



L-Università
ta' Malta

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From the Office of the Dean

Newsletter: 'Connect' | No 12

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These have been extraordinary times, but we have still managed to get through during this Covid-19 period. Trying times indeed and were it not for the leadership of the Heads and the continuous support of the Admin, RSOs and Academic teams we would not have managed to keep offering the sterling service we gave to our 1,000 students.

Would you like to link up with the Faculty 'socials'?

- **Faculty for Social Wellbeing:** <https://www.facebook.com/uom.socialwellbeing>
- **Department of Counselling:** <https://www.facebook.com/Department-of-Counselling>
- **Department of Criminology:** <https://www.facebook.com/uom.criminology/>
- **Department of Disability Studies:** <https://www.facebook.com/uom.disabilitystudies>
- **Department of Family Studies:** <https://www.facebook.com/uom.familystudies>
- **Department of Gender and Sexualities:** <https://www.facebook.com/uom.genderstudies>
- **Department of Gerontology and Dementia Studies:**
<https://www.facebook.com/uom.gerontology/>
- **Department of Psychology:** <https://www.facebook.com/uom.psychology>
- **Psychology Lab:** <https://www.facebook.com/uom.psychologylab/>
- **Department of Social Policy and Social Work:**
<https://www.facebook.com/uom.spsw>
- **Department of Youth and Community Studies:**
<https://www.facebook.com/uom.youth>
- **Twitter Account:** <https://twitter.com/FacultyforSW>
- **Instagram Account:** [facultyforsw](https://www.instagram.com/facultyforsw)

You are invited to retrieve **previous editions** of the **Connect** Newsletter by clicking here:

<http://www.um.edu.mt/socialwellbeing/notices/connectnewsletter>

Faculty activities in brief:

- A special mention and appreciation for all the **visiting and casual academic members of staff**, who support the work of the Faculty through the respective Departments, whether it is through dissertation supervision, placement supervision and mentoring, lecturing, sitting on committees, scholarship and research. Their commitment and loyalty to the Faculty is greatly appreciated and does not go unnoticed.

- The Dean, Prof. Andrew Azzopardi has been **re-elected** to lead the Faculty for the next 4 years (2020-2024). He will be relinquishing his post as Head of the Department of Youth and Community Studies after a stint of 5 years at the end of September to be able to focus on the growing agenda of the Faculty. This is the link to his Manifesto: [PRESS HERE](#)
- Academic year starting 2020/2021 will see a number of changes in the current crop of **Heads of Department**, approved during the most recent Council meeting; Dr Gottfried Catania will replace Dr Greta Darmanin Kissaun (Department of Psychology), Dr Christian Borg Xuereb will replace Prof. Marvin Formosa (Department of Gerontology and Dementia Studies), Dr Sue Vella will replace Dr Natalie Kenely (Department of Social Policy and Social Work), Dr Sandra Scicluna will replace Prof. Saviour Formosa (Department of Criminology). Dr Marceline Naudi (Department of Gender and Sexualities), Dr Dione Mifsud (Department of Counselling) and Dr Claire Azzopardi Lane (Department of Disability Studies) have all been confirmed for another term. There are expected changes to be announced in a future Council meeting for the Department of Youth and Community Studies and the Department of Family Studies.
- The Dean, Prof. Andrew Azzopardi has been appointed Chair of the recently set up **Platform for Migration** which is an inter-Faculty initiative spearheaded by the Faculty for Social Wellbeing. Dr Maria Pisani (Department of Youth and Community Studies) has been appointed by Senate to sit on the **Platform for Migration**.
- Barrister John Horan was invited to give a **public lecture** at the University of Malta hosted by the Department of Disability Studies and the Human Rights Platform on the involvement of persons with disability in the justice system.
- We are in our 167th edition of the **Digest**, edited and uploaded weekly by Ms Dorianne Cortis (Faculty Office).
- The Faculty is in the process of recruiting two **academic posts** in Psychology, a post in Disability Studies and a post in Social Policy/Social Work.
- A delegation led by the Dean, Prof. Andrew Azzopardi paid a **courtesy meeting** to the Prime Minister Dr Robert Abela and the Minister of Education and Employment Dr Owen Bonnici.
- Dr Claire Azzopardi Lane (Head, Department of Disability Studies) joined the Dean Prof. Andrew Azzopardi for a **courtesy meeting** at Hon. Roderick Galdes MP, Minister for Social Accommodation.
- Around 20 personalities from the media, entertainment and sport sector **endorsed** the Faculty as part of our student recruitment campaign on Instagram and Facebook.
- Dr Claire Azzopardi Lane (Head, Department of Disability Studies) was reconfirmed as **student athlete mentor** for the Faculty for Social Wellbeing and attended a meeting at the Institute of Physical Education to meet the Faculty's student athletes.
- Dr Claire Azzopardi Lane (Head, Department of Disability Studies) joined Prof Azzopardi for a meeting with Ms. Ruth Sciberras the CEO of *Agenzija Support* to discuss among other things the **MoU** between the Faculty and the Agency.
- Dr Anne Marie Callus (Department of Disability Studies) published a **paper**; Callus, A. M., & Cauchi, D. *Ensuring meaningful access to easy-to-read information: A case study*. British Journal of Learning Disabilities (published online).
- Prof. Andrew Azzopardi, Dean and Dr Andrew Camilleri (RSO) have published a **paper** on 'The Relationship Between Youth and Crime in Malta' (published online).
- Dr Anne Marie Callus (Department of Disability Studies) gave an **interview** on video on accessible science for *Think website*: <https://www.um.edu.mt/think/accessible-science-denise-camilleri-interviews-claude-bajada/>
- The Faculty recorded more **Vlogs**.
- Dr Vickie Gauci (Department of Disability Studies) moderated the Spinal Cord Injury **Conference** organised by the Malta Association of Occupational Therapists.
- Ms. Amy Joan Camilleri Zahra (Department of Disability Studies) attended **TVAM**, a programme to discuss her PhD Research.

- The Dean, Prof. Andrew Azzopardi had a meeting with Dr Joan Camilleri and Ms Elena Borg on how the **Health and Wellness Center** and the Faculty can cooperate.
- Dr Claire Azzopardi Lane (Head, Department of Disability Studies), Ms Camilleri Zahra (Department of Disability Studies), Ms Samantha Pace Gasan (RSO) and the Dean Prof. Andrew Azzopardi were invited to form part of the **Covid-19 Disability Task Force** set up by CRPD.
- Dr Claire Azzopardi Lane (Department of Disability Studies) started working on a research project called **Positive Parenting Project** in collaboration with Agenzija Sapport.
- The area of research as part of the MoU with Department of Disability Studies, the Faculty for Social Wellbeing and the CRPD (for 2020) was agreed to be *"The impact of COVID 19 on persons with disability, their families and service providers"*. This research is being conducted by Ms Samantha Pace Gasan and Dr Andrew Camilleri (RSOs).
- The Department of Disability Studies were invited by the **DIO** (Disability Issues Office) to form part of an external review process of the REACH project led by Agenzija Sapport. The Department agreed that they would be part of this process with Dr. Azzopardi Lane representing the Department. The Dean, Prof. Andrew Azzopardi, was also part of this consultation process.
- Dr Anne Marie Callus (Department of Disability Studies) was awarded a **Research Seed Fund** to carry out a project called *ĊaVetta għall-Futur: Creating Video Curriculum Vitae with People with Intellectual Disability*. This is an inclusive research project by the Department of Disability Studies in collaboration with the Commission for the Rights of Persons with Disability.
- We have stepped up our **Instagram and Facebook** accounts providing more information on what the Faculty is engaged in. We have seen an increase in the *Followers* and *Likes* respectively.
- Dr Claire Azzopardi Lane (Head, Department of Disability Studies) was successfully awarded the **Research Seed Fund** to carry out a research project on breast cancer with women with disability.
- Preparations are underway to start the third edition of the program *Konnekt on Campus FM*, anchored by Dr Albert Bell (Department of Youth and Community Studies). For the first time ever, it will also be transmitted on Facebook Live.
- The Dean, Prof. Andrew Azzopardi will be analysing the newspapers on **Campus FM** from this coming October.
- Dr Anne Marie Callus (Department of Disability Studies) participated in a **live stream** on how the lockdown is affecting disabled people and their families in Malta. The programme was organized by the Health and Wellness Centre.
- Ms Amy Camilleri Zahra (Department of Disability Studies) participated in a discussion organized by Prof. JosAnn Cutajar (Department of Gender and Sexualities) to discuss how **Covid-19** and the measures proposed by the health authorities are affecting women.
- Ms Amy Camilleri Zahra (Department of Disability Studies) participated in a **Webinar** organized by the Women's Brain Project.
- Dr Maria Victoria Gauci (Department of Disability Studies) participated in meetings regarding the **project** (PRIME VR2) with the Faculty of Engineering.
- The publication that emerged from the **LGBTIQ symposium** that took place in May 2018 edited by Dr Marceline Naudi (Head, Department of Gender and Sexualities) and Dr. Claire Azzopardi Lane (Head, Department of Disability Studies) was launched by the Human Rights Directorate under the Ministry for Social Dialogue, Consumer Affairs and Civil Liberties (MSDC). The publication is called *"Mapping the Rainbow; Researching the diverse colours of the LBGTIQ community"*. Dr Azzopardi Lane gave a speech during the opening. This publication can be accessed here: [PRESS HERE](#)
- The Department of Disability Studies together with the Department of Psychology **launched** the BA in Disability Studies and Psychology and was approved by Senate.
- Dr Claire Azzopardi Lane (Head, Department of Disability Studies) and Prof. Andrew Azzopardi, the Dean, participated in meeting regarding the **REACH** project.

- Dr Claire Azzopardi Lane (Head, Department of Disability Studies) was nominated as independent **expert** of recognized competence in human rights, for the elections of the UN Treaty bodies of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
- Dr Anne Marie Callus (Department of Disability Studies) provided support for Ms Isabel Bonello to give her reactions to the **REACH project** in a consultation session held with disabled people.
- Ms Amy Camilleri Zahra (Department of Disability Studies) participated in a **meeting** organised by the Nationalist Party for people working in the disability sector and active ageing sector about the effects of the pandemic.
- The Faculty has continued to work on a number of **research projects** with the intention to inform policy namely; MFCS (SOPs; Covid-19; mental health; adoption), Dar Kenn ghal Sahhtek (eating disorders), MEDE (challenging behaviour), Kindred (scholarships on the impact of gaming), Agenzija SAPPOR (parental skills persons with intellectual disabilities), Agenzija Zghazagh (activism), Housing Authority (services), CRPD (Covid-19; scholarships) and Valletta Local Council (community development), Loneliness, COVID-19 and its impact on students, amongst other. A number of new initiatives are on the way.
- His Excellency the President of Malta, Dr George Vella addressed the **on-line Faculty Seminar**. Over 100 participants were involved.
- The Department of Youth and Community Studies is working on an **edited text** detailing a number of youth related issues. This project is led by Dr Albert Bell (Department of Youth and Community Studies) and Dr Joanne Cassar (Department of Youth and Community Studies).
- The Faculty will be issuing the second edition of the Faculty magazine **societas.expert** in the coming weeks supported by Corporate Dispatch which has uploaded the magazine on a wide ranging international platform.
- Prof. Andrew Azzopardi, Dean, Prof. JosAnn Cutajar (Department of Gender and Sexualities) and Dr Natalie Kenley (Department of Social Policy and Social Work) all had articles featured in the magazine, **Corporate Dispatch**.
- Work on the first edition of the first **Studies in Social Wellbeing Journal** are progressing well. This initiative is led by Dr Maureen Cole (Department of Social Policy and Social Work) and Ms. Jamie Bonnici (RSO).
- The Dean, Prof. Andrew Azzopardi submitted the 4th edition of the **Faculty Annual Report**, compiled by the Heads of each Department.
- The Faculty has continued to produce **Vlogs** on a number of issues to continue with its community engagement.
- The Faculty has organized its fourth edition of the **Stakeholders meeting**. The session was very interactive and provided an excellent platform for debate and feedback for the Faculty. Ms Samantha Pace Gasan (RSO) and Ms Charlene Fabri (PA to the Dean) led the initiative.
- Over the past months, notwithstanding the restrictions of the Covid-19 pandemic, all the Departments of the Faculty have continued with their **lecturing duties** (on-line), with their research, and with their community engagement, which is vast. Naturally a number of planned face-to-face events including socials, Dean's Award Ceremony, Faculty Seminar, public talks, have either migrated to Zoom and other on-line platforms or else have been postponed.
- The **College of Heads** kept meeting regularly and in these last weeks was attended as well by the new nominated Heads.
- **FREC** continued to meet regularly under the leadership of Dr Claire Azzopardi Lane (Head, Department of Disability Studies). She took over half-way during the academic year.
- Administrators Ms. Marija Grech (Department of Social Policy and Social Work) and Ms. Jolin Mifsud (Department of Counselling) will **no longer be working** with the Faculty as they have applied and were chosen to pursue their studies at Master level in the UK and Sweden respectively. We wish them the very best and thank them for the service rendered to the Faculty and the UM.

- Members of the Department of Gender and Sexualities have actually been even more busy as a result of the **COVID-19 pandemic**, with interviews, conferences and meetings relating to the effect of the pandemic on women and other sections of our society.
- As the president of **GREVIO** Dr Marceline Naudi (Head, Department of Gender and Sexualities) has been interviewed by Voice of America, ARTE journal, the Council of Europe, Deutsche Welle, the BBC World Service, WAVE and other broadcasters or agencies about the problem of domestic violence during restrictive measure.
- Prof. JosAnn Cutajar (Department of Gender and Sexualities) has participated in **focus group meetings** with academics to discuss Government's efforts against poverty.
- The Department of Gender and Sexualities has continued to be active in the various local and international **projects** and boards they sit on, such as the European INIA project on Intersex, the Gender Action project, the European Observatory on Femicide, the Consultative Council on Women's Rights, the Violeta Project, Malta Trust Foundation - Y-Assist and Gozo Mental Health Outreach, Mediating Women Balancing the Media, among others.
- The participation of the Department of Gender and Sexualities within the University of Malta has also continued with their **presence and contribution** to the Institute of European Studies Board, the Human Rights Platform, and others, apart from the usual in-house Faculty meetings and events.
- The Faculty has set up over **20 streamers** spread all over Malta and Gozo promoting the different Departments and their courses.
- The Faculty set up two **billboards** a month for these last 5 months promoting its courses.
- The **MFA** is supporting the Faculty by promoting its courses on the MFA's website.
- Various Local Councils and the AKL are **supporting** the Faculty by promoting its courses on their FB pages.
- The **RSOs** of the Faculty have written over 15 articles on a number of topics related to social wellbeing.
- The Dean, Prof. Andrew Azzopardi, has written a number of **articles** in his weekly column on The Malta Independent focusing on issues around social wellbeing. He has also been on number of radio and tv programmes related to this area.
- The Faculty has launched a **number of courses** (some new) starting this coming October at Certificate, Bachelor, Masters and PhD levels.
- The Department of Counselling organised a **course for mental health and kindred professionals** to work online.
- Prof. Marvin Formosa (Head, Department of Gerontology) has been appointed as **Country Academic Leader** for the European Commission funded longitudinal study titled '*Survey on Health, Retirement and Ageing in Europe*'.
- Prof. Marvin Formosa (Head, Department of Gerontology) is **leading a United Nations - Malta** webinar titled '*Population ageing: Diversity, social justice and equality*'. His lecture was titled '*Social class and frailty: What relationship?*'
- Prof. Marvin Formosa (Head, Department of Gerontology) is **taking part in an international webinar** on the impact of COVID-19 on gerontological activities and services organised by Turkish Geriatrics Society. His lecture is titled '*Social class and frailty: What relationship?*'
- Prof. Marvin Formosa (Head, Department of Gerontology) has been **re-reconfirmed as the Chairperson of the National Commission for Active Ageing** by the Parliamentary Secretariat for Active Ageing and Persons with Disability.
- Prof. Marvin Formosa (Head, Department of Gerontology) is leading the **University of the Fourth Age** for its second academic year at St. Vincent de Paul Long-Term facility.
- Following the impact of COVID-19 which precluded, for a short period of time, any dissertations taking part in care homes for older persons, the Department of Gerontology and Dementia Studies organised a series of **seminars** in Non-Empirical Dissertation.
- The Faculty has continued to increase its crop of **MPhil/PHD candidates**. Well over the 50 mark now! The FDC is meeting regularly.

- The **CAVE Immersion lab** project was officially launched by Prof. Saviour Formosa (Head, Department of Criminology).
- The **Faculty Doctoral Committee** met regularly and in fact increased its number of meetings to cope with the big demand of people wanting to read doctorates with us.
- The Dean, Prof. Andrew Azzopardi and Dr Dione Mifsud (Head, Department of Counselling and Senate Representative) attended **Senate meetings**.
- **Faculty Board** meetings were held regularly.
- The Faculty Office once again organised a **Food Bank**. An initiative by Ms Charlene Fabri (PA to the Dean).
- The MPhil/PhD **sub-committee** will be organising a number of sessions for the MPhil/PhD candidates through the Doctoral School programme.
- **RSPC** is now being led by Dr Ruth Falzon (Department of Counselling). I would like to thank Dr Anne Marie Callus (Department of Disability Studies) for her diligent and exemplary leadership of this committee.
- The Department of Social Policy and Social Work worked on, finalised and shall be offering a new **Master of Arts in Social Policy and in Social Work**, mainly by research.
- The Department of Social Policy and Social Work collaborated with FSWS and FEMA to write a new **MA in the Management of Social Care Services**. It will be offered as from October 2020.
- The Department of Social Policy and Social Work collaborated with the Faculty of Theology and the Safeguarding Commission to write a new **Certificate in Safeguarding Children and Young Persons**. It will be offered as from October 2020.
- Dr Sue Vella (Department of Social Policy and Social Work) coordinated and wrote a new **Certificate in Volunteering** that will be offered as from October 2020.
- Dr Natalie Kenely (Head, Department of Social Policy and Social Work) delivered an **oration** on Green Social Work during the Post-Graduate Graduation.
- The Dean, Prof. Andrew Azzopardi delivered an Oration during the **Honoris Causa**.
- Dr Natalie Kenely (Head, Department of Social Policy and Social Work) visited University College Cork in order to negotiate an **Erasmus** agreement for social work placements with that University.
- Dr Natalie Kenely (Head, Department of Social Policy and Social Work) and Dr Claudia Psaila (Department of Social Policy and Social Work) delivered **training** on Resilience and Self Care to social work Practice Educators in Dublin. This Erasmus programme was carried out in collaboration with University College Dublin.
- The Department of Social Policy and Social Work hosted Prof. Paula Slavin from UCD and Mr Pete Ayling from the University of Worcester who **visited** their students carrying out social work placements in Malta.
- The Department of Social Policy and Social Work **co-hosted**, together with the Maltese Association of Social Workers, and the Safeguarding Commission, a series of three webinars for social workers and other professionals working in the helping professions. A total of 275 professionals and students participated in these webinars that discussed the Social Work Response to COVID19. Dr Natalie Kenely (Head, Department of Social Policy and Social Work), Dr Maureen Cole (Department of Social Policy and Social Work), and Dr Claudia Psaila (Department of Social Policy and Social Work), each addressed one of the webinars in this series.
- All the staff at the Department of Social Policy and Social Work followed training on the use of **Wiseflow** and/or Exam VLE as we adapted to the new reality of online exams. Ms Alison Darmanin (Faculty Officer), Ms Lucienne Gellel (Department of Social Policy and Social Work), Ms Jeanessa Bezzina (Faculty Office) and Ms Sarah Cassar (Department of Psychology) were involved as well.
- A number of academic members of staff are attending training on designing and delivering **online courses**.
- Administrative staff are attending the ongoing training being offered by the **HR Department**.
- Five members of staff have completed or are in the process of obtaining **training** on Designing, Delivering and Evaluating Online Study-Units, offered by the University of Malta
- Dr Maureen Cole's (Department of Social Policy and Social Work) mother sadly **passed away**.

- The Dean's Office continued to issue a number of **Press Releases** on social and current issues.
- Work has started on **Unity**, the fourth edition of the Faculty magazine.
- A number of initiatives are being put in place so that the Faculty starts **promoting its courses for the coming academic year** – with some very original and innovative courses.
- A number of academics have been involved in **activism** in a number of community issues.
- The Dean, Prof. Andrew Azzopardi has **moderated** a number of seminars.
- A number of **Webinars** were organised by the various Departments to promote their courses.
- Prof. Paul Bartolo (Department of Psychology) has been **promoted** to Full Professor.
- Work has started on the **planning** for the forthcoming academic year 2020/21.
- Dr Kurt Borg, former RSO has been appointed **lecturer** with the Faculty of Education. We wish him the best of luck.
- For the first time the Faculty in collaboration with the Department of Dance Studies of the School of Performing Arts organised, *'Pause to Rest your Mind and Body'* an invitation to practice **mindfulness** for university staff and students.

Appreciation is extended to:

- The team of **HoDs** who are incredibly supportive, namely; the Deputy Dean, Dr Greta Darmanin Kissaun (Head, Department of Psychology), Dr Claire Azzopardi Lane (Head, Department of Disability Studies), Ms. Alison Darmanin (Faculty Officer), Prof. Marvin Formosa (Head, Department of Gerontology and Dementia Studies), Prof. Saviour Formosa (Head, Department of Criminology), Dr Natalie Kenely (Head, Department of Social Policy and Social Work), Dr Dione Mifsud (Faculty Senate Representative and Head Department of Counselling), Dr Marceline Naudi (Head, Department of Gender and Sexualities) and Dr Clarissa Sammut Scerri (Head, Department of Family Studies).
- The **Faculty Board** members for their important role in running this Faculty.
- The Academic members of **staff**, whether resident full-time or part-time, casual or visiting, dissertation and placement supervisors and the **students** who make this a cohesive Faculty keen to respond to the challenges of society.
- The **administrative staff** and **Research Support Officers**, both serving the Faculty in the Departments as well as in the Faculty Office, for their unwavering support and commitment.
- **Ms Charlene Fabri** (PA to the Dean) for her dedication and constant support.

This is most certainly not all that has happened in the Faculty during these last months. If there is anything you would like to include in the future editions of Connect please send an email to charlene.fabri@um.edu.mt