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UL Human Rights eNewsletter is intended for circulation among staff and students of University of Limerick. Extracts from this newsletter should not be published without the permission of the editor.





Welcome to our December 2022 Human Rights, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion eNewsletter

Welcome to the end of year edition of our Human Rights-EDI eNewsletter. The last six months have been particularly busy months for the office.

Key activities and events included:

- An analysis of the AS/EDI Staff Culture Survey the results from which were communicated to all staff through feedback workshops rolled out in October. A summary of the findings are available [HERE](#)
- The findings of the survey have now been used to inform the Athena Swan Silver Institution Action Plan.
- The AS Submission was approved by both the Executive Committee and Governing Authority in December.
- A second cohort of the Preparing for Academic Advancement (PAA) Gender Equality Enhancement Funded (GEFF) Programme was rolled out. 48 senior lecturers from seven institutions engaged in the cross-sectoral programme where senior academic professors provided exceptional mentorship to help participants submit successful portfolios to AP and Prof B levels.
- Consent workshops were delivered to

80% of first-year students in 2021/22, surpassing the 70% target; as of October 2022, consent training attended by 1,061 students.

- The appointment of a Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence Prevention and Support Officer Tracey Keogh followed by Maria Healy to act as first point of contact for students.
- The establishment of a Student Designated Contact Persons Panel (SDCPP). We are very grateful to the staff who volunteered to act as members of the SDCPP. The panel members are currently under-going a series of training workshops and will shortly be introduced to students as key points of contact should they experienced any form of sexual misconduct, sexual harassment or sexual violence.
- The development of a sexual harassment and sexual violence policy for staff and students is nearing completion and will shortly be issued.
- A review of student and staff dignity & respect policies are ongoing.
- Staff and student training on handling disclosures was delivered to 30 students and 186 staff in 2022.

- Bystander training is available on line to staff and students.
- The Ethnic Diversity Forum are busy finalising an Ethnic Diversity/Race Equality Action plan. We hope to launch the action plan in Q2 2023.
- We were particularly delighted to launch UL's Gender Identity and Gender Expression Policy in August. The policy clearly sets out the steps staff and students can follow should they wish to have their identity changed on our records.

On behalf of our team, I would like to thank everyone for their support during 2022. We look forward to working with you in 2023.

Wishing you all a joyous Festive Season and a Happy New Year.

Dr Marie Connolly
Director, Human Rights, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion, University of Limerick

Limerick Pride Monday 4th – Sunday 10th July 2022

As part of the celebrations, the HR - EDI Office hosted a lunchtime seminar on the 4th of July at 1pm in the University Concert Hall with William Keohane who spoke about his experience transitioning, fundraising and travelling to access healthcare abroad.

William also offered insights into what life is like for trans students in college and in the wider Irish context. William is a writer, graduate of the MA in Creative Writing at the University of Limerick and a transgender man. This event was very inspiring, engaging and thought-provoking.

The HR-EDI Office in conjunction with GOSHH organised an LGBTI+ quiz on Wednesday 6th July.

Pronoun Awareness: Along with the events we ran to celebrate Pride in the University of Limerick, we also felt it was an opportune time to discuss pronoun awareness. Having your preferred pronouns in your email signature not only makes it easier to ensure others are using your preferred pronouns in emails, but it also ensures that you can do the same for others.

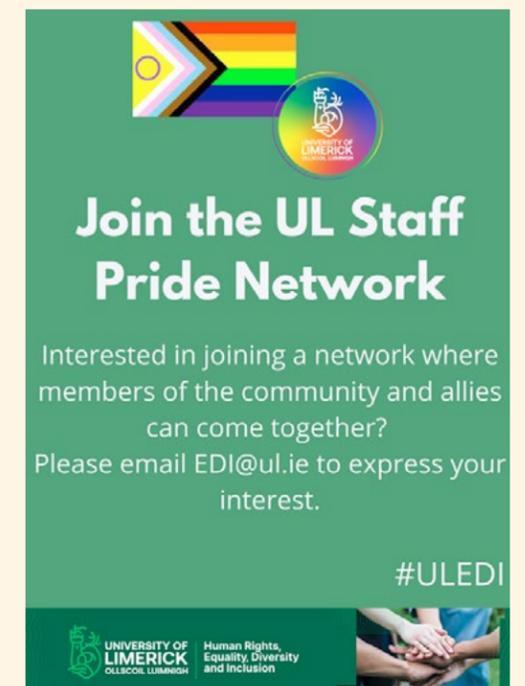
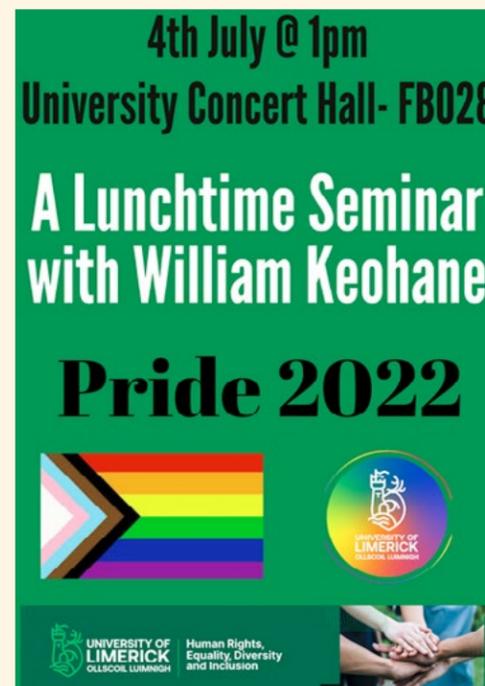
While it may seem like a small task, it can have a hugely significant impact.

Equally, having the LGBTI+ 'inclusive space' logo inserted into your email signature can help to signify to members of the LGBTI+ community that they can feel safe in the knowledge that their pronouns will be respected and acknowledged in their correspondence with you.



We encourage everyone to take these little actions that can be hugely impactful.

UL Staff Pride Network: If you are interested in joining the UL Staff Pride Network please email EDI@ul.ie to express your interest. This is a network where members of the community and allies can come together.



HEA Gender Equality Enhancement Funding



The results of the **HEA Gender Equality Enhancement Funding** for 2022 was announced in September. The HR-EDI Office is a partner in three of the funded projects:

1. Undertaking an analysis of the nature of change and transformation with respect to gender equality, inclusion, and diversity across higher education (Partners MIC, TCD, University of Galway, UL).
2. Addressing the Gender Pay Gap in Irish Higher Education (Partners MIC, TCD, UCD, University of Galway, UL).
3. Engaging men in building gender equality – the development of a pilot programme in Irish HEI (Partners DKIT, IADT, MIC,

MTU, MU, NCI, University of Galway, RCSI, TUS, UCC, UCD, UL).

Dr Marie Connolly is currently leading on the PAA (Preparing for Academic Advancement) Programme which has received 2 tranches of funding from the GEEF in 2020 and 2021. A further 24 Senior Lecturer Women are currently undertaking the programme from across 7 institutions.

The launch of the **Gender Identity and Gender Expression Policy** by President Kerstin Mey took place on **Tuesday 6th September**. An exciting, informative and engaging panel discussion took place with William Keohane, GOSHH, TENI and Shout Out about the importance of this Policy.

A total of 59 attendees were present at the launch.

On Thursday, 20th of October, ShoutOut provided **Gender Identity, Expression, and Diversity Training (GIEDT)** to members of Management Council. Further GIEDT training took place online on the **25th and 27th October**.

GIEDT offers a detailed exploration of the theory behind gender identity, gender expression and biological sex. They look in detail at how stereotypes and biases inform experiences of gender and how we might work to break through processes of assumptions to create more inclusive spaces for gender diversity.

The Gender Identity and Gender Expression Policy can be found on the UL Policy Hub [HERE](#). Click [HERE](#) to view the Gender Identity and Gender Expression Policy Booklet.

ABCs of LGBTQ+ Training for Staff and Students

The HR-EDI Office held 4 x 1 hour training sessions for staff and students on the **ABC's of LGBTQ+** on the 13th, 14th and 15th September.

The ABCs of LGBTQ+ offers a comprehensive overview of LGBTQ+ identity, terminology and allyship. Topics covered included:

- A detailed overview of LGBTQ+ terminology and theory, including gender identity and sexual orientation.
- Further explanation on trans, non-binary and intersex identities.
- Using gender neutral language and pronouns.

The training sessions were delivered by ShoutOut, who are a registered charity, harnessing education promoting inclusion and equality for the LGBTQ+ community. They empower LGBTQ+ people and work to build networks of informed allies who work alongside the LGBTQ+ community, to ensure their rights are protected. They do this by developing educational programmes on LGBTQ+ issues and deliver them to school students, teachers, youth workers, parents and guardians, higher education institutions and workplaces.

ShoutOut's Terminology Guide can be found [HERE](#)

ShoutOut's Pronouns Guide can be found [HERE](#)

The LGBTI Ireland Report can be found [HERE](#)

World Suicide Prevention Day Talk

World Suicide Prevention Day is an awareness day observed on 10th September each year. The HR-EDI Office held an online lunchtime talk on **Thursday Sept 8th @ 1pm** where 39 people listened to a very informative talk with Rionach Campbell, a Clinical Lead Therapist with Pieta.



Pieta has helped over 60,000 people in suicidal distress or engaging in self-harm since it was founded in 2006. Pieta employs over 200 therapists and support staff to provide free of charge, professional one-to-one therapeutic service for people who are experiencing suicidal ideation, people who have attempted suicide and people who are engaging in self-harm.



Active*Consent Workshops

A total of **1,061 students attended Active Consent Workshops** in the first semester.

APEX Event

Thursday 29th September

APEX is the **Academic & Professional Empowerment Network** set up in 2021. Its purpose is to enable wider engagement and relationship building with all UL staff.

Olympic Boxer and motivational speaker Kenneth Egan gave a talk on Thursday 29th September from 12-1pm in AD2010, Bernal Building, UL. This was a hybrid event where people had the option of attending in person or joining online.

From the Olympic podium to the depths of despair and back again. Kenneth's story is one on personal effectiveness, embracing change and learning from failure.

The Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty



As the University commences a review of the **Equality and Human Rights Strategy 2019 -2022**, Niall Crowley from Value Labs was invited to meet with the newly formed Human Rights EDI Committee to discuss the next steps and to provide advice on the development of a new strategy inclusive of the Public Sector Duty.

The HR-EDI Office have formed a working group, a subgroup of the HR-EDI Committee. The purpose of this subgroup is to review the IUA Framework and put forward proposals for adapting the framework from a UL perspective. We are seeking one nominee from a number of areas within the university.

ATHENA SWAN BRONZE AWARD

The Department of Electronic and Computer Engineering and CONFIRM at University of Limerick have achieved **a joint Athena Swan Bronze award**. The award means that only two SFI Research Centres – in Confirm and Lero - nationally have Athena Swan awards, with both led by UL. Athena Swan is about supporting institutions to achieve their gender equality objectives and inclusive work practices for academic and professional, managerial and support staff.



Athena Swan/EDI Staff Culture Survey 2022 Feedback

The HR-EDI Office held 2 roadshow events on the **5th and 6th of October** to communicate the findings of the **AS/EDI Culture Survey**. 43% of staff responded to the survey. The findings from the survey were positive overall with 71% (n=582) of respondents agreeing that UL's ethos is one that supports equality of opportunity for all genders. 65.6% (n=543) of staff agreed or strongly agreed that top leaders at their department demonstrate a visible commitment to diversity. 58.5% (n=484) agreed that the leaders at their faculty have this commitment. Finally, 57.1% (n=472) agreed that UL leaders commit to diversity. In terms of trust, staff perceived they are treated fairly by their department by 74.1% (n=613), faculty by 62.6% (n=518), and UL by 51.4% (n=425). Areas of concern highlighted were the high incidents of Bullying & Harassment experienced by staff over the past 3 years. The feedback will now be included in the AS 4-year Institution Action Plan, which workshop participants were invited to contribute to. The 4-year action plan when agreed, will require approval and sign off by the AS/EDI Committee, chaired by the President and the Executive Committee. Recordings of the workshops are available to staff. Please contact EDI@ul.ie if you would like a copy.

Race Equality in Higher Education

Workshop

Members of the AS Committees were invited to attend a **Race Equality in Higher Education Workshop with Dr Lucy Michael** on **Friday 21 October** at the University of Galway. This workshop was organised by 'The Race & Ethnicity Working Group'.



Student Designated Contact Person (SDCP)

STAFF VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

BECOME A VOLUNTEER

You can make a difference today

Student designated contact person (SDCP) to support students

Info & register:
edi@ul.ie

STUDENT DESIGNATED CONTACT PERSONS PANEL



The **Consent Framework Steering Group** approved the setting up of a Student Designated Contact Person Panel (SDCPP). The role of the Student Designated Contact Person (SDCP) is to act as a point of contact for those who have previously or are currently experiencing incidents of sexual harassment and sexual violence. A call was issued for volunteers on the 11th October and anyone who was interested was asked to complete a brief Expression of Interest Form. We received an excellent response to the call from staff very willing to act as key points of contact.

The SDCP will offer support to students who have experienced any form of sexual harassment or sexual violence signposting students to relevant information relating to internal and external supports. Volunteers have commenced a schedule of specified training for this role enabling them to listen in a non-judgemental manner while providing support to students affected by sexual harassment and sexual violence.

Below are some of the things UL are currently doing to change campus culture on Sexual Harassment, Misconduct & Violence:

- Ongoing Campaigns
- Mandatory Consent Workshops for all incoming students
- Policy Development – Sexual Harassment, Misconduct and Violence Policy
- On line Bystander Training
- Handling Disclosure Training
- New anonymous reporting tool - Speak Out

Tell Your Own Story was launched on 14th October by Dr Marie Connolly, Director of Human Rights, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion. The TYOS project is driven by Dr Maria Rieder and Dr Marta Giralt. TYOS works towards diversity in mainstream media, taking a story-based approach to breaking down cultural barriers. TYOS empowers people to share their stories which foster inclusivity and empathy.

Anti-Racism Week

A really good schedule of activities was set out for **Anti-Racism Week** which took place from the 7th -11th November by the Ethnic Diversity Forum in collaboration with the PSU and Student Life.

It included a range of educational talks covering a wide variety of subjects; a talk by Aideen Roche called 'The Door' discussed rights and responsibilities as well as how to respond to racism; a talk about The Irish Network Against Racism, presented by Shane O'Curry, featuring subjects such as INAR's recording and advocacy rules as well as responding to racism; An Garda Siochana discussed the reporting and policing of racist crimes as well as discussing the investigations that go into racially motivated incidents.

An excellent 6-minute educational video was produced by Dr Maria Rieder to accompany the event 'Another perspective' which took place in the Foundation Building on Thursday 10th November.

Click [HERE](#) to view the video.

ANTI-RACISM WEEK 2022
Call it Racism!

Register here for catering

Monday 7 Contemplative Centre 12pm	Doras - Aideen Roche • learn about your rights & responsibilities • how to respond to racism • let's eradicate the culture of silence around racism • free finger food & drinks
Tuesday 8 Millstream Common Room 12pm	Irish Network Against Racism - Shane O'Curry • learn about INAR's recording and advocacy tools • how to respond to racism • free finger food & drinks
Wednesday 9 Students Courtyard 10am	An Garda Siochána - Sgt. Shane Davern • learn about policing of racist crimes • learn about racist crime investigation • speak confidentially to Sgt. Davern • free tea & bikkies
Thursday 10 Foundation Building 12pm	Another Perspective • learn about supports available from Student Life & Postgraduate Student's Union • hear from people who have experienced racism • meet with SALAAM (Sustainable Alliances Against Anti-Muslim Hatred) • free finger food & drinks
Friday 11 UL Plaza 10am	Diversity Fair • showcasing cultures from the African Society, the Indian Society, the Limerick Irish Algerian Friendship Group, TYOS (Tell Your Own Story) and the Ethnic Diversity Forum

enquiries: maria.rieder@ul.ie



ATHENA SWAN AWARDS CEREMONY 2022

The 2022 Athena Swan Ireland Awards Ceremony, celebrating awards conferred in the November 2021 and April 2022 rounds took place on Tuesday, 8 November 2022 at Atlantic Technological University at the Mayo Campus.

The following two UL departments received their awards from AdvanceHE:

- **The Department of Electronic and Computer Engineering (ECE) and CONFIRM** - The Department of Electronic

and Computer Engineering and CONFIRM at University of Limerick achieved a joint Athena Swan Bronze award in September 2022. Sean O'Brien and Dr Sinead O'Keeffe were the co-chairs for the ECE-CONFIRM joint application.

- **School of Engineering** – April 2022 - was co-led by Dr Reena Cole and Prof. Jeremy Robinson, in his role as then Head of School.

Congratulations to all involved.



Pictured above (l-r): Dr Ronan O'Higgins, Head of School of Engineering; Dr Reena Cole, School of Engineering; Dr Sinead O'Keeffe, Department of Electronic and Computer Engineering; Patricia Bourke, CONFIRM and Sean O'Brien, CONFIRM.

INTERNATIONAL MEN'S DAY

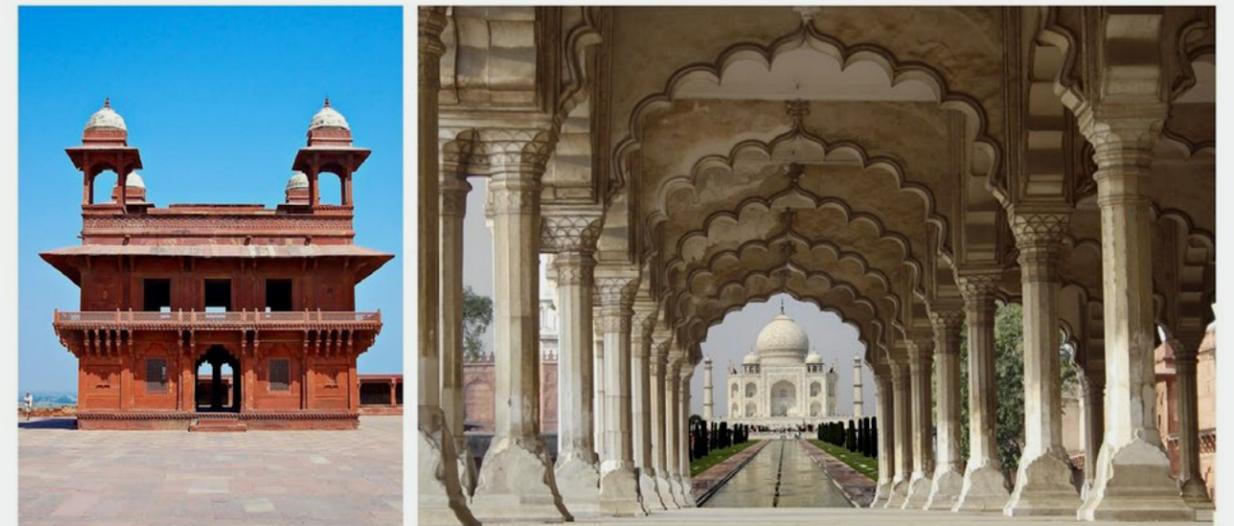


International Men's Day took place on Friday 18th November. This was a hybrid event giving staff and students the opportunity to attend in person or online. The theme for 2022 is "Helping Men and Boys". Health Professional, Facilitator and Coach Jack Kavanagh gave a talk to staff and students of UL in the Appellate Moot Courtroom, 3rd Floor, Glucksman Library from 1-2pm.

After a catastrophic spinal injury at just 20 years of age, Jack Kavanagh knows only too well about health and wellbeing as drivers for resilience and performers. Jack describes himself as an 'optimistic realist' – someone who recognises the realities of life's challenges but who strives to confront and overcome his perceived limitations and, in doing so, inspire others to do the same.

Jack inspired everyone who attended in person and those who joined online by sharing his knowledge, outlook and experience.

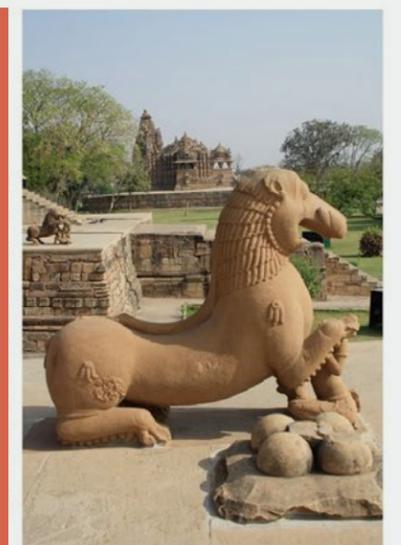
A total of 71 people registered to attend this event.



Indian Society at UL

Do you have Indian heritage? Would you be interested in joining an Indian Society at UL?

If so please complete this **Expressions of Interest Form for Staff** and if you have any questions, please contact Dr Yoga Nathan yoga.nathan@ul.ie



International Day of Persons with Disabilities



The **HR-EDI Office** and the **Autism@UL Special Interest Group** hosted a virtual speaking event with Melissa Mooney (left) on Friday 2nd December from 1-2pm.

Melissa is an autistic and dyspraxic self-advocate. She holds a BA in Applied Languages from the University of Limerick, and is a member of the Autism@UL Special Interest Group. She works with businesses globally to develop accessible, authentically inclusive hiring programmes for neurodivergent people and people with disabilities. She strives to help deepen society's understanding of neurodiversity and has written and spoken on a wide variety of topics, including autistic pride, self-acceptance and masking.

The title of Melissa's talk was '*Authentically Autistic: My Journey towards Self-Acceptance*'. She also offered practical advice for people who want to know how they can be good friends and allies to the Autistic people in their lives.

For more information on Autism@ul please click [HERE](#)





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