightspace, but my student email that I use for all my academic communications still has the name that I do not use on it.

This is a huge issue faced by both transgender and cisgender students.

A legal name change can be expensive and, for some transgender students, unsafe to do. However, many transgender students in UL find UL a safe space to use their real names, and it is unfair that their student emails and transcripts must use their deadnames, when that is not the name that their peers in UL know them as. It is especially dangerous in some class situations where deadnames are called out for attendance, as transgender students are effectively forced to out themselves in a space where they do not know if their fellow students could be violent and hateful towards them.

- I will develop a system, by using information from other universities across Ireland, to allow students to change their names on their student email and IDs, as these are the main places where students are affected by use of deadnames.
- I will contact other universities where name change systems have been put in place and see what systems UL can put in place for students who are changing their names.

If you vote for me for Diversity & Inclusion Officer I will do ALL this and MORE to ensure our campus is welcoming, understanding, inclusive and SAFE for ALL students.