

## From the Office of the Dean | Connect 1

Dear Faculty Colleagues and Students,

It has been almost 3 weeks since I have taken on the role of Dean of the Faculty for Social Wellbeing. They have been three very busy weeks! As promised in my Manifesto I will keep in regular contact with all the Faculty and one way of doing this is through regular emails that will provide you with a snap shot of the work that is going on in our Faculty.

- First and foremost, congratulations to the new Heads of Department who have recently been appointed and those that have been confirmed. Dr Natalie Kenely is now Head of the Department of Social Policy and Social Work and Professor Saviour Formosa is Head of Department of Criminology. Dr Clarissa Sammut Scerri has been appointed Head of Department for Family Studies (previously occupying the role of Acting Head). I would like to extend my appreciation to the former Deputy Dean and Head of Department for Criminology Dr Jacqueline Azzopardi for her dedication and Dr Maureen Cole former Dean and Head of Department of Social Policy and Social Work for providing so many years of service to the sector - indeed much appreciated. Dr Dione Mifsud (Department of Counseling), Dr Marvin Formosa (Department of Gerontology), Dr Brenda Murphy, Acting Head (Department of Gender Studies), Ms Vicky Gauci (Department of Disability Studies) and myself (Department of Youth and Community Studies) have all been confirmed in their posts. More news in this realm will be forthcoming.
- These last weeks I have been meeting Ms Rowena Leontijevic our Faculty Officer regularly. We have been looking at the Faculty procedures, setting-up of committees and analyzing the shortage of staff that we have been facing especially in the administrative area. Roughly it looks like we are short of almost one-third of our admin compliment, an issue I have already picked up with Ms Jacqueline Fenech, the HR manager. I have been promised that this issue will be resolved ASAP. In the meantime I would like to thank all the staff members who are no longer with us and moved or are moving on to new pastures. Good luck!
- Congratulations to Ms. Stephanie Jo Grech and her partner for the birth of her baby Emily. We wish her the very best. A bouquet of flowers was sent to Stephanie from all the Faculty.
- A number of academics will either start or continue their sabbatical during this forthcoming academic year; namely, Professor Mary Ann Lauri (Psychology), Dr Joanne Cassar (Youth and Community Studies), Dr Jacqueline Azzopardi and Dr Sandra Scicluna (Criminology), Dr Marceline Naudi (Gender Studies), Professor Angela Abela (Family Studies) and Dr Maureen Cole (Social Policy and Social Work). On your behalf I wish them the very best. A number of academics return to the fold – welcome back!
- Later on this month we will be having an *away-day* at Villa Psaigon in Dingli for all the administrative staff. Ms Sharon Valenzia will remain at the Faculty office to provide any logistical support and advice that may be required in the absence of the other administrative members of staff. Many thanks to the HoDs for accepting to release their staff for this half-day. In the middle of September the Heads of Department will be having a half-day seminar at the Hilton Business Center (courtesy of Tumas Fenech Foundation) in preparation for the forthcoming academic year.
- To date my assistant has not been posted. I hope that this vacancy will be sorted out soon. In the meantime please do not hesitate to pop over, call me or come over at my office in Room 114, Humanities B (FEMA) building (I have kept the same office) if you need to (I am well-stocked in coffee!). If I'm not around do not hesitate to liaise with Ms Rita Micallef or Mr Michael Debattista until my personal assistant is appointed.
- During these last weeks I have made it a point to start meeting the Pro-Rectors. I have met Professor Godfrey Baldachhino and Professor Joe Cacciottolo – they were very cordial meetings. There are meetings scheduled with Professor Tanya Sammut Bonnici, Professor Saviour Zammit and Dr Carmen Sammut. A meeting with the Director of Finance, Mr Mark Debono is in the pipeline and a meeting with the Rector has been scheduled together with a second meeting with Ms Jacqueline Fenech, HR Manager. I will shortly be asking for a meeting with the President of UMASA Dr Brenda Murphy.

- I have met a number of Deans and several other meetings have been scheduled. So far I have met Professor Frank Bezzina (FEMA), Professor Kevin Aquilina (Laws), Dr Noellie Brockdorff (MAKS) and Professor Ernest Cachia (FICT). I will be meeting the rest of the Deans in the coming months. The objective of the meetings are not only to establish links and build bridges but to find concrete and tangible ways how to collaborate – will keep you posted on developments.
- I attended the launch of the *BetaPsi* website launch at Skyparks. Mr Gottfried Catania was present as well. It was a lovely event – this organization is indeed the epitome of how student organizations should be run. Well done!
- As promised I have started 1-to-1 annual meetings with all members of staff.
- I have scheduled a number of meetings with our social partners, starting with MASW, Caritas, FSWS, MAY, Agenzija APPOGG and Victims Support Malta. I have also programmed a meeting with students representing different departments and also student associations; PULSE, SDM, KSU, BetaPSi and the Social Work Students' Association – my endeavor to make sure that students and our social partners are part of this Faculty is a priority.
- I have a meeting scheduled with the Speaker of the House Dr Anglu Farrugia, the Minister for the Family and Social Solidarity Dr Michael Farrugia and am in the process of meeting the Shadow Minister for the Family and Social Solidarity, Dr Paula Mifsud Bonnici and the 'Whips' of the House of Parliament. The Speaker has invited this Faculty to facilitate a debate on social matters to be broadcasted on Parliament TV.
- I have met Her Excellency the President of Malta Marie Louise Coleiro Preca and discussed possible collaborations between our Faculty and the President's Foundation for the Wellbeing of Society – we have already identified potential areas of partnership.
- We have started working on the design of an *App* for Students and Faculty Staff that will link us more. Students from the Faculty of ICT will be involved in this project.
- In the coming weeks I will be proposing a Faculty Summer School (for Summer 2017) – will give you details on this at a later stage.
- Shortly I will be appointing the Dean Delegates and the Deputy Dean and will be informing you on their terms of reference.
- We are working on the setting up of new committees and confirming the others. Some changes on procedure will be recommended – will keep you posted on developments.
- A yearly schedule of Faculty Board meetings will be circulated amongst all the Faculty (apart from being listed in the Faculty Website). This will ensure that anyone in the Faculty who would like to bring an item or represent a proposal to the attention of the Faculty Board will be able to do so.
- Kudos to Dr Claire Azzopardi Lane (Department of Disability Studies) who has participated in 'Ironman – Budapest' running 22k, swimming 1.9k and riding a bike for 90k – impressive – well done.
- Improvements are going to be proposed for the Dean's Awards and a new initiative, the Dean's Forum, will be organized in tandem with our students.
- *D Pebble in My Shoe* is a book co-authored by Prof. Deborah Chetcuti (Faculty of Education), Dr Ruth Falzon (Department of Counselling) and PSD EO Stephen Camilleri.
- The final two promotional videos for the Department of Counselling and the Department of Psychology are now available on Newspoint (<http://www.um.edu.mt/newspoint>). Shortly I will be

proposing a collective marketing strategy for the Faculty, initiatives that will be rolled out during the year. Naturally, this doesn't mean that Departments cannot take on 'autonomous' initiatives as well.

- The Research, Scholarship and Publications Committee is in the process of starting a radio show on Campus FM Radio that will be dealing with the research that was presented during the Brown Bag Seminars. Dr Anne Marie Callus (Department of Psychology) and Dr Christian Borg Xuereb (Department of Gerontology) are in the process of planning the IPA workshop expected to be held in January 2017.
- A week-end seminar for PhD students is being organized by the PhD sub-committee, namely Dr Clarissa Sammut Scerri (Department of Family Studies), Professor Mary Anne Lauri (Department of Psychology) and Dr Paul Bartolo (Department of Psychology). Administrative support is being provided by the Faculty Officer, Ms Rowena Leontijevic.
- The Text (possibly Texts) *Perspectives on Social Wellbeing: A reader* edited by the undersigned, Dr Ruth Falzon (Department of Counselling) and Dr Sue Vella (Department of Social Policy and Social Work) is progressing well. An international editorial board is being set-up. Publication is expected around this time next year.
- I have met Dr Gordon Sammut (Department of Psychology) on the potential development of an 'Observatory on Social Wellbeing and Quality of Life'. We will be working with some other colleagues to write-up a proposal – more on this shortly.
- As from this academic year the Head of Departments forum will be meeting regularly, prior to the Faculty Board meeting. The terms of reference will be circulated amongst the Faculty.
- I am pleased to announce that next month the Department of Youth and Community Studies together with the University will sign a Memorandum of Understanding with Agenzija Zghazagh and the Ministry of Education and Employment that will see a number of initiatives that will benefit the sector, scholarship and students.
- A Faculty organogram will shortly be circulated to show how Departments and Committees within the Faculty are connected to each other.
- A new Facebook page for the Faculty for Social Wellbeing has been set up <https://www.facebook.com/uom.socialwellbeing> - I would appreciate if you share this link and contribute with your postings.
- A Faculty You Tube channel to host all our promotional and video material will be set-up shortly.
- As from the start of the new academic year, the Times of Malta have gently agreed to provide the Faculty with a complimentary copy of the daily edition of the Times – staff can access this newspaper at the our Common Room in the Humanities B building. A bookcase will be installed in the staff Common Room and academics will be invited to leave a complimentary copy of their papers, texts and publications for easy access.
- Tweets from my account @Azzopardi70, related to the Faculty for Social Wellbeing, will be identified by the #socialwellbeing.

**Please feel free to come in touch if there is an initiative or idea you would like to explore.**

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