

VOTE

VÓTÁIL

DERVLA RYAN

FOR

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION
OFFICER

Issued by Emilia Ziolk, Campaign Manager for Dervla Ryan.



MARCH 13TH, 2025 ~ 8:00 AM TO 6:00 PM
ONLINE OR AT ANY POLLING STATION



WHO AM I?

My name is Dervla Ryan, and I'm re-running to be your Diversity & Inclusion Officer!

Dearbhla Ní Riain is ainm dom, agus táim ag rith arís chun a bheith mar Oifigeach Éagsúlachta & Ionchuimsithe!

Born in Kilkenny, I've called Limerick home for six years while studying European Studies, a degree that let me travel, explore cultures, and build communities.

I am a neurodivergent queer woman, and I balanced putting myself through college alone while working 2-3 jobs, taking six years to graduate. This gave me a deep understanding of the financial, academic, and personal struggles students face. It also made me aware of the privilege I had, while many others are neglected by the system. These experiences drive my commitment to equity, inclusion, and representation. You deserve a union that listens, supports, and fights for all students, and I'm ready to make that happen.



WHY AM I RE-RUNNING?

For the past nine months, I have had the privilege of serving as your Communities Officer at UL Student Life, a role that has recently evolved into the title of Diversity & Inclusion Officer. Throughout this time, **I have changed and shaped this role**, which has only existed for five years. I have **passionately worked to create a welcoming, supportive, and inclusive environment** for all students. With your trust, I am ready to build on this foundation, bringing my experience and dedication to the next level to ensure your voices are heard and your needs are met.

There is still so much to achieve in making UL and the Union into truly inclusive and supportive environments for all students. A few of my manifesto points last year were sadly unachievable due to the unforeseen delays in the opening of the New Student Centre, and I want to harness that potential! During my time as Communities Officer, I've seen the **positive impact that student representation can have, and I want to build on that momentum** to address the challenges students still face. Our current Student President was the first officer to be re-elected in decades, and this **continuity has proven invaluable** to the officer team, providing knowledge and experience that has allowed our work to go further. I want to bring that same continuity to the role of Diversity & Inclusion Officer, ensuring we can build on our successes and drive meaningful, lasting change for all students.

WHY VOTE FOR ME?

INCLUSIVITY

TRANSPARENCY

CONTINUITY

As your Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) Officer, I will:

- **Advocate for all students**, regardless of age, race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or socio-economic status, ensuring everyone feels safe, supported, and heard. I have the experience and knowledge to make real change and have already held the university accountable to ensure every student's voice matters. UL was built for students, so let's ensure it serves us all!
- Strengthen **transparency and trust** by ensuring the Union is open, communicative, and accountable to students.
- **Enhance the officer team's impact by bringing continuity, experience, and leadership to my second term.** I will actively support fellow officers in their campaigns, with a strong focus on welfare, academics, community, and representation for marginalized groups.

WHAT I HAVE ACHIEVED AS COMMUNITIES OFFICER

- Took the lead on the **Commuter Hub**, securing **€8,500 in funding** to expand its resources while making food options more diverse & inclusive. I also launched a **Commuter Survey**, giving students a voice on how commuting impacts their lives. This has helped the team advocate for improved university facilities, local transport services, and stronger student supports.
- Supported our Student President in organizing an **accommodation protest** during UL's Open Day, highlighting the housing and cost-of-living crisis.
- Played a key role in developing the **UL Student Life Equality, Diversity, & Inclusion (EDI) strategy**, organizing focus groups for staff and students to shape a more inclusive campus.
- **Secured UL Student Life as a breastfeeding-friendly union**, in collaboration with the PSU Engagement Officer.
- Successfully put forward a motion to rename the '**Communities Officer**' role to '**Diversity & Inclusion Officer**', ensuring the position reflects its focus and impact—a lasting legacy for future student representation.
- Introduced new student representation positions in Student Council, such as **Student Carer Rep, Traveller/Mincéir Rep, and Sustainability Rep**. I am currently writing a motion to introduce a **Women's Rep and BIPOC Rep**, further ensuring diverse and fair representation in student leadership.
- Facilitated **Zen Zone/Sensory Space** for neurodivergent students, providing a calm, sensory-friendly environment. I am currently advocating for **permanent spaces in the New Student Centre and across campus**.
- **Hosted Community Catch-Ups** for LGBTQIA+ students, students with disabilities, student parents, mature students, carers, and access students—creating safe spaces for connection and support.
- Delivered **fundraising & budgeting workshops for Clubs & Societies**, fostering collaboration and financial sustainability. Supporting the **C&S Executive** has been one of the highlights of my role as we **advocate for more funding for the university, increased student engagement, and improved accessibility & safety for all students**.
- Established **third spaces**, a key manifesto point last year, by co-hosting free crafting events & coffee mornings with the Welfare Officer, helping students connect outside the classroom.
- Sat on multiple **university committees** representing EDI issues at decision-making levels.
- Advocated for **extended Prayer Room hours**, working with the Islamic Society, who highlighted this need. Ongoing advocacy aims to improve the space and create more prayer spaces across campus, especially for Muslim women.

These wins demonstrate my ability to deliver real change!



GOALS AS DIVERSITY & INCLUSION OFFICER (1/2)



Inclusive & Accessible Engagement for All:

Not all students want to or can participate in UL's nightlife, and engagement shouldn't come with a price tag. I will push for more non-alcoholic, daytime, and free events, ensuring every student feels included.

- Expand **free and low-cost events** to improve accessibility.
- Increase **daytime social events** like coffee mornings, workshops, and game nights.
- Promote **alcohol-free** alternatives alongside nightlife events.
- Ensure **family-friendly** events for student parents & mature students.
- Support **culturally diverse celebrations**, recognizing and uplifting the traditions of UL's international student community. The PSU and UL Global are trailblazers in international student engagement, so I aim to have a collaborative approach rather than independent.

Minority Students:

Every student deserves to feel represented and supported. I will work to amplify the voices of marginalized and underrepresented students.

- Strengthen **peer support for marginalized students**—LGBTQIA+, disabled, mature, ethnic minorities, and more—through community meetups and advocacy.
- Work with UL to **improve accessibility & inclusion** across campus.
- Expand **sensory-friendly initiatives** like the Zen Zone, advocate for **permanent quiet spaces on campus**, and push for **greater accessibility in student services**, assessments, and learning supports.
- Work with UL and the Union to expand **breastfeeding facilities**.
- Agitate for UL & Ireland to allow **transgender & non-binary students** to use their preferred name on emails & official university documents.
- Ensure more **LGBTQIA+ visibility & protection**, including gender-neutral bathrooms and trans-inclusive policies.
- Advocate for more **prayer spaces** on North Campus.
- Expand **financial aid awareness** for low-income students.
- Promote the **Irish Language** in UL, a linguistic minority.



Clubs & Societies:

The D&I Officer carries out Clubs & Societies (C&S) duties on behalf of the Student President. With over 6 years of experience in C&S, I endeavor to:

- **Secure annual university funding for C&S, as UL benefits from them while providing no additional financial support.** C&S strengthens student retention ('How Ya Now?' Survey, 2023), yet UL still fails to fund them properly. UL must do better for C&S!
- Implement mandatory training for clubs & societies on **consent and neurodivergence**, creating a safe and inclusive community for all.
- Continue to facilitate **peer-to-peer workshops** for committees to help C&S develop at a sustainable rate and foster diverse relationships.

GOALS AS DIVERSITY & INCLUSION OFFICER (2/2)

Enhance Services:

- Campaign for **affordable, diverse, and inclusive food options** on campus — such as halal, kosher, vegan, vegetarian, & high-protein meals to reflect & support our diverse campus community and align with UL's status as 'Ireland's Sporting Campus'.
- Advocate for the expansion of student supports, including **Disability Support Services**, to ensure every student has access to the resources they need to thrive.
- **Expand the Commuter Hub:** Advocate for its growth within the Union, securing annual funding from the University. The ultimate goal is to have the University fully recognize the value of this service and take responsibility for its long-term support.

Expand Student Representation & Support:

- Strengthen the **promotion and recruitment of student representatives** by organizing empowering workshops for women, LGBTQIA+ students, disabled and neurodivergent students, mature students, students of all faiths, and those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, thus ensuring diverse voices in leadership.
- Advocate for the **expansion of UL Student Life's Advice & Advocacy service**, so students have greater access to the support they need.

North Campus:

Students on North Campus often feel disconnected from campus life due to physical distance, fewer services, and limited engagement opportunities. Many report feelings of isolation and loneliness. This must change.

- Outreach has improved significantly on North Campus this year. My goal is to build on this success by having **more events and outreach**.
- **Advocate for a permanent sensory space on North Campus.** While the primary goal is to support all neurodivergent students, particular emphasis will be put on North Campus, as over 30% of students registered with Disability Support Services (DSS) study there.
- UL Student Life does not follow the **medical school or postgraduate academic calendar**, and there is a lack of engagement during the summer. I aim to rectify this by **incorporating all student groups into UL Student Life semester planning**. The Union represents all students, and it's time we did better for you all.
- Lobby for a **bus route from North Campus to Main Campus**, with the long-term goal of having a bus route from Castletroy/Limerick City to North Campus.



@DERVLA4DIVERSITY

QUALIFICATIONS & EXPERIENCE

- Vice-President Communities Officer (AY 2024/2025).
- BA European Studies (Sociology, German, Economics, and Film), University of Limerick (2024).
- UL Student Council Representative: Modern Languages & Applied Linguistics Rep (2023/24).
- UL Archery Club: First-Year Rep (2018/19), Secretary (2019-2021), President (2022/23 - winning club of the year!) and Treasurer (2023/24).
- Archery Ireland Secretary & Director (2024 - Present).
- Irish Student Archery Association: Secretary (2022/23) & President (2023/24).
- Communities Team Chairperson (2024).
- Welfare Team Member (2023/24).
- UL Global Buddy Programme (2022/23).
- Irish Times 'Diversity & Inclusion' Training (2023).
- Foundation Certificate Youth Leadership, University of Galway (2016).



SKILLS

- Effective Leadership & Representation
- Event Management & Community Building
- Public Speaking & Communication
- Advocacy & Campaigning
- Intercultural Competence
- Policy & Governance Knowledge
- Negotiation & Problem Solving
- Conflict Resolution
- Social Media Engagement

QUALITIES

- **Passionate & Driven** - I care deeply about student welfare, representation, & inclusion, and my experience reflects that.
- **Empathetic & Approachable** - created safe spaces for students and understood their challenges.
- **Resilient & Dedicated** - I have taken on multiple responsibilities, run successful events, and delivered real change despite challenges.
- **Strategic & Visionary** - I look at the bigger picture and work toward long-term improvements as well as short-term plans.

KNOWLEDGE

- **UL Student Life Operations:** I understand how the Union functions, its governance & structure, and how to push for change effectively through the correct pathways.
- **EDI & Student Supports:** I played a key role in developing UL Student Life's Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) strategy, participated in EDI training, and worked to ensure marginalized students have a voice in the Union.
- **Clubs & Societies:** As C&S Executive Chair, I know how to advocate for funding, improve engagement, and diversify representation in student-led groups. As a member of various clubs & societies, I can drive change from both the leadership and student perspective.
- **University Bureaucracy & Decision-Making:** I have learned how to negotiate with UL administration, advocate for funding, and hold the university accountable. This is knowledge that takes months if not years to gain and having an officer in their second term will be a catalyst for real change in UL.
- **Understanding Student Challenges:** From commuter students to student carers, mature students, and those facing financial struggles, I have hands-on experience advocating for student needs and creating meaningful support structures.
- **Campaigning & Advocacy:** Led and supported impactful student-led campaigns, including the accommodation protest, successfully drawing attention to the housing crisis. I know how to mobilize students, engage with media, and push for policy changes to ensure our voices are heard and acted upon.

FINAL WORD

UL is more than just a university—it's our community. Every student, regardless of **background, identity, or circumstances**, deserves to feel **heard, supported, and valued**.

Throughout my time as Communities Officer, I have worked to make real change, from **expanding student supports and representation to creating inclusive spaces and advocating for those often overlooked**. But there's more to do.

With your vote, I will continue to fight for a stronger, fairer, and more inclusive student experience. A vote for me is a vote for **action, accountability, continuity, and real representation**.

Together, we can create a stronger, more inclusive, and empowered UL.

Vote #1 Dervla! / Vótáil #1 Dearbhla!

USE YOUR VOICE AND VOTE!

THURSDAY, MARCH 13TH



@DERVLA4DIVERSITY

WHO CAN VOTE?

EVERYONE!

- Undergraduates
- Postgraduates
- International
- Erasmus
- Part-time
- Online

