

Hello everyone!!!!

My name is Hannah Holmes, and i want to be your academic officer for 2026/27. I'm a fourth year Psychology and Sociology student, and i have been Class Rep for all four of those years. I'm also chair of the Philosophy and Debating society, (Phildeb to our friends 😊) I'm from a rural village in east Limerick called Doon, and I've experienced many of the trials and tribulations of college life in my time. The long days and nights of a commuter student, waking at 6 am to get into 9:00 classes and ending up on the road till 10 at night because having a class until 6 meant I had to take the 8:30 bus home, and generally, i was commuting from one of the better areas! The stress of working alongside your studies, because when you have accommodation or car fuel to pay for, you need that cash to survive. Repeating exams because of illness and mental health struggles! These, and others are pervasive issues, and one person in one year can't solve them all, but work can be done to help ease some of the stress caused to students by these preventable issues!

Community in Academics

A huge issue I've seen, especially in courses with larger class groups, is that none of the students know each other. This can lead to a lot of feelings of loneliness and isolation, as well as making it way easier for students who are struggling to fall through the cracks. I believe there are strides that can be taken to make sure that students can make the best of this time, leaving them as well-rounded individuals.

Academic Advisors

Do you know who your academic advisor is? Shockingly sparse numbers of students do. I believe there should be some mandatory check ins with members of staff at several points of your degree, to highlight any issues the students might be having academically, whether this be a need to avail of supports, the student wishing to switch course, or to express a desire to drop out. This also would foster social connections between students and staff to help them when looking for FYP supervisors and references for graduate programmes and future jobs.

Class Fun!!!

Social events for students in different course groups and faculties should be encouraged! Interfaculty football games and rounders, pizza parties after exams, and even grabbing a few pints in stables. I can't emphasise how much even a course group chat can help make sure everyone is on the ball. Having friends in class means you aren't as nervous asking for notes if

you have an unplanned absence, and your peers can remind you about that quiz Thursday you were going to forget.

This is also where class reps are invaluable, but the issue is that classes that have no social cohesion frequently can't elect a class rep, I want to change this, making sure everyone has a class rep, and class groups know who their rep is.

I especially want commuters, mature students, and access students to feel important, valued and included within their class groups, which is why I will support any campus initiatives that increase events during normal college hours.

Admin Issues

Timetabling Reform

Timetabling in UL is a semesterly annoyance we all have to deal with. We get our timetables on such short notice, with little regard given to making them feasible for the students. If you swap modules, even when you don't choose this, the generated timetable becomes useless. This is not a universal college issue, and I believe it is feasible for UL to get their timetables out earlier, with care given to making the classes accessible, allowing online options for as many classes as possible.

Placement and Not Getting It

This year, an enormous number of students Did not get Any Co-op interviews. This has led to a lot of students being on the Alternate to Co-op program. As well as this, students are Doing jobs Irrelevant to their degrees, or that violate closely held moral principles. We need immediate reform of this system and emergency measures put in place to keep this period in college useful and worth the students' time. Students should have right to refuse an inappropriate placement, whether it be because of irrelevance or moral objections

Repeats

We need to continue fighting for cheaper repeats, more opportunities to make up your credits before repeats happen, and to reduce the number of students that need to pay extortionate fees to repeat the year. I will advocate for an end to unnecessary delayed graduations, because having the flu in December of fourth year should not lead you to missing out on graduate opportunities.

Advocacy

As an academic officer, I would be sitting on multipole boards within the university. I promise to advocate and lobby on the university, local, and national levels for the issues the students care about. This would include accommodation, keeping rents affordable, increases in SUSI grant eligibility, and increasing quality and quantity of public transport to UL.

IN SUMMATION

I care deeply about my fellow students being treated fairly and gaining the skills and knowledge they deserve to develop in college. UL Students should leave ready to face the world of work and further study with strong connections, industry knowledge, and preferably, not in debt because of getting lost in the cracks along the way. I want the student to be able to ask for help, and have the skills to advocate for themselves, and we can signpost the resources for them to do that.

I have the track record as a class rep behind me, and I hope I can help more people with this role.

I hope I will have your vote and thank you for reading!!!