

From the Office of the Dean | Connect 2

Dear Colleagues,

I trust this second edition of Connect finds you well.

What an eventful two months these have been. The amount of work this Faculty generates is incredible. I would like to start by making a mention of our dedicated administrative staff who are incredibly committed and their hard work, especially in collaboration with their Heads of Department, ensure we start our academic year serenely and with composure.

This is a sample of what has been going on (you can follow regular updates on our Facebook Page -<https://www.facebook.com/uom.socialwellbeing/>).

- Dr Greta Darmanin Kissaun (Head, Department of Psychology) has been appointed **Deputy Dean** by the Rector following my recommendation. Dr Darmanin Kissaun will be a very important loop in the management of the Faculty. The roles and responsibilities of the Deputy Dean will be communicated shortly.
- The 6 **Dean Delegates** have been approached and will soon be announced together with their areas of responsibilities and terms of reference.
- I would like to welcome a **new academic member of staff**, Dr Pam Portelli (Department of Psychology).
- The following will be **chairing the respective Faculty committees**: Dr Anne Marie Callus (Department of Disability Studies) – Research, Publications and Scholarship Committee, Dr Andrea Dibben (Department of Social Policy and Social Work) – Community Engagement, Dr Katya Degiovanni (Department of Psychology) – FREC, Prof Marilyn Clark (Department of Psychology) – Faculty Seminar, Dr Gordon Sammut (Department of Psychology) – Research Observatory.
- Ms Joanne Muscat (Department of Criminology), Ms. Dorianne Cortis (*temporarily in the Department of Social Policy and Social Work*) and Mr. Anthony Buhagair (Faculty Office) are **new administrative members of staff**. In the meantime, Ms Lara Ellul (*former Department of Social Policy and Social Work*) will be the **Personal Assistant** of the Dean and Ms Sandra Zammit Giordano will support the Department of Youth and Community Studies for the time being. I would like to thank Ms Rowena Leontijevic (Faculty Officer) for the work she has put into acclimatizing the new administrative staff.
- As from this academic year the **administrative members of staff** will have a minimum of two half-day meetings (one per semester) to focus on operational responsibilities and team building. Sessions will be led by the Faculty Officer and attended by the Dean and Deputy Dean.
- I've had a **cordial meeting** with the Management Team of the Foundation for Social Welfare Services (FSWS), Ms Renee Laiviera Commissioner NCPE, Mr Joe Gerada, Director of the Domestic Violence Commission, Ms Marthese Mugliette, President of

MASE and Mr Simone Schembri, President of the Maltese Association of Youth Workers. In all of these meetings concrete and tangible initiatives were discussed. I am convinced that good working relations develop through practical projects. I have meetings scheduled with Dr Roberta Lepre, Victim Support Unit, Mr Oliver Scicluna, Commissioner Persons with Disability and Dr John Cachia, Commissioner of Mental Health, amongst other.

- The Faculty has been invited by the Pro-Rector for Staff and Student Affairs and Outreach, Dr Carmen Sammut, to lead a conference on the 25/11/2016 on how the University could become more **accessible** for people on the autistic spectrum and those with dyslexia. This is an excellent opportunity for our Faculty to grow in stature not only in terms of scholarship and teaching but also in influencing positively the University practices and procedures. This initiative took shape in a meeting that was attended by Ms Vicky Gauci (Department of Disability Studies), Dr Clarissa Sammut Scerri (Department of Family Studies), Dr Sue Vella (Department of Social Policy and Social Work) and myself.
- Dr Trevor Calafato (Department of Criminology) has recently been involved in the 4th transnational meeting organized by the European Association of Civil Protection Volunteer Teams (**EVOLSAR**). Dr Calafato is the editor of the #EVOLSAR basic rescue manual.
- Mr Edgar Galea Curmi (Department of Social Policy and Social Work) is currently drafting terms of reference to be discussed and then presented to Faculty Board on the role of the **social partners** in the Faculty. More on that shortly.
- The Department of Gerontology led by Dr Marvin Formosa will be collaborating with the Faculty of Dental Surgery and the European College of Gerodontology in organizing an **International Conference**: ‘Overcoming Barriers in Oral Health in Later Life’.
- A new initiative, the **Dean’s Forum** is being planned – it is generating quite an interest – will pass on details shortly.
- 3 research proposals have been submitted for potential **MALTCO funding**. A meeting with MALTCO and RIDT is being scheduled for the coming weeks.
- I would like to **congratulate** Ms Amy Camilleri Zahra (Department of Disability Studies) who was presented with the prestigious human rights advocate award by the Ambassador’s Woman of Courage award – well done indeed! <https://mt.usembassy.gov/u-s-embassy-presents-ambassadors-woman-courage-award/>
- Our new flagship **radio show** on Campus FM radio, ‘Connect’ will be anchored by Dr Albert Bell (Department of Youth and Community Studies). This is another initiative of the very active Research, Publications and Scholarship Committee (RPSC) ably led by Dr Anne Marie Callus (Department of Disability Studies). This programme is scheduled to be broadcasted during the Autumn and Winter schedule, starting next week. The RPSC has also announced that work has started on the writing on a research bid focusing on ‘**poverty**’ from the Italia-Malta funding programme.

- Attendance is filling up fast for the IPA Workshop that will be led by Dr Rachel Shaw (Aston University). Kudos to Dr Anne Marie Callus (Department of Disability Studies) and Ms Lucienne Brincat (Committee secretary) for the work they have put into this event.
- We are in the process of designing a **questionnaire** that will evaluate how the Faculty is responding to the aspirations of our staff and students. This on-line anonymous questionnaire will be repeated every year to trace developments.
- The **PhD sub-committee**; Dr Clarissa Sammut Scerri (Department of Family Studies), Prof Paul Bartolo and Prof Mary Anne Lauri (Department of Psychology) with the support of Ms. Rowena Leontijevic (Faculty Officer) are working hard at organising a Writing Seminar for our doctoral students. A number of new initiatives on how we can support our PhD candidates are also being considered.
- A collaborative project is being designed between **MEPs Dr Miriam Dalli and Dr Therese Comodini Cachia** and our Faculty – more on this shortly.
- Work has continued to progress on the **Research Observatory**. This initiative, led by Dr Gordon Sammut (Department of Psychology) is being further consolidated by the support of Dr Sue Vella (Department of Social Policy and Social Work) and Dr Anne Marie Callus (Department of Disability Studies).
- Following consultation with the Heads of Department of the Department of Disability Studies, Ms Maria Victoria Gauci and the Department of Gender Studies, Dr Brenda Murphy the Faculty will be writing to the University Authorities to ensure that we have **Gender Neutral bathrooms and couches** installed in the accessible toilets.
- A **Book Launch** of Aleks Farrugia's (Visiting Lecturer with the Department of Youth and Community Studies) novel and a **book debate** (Co-Editors Dr Maria Brown and Dr Michael Briguglio's), 'Sociology of the Maltese Islands' is being planned. The latter includes a number of chapters by lecturers of the Faculty for Social Wellbeing who have contributed to this edition.
- Discussions are on-going on the new faculty building with the Director of Finance Mr Mark Debono and the University Secretary Mr Simon Mercieca on plans how this issue is to be resolved.
- Met with all **Pro-Rectors** and most of the **Deans**. The Dean has also attended his first **Senate**. A number of initiatives that concern the Faculty have been discussed.
- I am pleased to mention that I have been asked to sit on a Senate committee that will be looking at the current **UREC operations**. A debate on the need to review these procedures was long time coming.
- Prof Marilyn Clark (Department of Psychology) has kindly drafted a Media position on the recent **ESPAD** outcomes.
- Prof Saviour Formosa (Head, Department of Criminology) has been highly involved in the recent reforms and amendments to the **Police law**.

- Dr Dione Mifsud (Head, Department of Counselling) will be giving an **Oration** in the post-graduate Ceremony of Tuesday 6th December 2016 at 4.30 pm. Whilst I congratulate Dr Mifsud, I would like to encourage the academic members of staff to attend the said ceremony.
- Dr Andrea Dibben (Department of Social Policy and Social Work) has been involved in the highly popular **Rock Musical** and played 'Rita' in 'Belliegha' held at the Pjazza Teatru Rjal – well done! Some very highly acclaimed reviews have been noted in the newspapers.
- A **schedule** of Faculty Board Meetings, Heads of Department Meetings, PhD Committee Meetings and Administrative Staff Meetings is in the process of being circulated – and will be uploaded on the Faculty Website Page. I encourage any academic member of staff, administrative member of staff and student of the Faculty to submit items for discussion during the Faculty Board. These items would need to go through the respective Heads of Department (in the case of staff) and through the student reps sitting on FB (in the case of students). I have also requested that the Rector appoints new Government representatives on the Faculty Board.
- All the Departments will be asked to submit their **Annual Report** by the end of October, following which the final report of all the Departments and the Faculty will be circulated with students and members of staff. Many thanks to Dr Sue Vella (Department of Social Policy and Social Work) and Dr Marvin Formosa (Head, Department of Gerontology) for their support in this task.
- The Dean has written to the Rector to consider the setting up of the **Unit/Department of Migration Studies** as committed in the Memorandum presented and approved by Senate and Council way back in 2012.
- A number of new under-grad and post-grad courses are being planned – more on this shortly.
- Very soon the **Dean's Award committee** will be convened and new initiatives will be discussed to build on an already very successful event.
- Dr Daniella Zerafa (Department of Social Policy and Social Work) attended the **Public Consultation Launch of the National Children's Policy**. Very soon, following an internal Faculty discussion, we will issue a public position on the matter.
- A new format of the **Strategic Committee** will be recommended to Faculty Board following discussion with the HoDs.
- The Dean has requested that the administrative **budget** of the Faculty is increased in relation to the way our operations have expanded. If approved these monies will trickle down to the Departments. A consultation meeting on budget allocation for 2017 will soon start with the HoDs. Those Departments that will show evidence that in the coming year they will be actively involved in projects and schemes will be awarded more funds to operate accordingly.

- The Dean, Heads of Departments, Faculty Officer and for the first time student reps from each Department will be addressing the **freshers** on the 4th October.
- The Dean is currently meeting every Department for a **preliminary meeting** to wish the staff well for the forthcoming academic year and to listen to grievances and recommendations. The Dean will also meet the different student cohorts in the coming months.
- A **‘Toast the Faculty’** event will be held for all members of staff next Thursday 29th September (come rain or shine ☺) to usher in the new Academic Year. The Rector, Registrar and Pro-Rectors have been invited to attend this event.
- You are more than welcome to request a **meeting** with the Dean either directly (please note details at the end of the email) or through my colleague Ms Lara Ellul (Dean’s PA).
- Departments are being encouraged to have an ‘active’ **Facebook page** and to post events on the Faculty FB Page.
- Work is about to start to revamp our **Faculty Website Page** thanks to Ms. Jeanessa Bezzina (Faculty Office). I encourage all Departments to review and upgrade where necessary their Departmental Pages.

Please encourage students and staff to LIKE our Faculty FB Page so that you are kept up-to-date with Faculty events: <https://www.facebook.com/uom.socialwellbeing/>

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