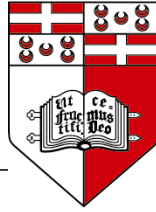


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UNIVERSITY OF MALTA
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FACULTY FOR SOCIAL WELLBEING

From the Office of the Dean

Newsletter: 'Connect' | No 3

19/12/2016

Dear Colleagues,

I trust this third edition of 'Connect' finds you well. This has been indeed an amazing start to the Academic Year.

Allow me to thank all students and staff for being part of this lovely Faculty. The volume of work we produce in this Faculty (over and above our teaching, research, supervision and administration role) is simply overwhelming.

I am amazed at the commitment of the admin and academic staff. Notwithstanding the fact that you all carry personal and familial struggles yet your students, colleagues, Departments and Faculty are never short-changed. I am indebted for the heart and energy you all put into this job.

It is also a pleasure to have such a massive student cohort that I hope will keep growing in numbers. Students are our Ambassadors and I invite you to share the Faculty news with their friends, family and work colleagues. If there is an initiative you would like to take, all you need to do is give the HoDs or myself a heads-up – we are always ready to take on new challenges.

The numbers in this Faculty speak for themselves;

- 1,000 students, c.30 Erasmus and visiting students, over 85 resident academic staff, over 300 casuals, visiting, placement tutors and supervisors, over 20 administrative staff, 9 Departments, c. 30 courses, 196 graduates and I could go on. The amount of meetings, committees, symposia, conferences we have going on is also incredible and this notwithstanding the hours we put into research, lecturing, supervision and placements.

It is commendable that so many members of staff are grounded in the social sector. This is without a doubt inspiring. Connecting with the social welfare field and contributing directly to the field of practice is an essential part of our mission and vision. Add to this our international participation and it immediately gets breathtaking!

However, I must say that the news that rocked the Faculty this academic year was the unexpected and untimely death of Dr Jacqueline Azzopardi, a long-time friend and colleague to many of us. The former Deputy Dean and HoD of the Department of Criminology passed away at the pinnacle of her career, at what I consider to be the tender age of 47 years. She will be

missed not only for her scholarship and dedication to the sector she was so committed to, but also for her amazing personality and fantastic sense of humour. I was also deeply moved by the passing away of Mr Patrick F. Philpott, a former mature student, who read a course with the Department of Psychology.

However, before going any further with this newsletter, allow me to extend my appreciation to all the Heads of Department; Dr Dione Mifsud (Department of Counselling), Prof Saviour Formosa (Department of Criminology), Ms Vicky Gauci (Department of Disability Studies), Dr Clarissa Sammut Scerri (Department of Family Studies), Dr Brenda Murphy (Department of Gender Studies), Dr Marvin Formosa (Department of Gerontology), Dr Natalie Kenely (Department of Social Policy and Social Work), Ms Rowena Leontijevic (Faculty Officer) and the Deputy Dean, Dr Greta Darmanin Kissau (Department of Psychology) who have been immensely supportive these first few months of my Deanship. Their presence is immensely reassuring. I would like to thank the recently appointed Dean Delegates; Dr Claire Azzopardi Lane (Department of Disability Studies), Dr Andrea Dibben (Department of Social Policy and Social Work), Prof Saviour Formosa (Department of Criminology), Dr Marvin Formosa (Department of Gerontology) and Dr Katya Degiovanni (Department of Psychology) for the services they are rendering. Their terms of reference for this new role will soon be circulated for your gentle perusal.

In this edition of **Connect**, I will be listing only a sample of the work taking place in the Faculty. However our **Facebook Pages** are extremely active and you might want to link up with them for more details:

- Faculty for Social Wellbeing: <https://www.facebook.com/uom.socialwellbeing>
- Department of Criminology: TBA shortly
- Department of Counselling: <https://www.facebook.com/Department-of-Counselling>
- Department of Disability Studies: <https://www.facebook.com/uom.disabilitystudies>
- Department of Family Studies: <https://www.facebook.com/uom.familystudies>
- Department of Gender Studies: <https://www.facebook.com/uom.genderstudies>
- Department of Gerontology: <https://www.facebook.com/uom.gerontology/>
- Department of Psychology: <https://www.facebook.com/uom.psychology>
- 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>

Faculty work in brief:

- 196 students **graduated** this year (Diploma in Policing - 29 students; Diploma in Youth Studies - 2 students; Higher Diploma in Psychology -19 students; Bachelor of Arts (Honours) (Criminology) - 30 students; Bachelor of Psychology (Honours) -79 students; Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Social Policy -7 students; Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Social Work - 17 students; Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Youth and Community Studies - 8 students; Postgraduate Diploma in Counselling – 1; Postgraduate Diploma in Gerontology and Geriatrics - 4 students). Dr Dione Mifsud (HoD, Department of Counselling) and newly graduated PhD student Dr Daniella Zerafa (Department of Social Policy and Social Work) presented two excellent **Orations**;

- The first ever **Faculty for Social Wellbeing National Conference**, ‘Towards a truly accessible University’ co-organised with the Rectorate and Pro-Rectorate led by Dr Carmen Sammut was a huge success, not only in terms of attendance (over 150 attendees) but also in the positive debate that was generated and the potential changes it can trigger. Kudos to the Faculty Office and the Administrative Staff of the Department of Youth and Community Studies for supporting this initiative;
- The first **Faculty Flier** was printed and used for the National Conference and for circulation amongst JC students. A series of fliers will be published early next year promoting each Department, our PhD programme and our BA (Hons.) in Social Wellbeing Studies;
- Many thanks to Dr Sandra Scicluna Calleja (Department of Psychology) for supporting the Dean during **Senate** meetings;
- The following members of staff were **conferred the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**: Dr Daniella Zerafa (Department of Social Policy and Social Work), Dr Greta Darmanin Kissaun (HoD, Department of Psychology) and Dr Kristina Vella (Department of Psychology);
- The Research, Scholarship & Publications Committee organized the first **Writing Workshop** coordinated by Dr Claudia Psaila (Department of Social Policy and Social Work) for this year entitled: ‘The Nuts & Bolts of Getting Published’. During this workshop, Prof Marilyn Clark (Department of Psychology), Prof Jeannie Wright (Department of Conselling) and Dr Anne Marie Callus (Department of Disability Studies) presented their thoughts, experiences and insights on the process and experience of getting published;
- Dr Andrew Azzopardi (Dean) is sitting on the **review committee of UREC** appointed by Senate;
- The **Community Engagement Committee** led by Dr Andrea Dibben (Department of Social Policy and Social Work) started working on a new plan of action – more information soon;
- The Faculty has come to an agreement with MEPs Dr Miriam Dalli and Dr Therese Comodini Cachia to have a delegation made up of 4 academic members of staff, 3 administrative members of staff and 3 students to visit Brussels on a **working/study visit** to try and understand the social wellbeing and quality of life agenda that is being promoted in the EU. This visit coincides with Malta’s Presidency of the EU;

- Dr Andrew Azzopardi (Dean) attended the first **College of Deans Meeting**;
- The **Social Wellbeing Committee** led by the Deputy Dean Dr Greta Darmanin Kissaun (Department of Psychology), Prof Carmel Cefai (Department of Psychology), Dr Trevor Calafato (Department of Criminology), Prof Paul Bartolo (Department of Psychology), Dr Marta Sant (Department of Psychology) and Dr Andrew Azzopardi (Dean) agreed to circulate a questionnaire (January 2017) to get a clearer understanding of the mood and frame of mind of the Faculty staff and students and address a wellbeing programme accordingly;
- As from this Academic Year we have new, more detailed and structured **annual reports**. Kudos to Dr Sue Vella (Department of Social Policy and Social Work) for the template design and for the time HoDs took to fill it in;
- Mr Paul Caruana (Department of Criminology) led the ‘Joint European Cross Border Cooperation (JECBC)’ **study programme** (CRI 3009). This was a fantastic experience that saw the participation of Border Guards coming from a number of European countries. Dr Andrew Azzopardi (Dean) and Prof Saviour Formosa (HoD, Department of Criminology) presented the certificates;
- The Deputy Dean, Dr Greta Darmanin Kissaun, Dr Kristina Vella (Department of Psychology) and Dr Andrew Azzopardi (Dean) are working on a proposal to organise an **intra-Faculty seminar series**. *More on this soon*;
- Work on the **Research Observatory** is panning out well. This ad hoc committee led by Dr Gordon Sammut (Department of Psychology), Dr Anne Marie Callus (Department of Disability Studies) and Dr Sue Vella (Department of Social Policy and Social Work) are doing sterling work. In this regard a proposal has been submitted to Prof Alfred Vella (Rector) who reacted positively to this Faculty initiative;
- An initiative in the field of **Migration** will soon be set-up. *More on this soon*;
- The Faculty is considering starting negotiations with students to set up a **Faculty for Social Wellbeing Students’ Association**;
- I would like to congratulate the Department of Youth and Community Studies for the signing of a **Memorandum of Understanding** with the National Youth Agency which will see collaboration between the two entities in terms of research, staff training and student placements embedded in a 3-year agreement;
- Dr Marvin Formosa (HoD, Department of Gerontology), in his capacity as Chairperson of the National Commission for Active Ageing, was appointed on the **Consultative Council** for the recently launched Office of the Commissioner for Older Persons;

- The Office of the Dean has issued a number of **Press Releases** in these last weeks, namely:
 - *Budgeting for Social Wellbeing* (11/10/2016)
 - *Faculty for Social Wellbeing: Child Poverty* (22/11/2016)
 - *Faculty for Social Wellbeing expresses concern on THP-n 'removal'* (30/11/2016)
- The Faculty through the Department of Family Studies in collaboration with the Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity was involved in the launch of the **National Strategic Policy – 'Positive Parenting'**. Kudos to Prof Angela Abela and Ms Ingrid Grech Lanfranco who have co-authored this policy;
- Two **Brown Bag Seminars** took place organized by the Research and Scholarship Publications Committee led by Dr Anne Marie Callus (Department of Disability Studies). It was the turn of Dr Kristina Vella (Department of Psychology) to present on; 'The Implicit Relational Assessment Procedure (IRAP) as a measure of harm avoidance and incompleteness in Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder' (October) and Prof Saviour Formosa to present on 'Visualising Social-Wellbeing: Spatio-Temporal Approaches to the Mapping of Social Research' (November);
- The Research, Publications and Scholarship Committee of the Faculty for Social Wellbeing is organising a workshop to be held between the 11-13 January 2017 that will focus on **Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)** and will be led by Dr Rachel Shaw, from Aston University in the UK, a leading expert in the use of IPA;
- We had two **Faculty Board** meetings (on the 23/11 and 2/12). For the first time a Faculty Board meeting was hosted at the offices of the Department of Counselling – kudos to the staff for hosting us. A gentle reminder that any member of staff (through their HoD) or members of the student body (through their student reps) may recommend issues for discussion during Faculty Board. Please send an email to Ms Rowena Leontijevic on email address rowena.leontijevic@um.edu.mt;
- Ms Amy Camilleri Zahra (Department of Disability Studies) has chaired a debate organised by the Ghaqda Studenti tat-Teologija about **Gender Identity, Faith and Modernity**;
- It was indeed a pleasure to meet the First Year undergraduate students during the **Away Day** organised by the Department of Social Policy and Social Work led by Dr Natalie Kenely (HoD);
- The Dean, after meeting the first year students during fresher's week, is also **visiting every cohort** reading an undergraduate or postgraduate degree with our Faculty. In the future meetings will be organized with all PhD students;

- The Administrative Staff had their **second staff meeting** led by the Faculty Officer Ms Rowena Leontijevic. A number of issues were raised. The Dean attended and addressed the meeting;
- Another in a series of **Public Lectures** was organised by the Department of Gender Studies led by Dr Brenda Murphy (HoD). In this public lecture Dr Richard Hayes talked about 'The long voyage home: Eugene O'Neill and Ireland';
- The Dean was invited to the **launch of the book 'Psychology and the Arts'** co-edited by Prof Carmel Cefai (Department of Psychology) and Dr Louis Lagana'. The Deputy Dean, Dr Greta Darmanin Kissaan, introduced the event;
- Ms Vickie Gauci (HoD, Department of Disability Studies) **presented** at the 1st National 'Allied Health Professionals Conference 'Rehabilitation - are we doing what we should be doing?';
- Ms Amy Camilleri Zahra (Department of Disability Studies) **presented the paper:** 'Disability Issues Pertinent to a Maltese Context ' at the final conference 'Breaking the News' organised as part of the Positive Parenting Policy together with Allied Health Care Services Malta;
- Dr Anne-Marie Callus (Department of Disability Studies) recently participated in a **colloquium** on disabled children's participation rights organised by the President's Foundation for Social Wellbeing;
- Dr Marvin Formosa (HoD, Department of Gerontology) has been appointed on Malta's **Academic Focal Point** for the Survey of Health, Ageing, and Retirement in Europe. The Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE) is a multidisciplinary and cross-national panel database of micro data on health, socio-economic status and social and family networks of approximately 123,000 individuals aged 50 or older;
- The **Dean has met** with the Chairman of the MCESD, the Social Work team of Agency SAPPOR, the Managers of Agency Appogg and led a delegation that met with HE the Archbishop Charles J. Scicluna and a follow-up meeting with Fr Charles Cordina;
- A number of student requests were processed in the **PhD Committee** which is seeing a steady increase of students reading a doctorate with the Faculty. We currently have 13 registered PhD candidates, 1 student will be sitting for his Viva shortly, 3 at proposal stage and 1 has just graduated. These students will soon have hot desks where they can work from;

- A **Writing Retreat** workshop was held during the first week in December for our PhD students and staff. Some students from other Faculties joined us. This Writing workshop was organized by a sub-committee made up of Dr Clarissa Sammut Scerri (HoD, Department of Family Studies), Prof Paul Bartolo (Department of Psychology) and Prof Mary Anne Lauri (Department of Psychology). The admin staff led by Ms Rowena Leontijevic (Faculty Officer) supported this event;
- The Faculty **radio programme** anchored by Dr Albert Bell (Department of Youth and Community Studies) ‘Connect’ is getting very good reviews. The station has invited Dr Bell for another run in this series;
- ‘Persons with Intellectual Disability in the Criminal Justice System’ is a **Public Lecture** was delivered by Prof. Glynis Murphy organised by the Department of Disability Studies;
- A committee has been appointed by the HoDs to draft a **Faculty Strategy** that will take our Faculty forward in the coming years. This committee is led by Dr Greta Darmanin Kissaun (Deputy Dean) and also includes Dr Janice Formosa Pace (Department of Criminology), Dr Sue Vella (Department of Social Policy and Social Work), Prof Jeannie Wright (Department of Counselling), Dr Albert Bell (Department of Youth and Community Studies) and Dr Andrew Azzopardi (Dean);
- A **concept paper** presented by Mr Edgar Galea Curmi (Department of Social Policy and Social Work) entitled ‘Faculty for Social Wellbeing Service Users, Carers, and Stakeholders Forums - Concept Paper and Draft Terms of Reference’ was presented to the Dean and will be discussed at Faculty Board;
- A sub-committee made up of Dr Andrew Azzopardi (Dean), Prof Paul Bartolo (Department of Psychology), Prof Marilyn Clark (Department of Psychology), Dr Martha Sant (Department of Psychology) and Dr Dione Mifsud (HoD, Department of Counselling) are currently working on the Faculty Seminar. Prof Clark has presented a concept paper ‘Politicising Wellbeing’ that is the draft theme for this year’s **Faculty Seminar** to be held in May. The Faculty Seminar will be open to all members of staff, administrators, full-time/part-time resident academics and casual/visiting staff;
- The **Hilltop Gardens Award for best Gerontology and Geriatrics dissertation 2016** was given to Ms Anabel Scolaro for her dissertation entitled, ‘Dignity in Care Homes for Older People: A Qualitative Study’ as part of her studies for the Master Degree of Gerontology and Geriatrics. The dissertation constitutes a research investigation on the extent that older residents in a Maltese long-term care facility experienced dignified living. Ms Jacqueline Camilleri, Chief Executive Officer at Hilltop Gardens presented the award in the presence of Prof Joe Cacciottolo, Pro-Rector, Dr Andrew Azzopardi, Dean and Dr Marvin Formosa, HoD;

- Members of all 9 Departments are busy going round sixth forms and post-secondary institutions promoting **Faculty courses** to be offered in academic year 2017-18;
- A number of Departments are involved in a number of **new MA courses**. *More on this shortly*;
- Dr Marvin Formosa (HoD, Department of Gerontology) was commissioned by the UNFPA to **lecture on gerontology and active ageing** policy to civil servants from the Belorussian Ministry from Employment and Welfare in Minsk, Belarus;
- The European Commission awarded the Department of Criminology, together with partner institutions from France, Germany, Italy, Spain and the UK a **grant** to conduct a research and practice based project for the protection of and the support of victims or potential victims of Sexual/Gender Based Violence called ‘CAPTIVE: Cultural Agent - Promoting & Targeting Interventions vs Violence & Enslavement’. Kudos to Dr Sandra Scicluna for a leading role in this project;
- The Gender Studies Department hosted the **screening of the film** ‘Italo’ at the Cottonera Resource Centre, Vittoriosa on Friday 9th December 2016. The film recounts the tale of the tender and moving friendship between a lonely boy and an extraordinary dog that teaches a whole village about being human;
- Dr Brenda Murphy (HoD, Department of Gender Studies) spoke about ‘patriarchy, gender equality and violence against women - and the media’ at the **Annual Conference** of the Domestic Violence Commission;
- Work has started on the new **Faculty video**. *More information shortly*;
- Kudos to the Department of Criminology that has been instrumental in driving change through Dr Janice Formosa Pace's role in designing and delivering the national **Crime Prevention Strategy** launched on Friday 28 October 2016;
- Two academics from the Department of Family Studies, Prof Angela Abela and Dr Clarissa Sammut Scerri (HoD) and student Ms Charlotte Busuttil **presented a paper** at the highly acclaimed EFTA conference;
- The **Dean’s Awards** will take place on the 24/2/2017. There are 4 candidates for the ‘Dean’s Award’; 8 eligible candidates for the ‘Outstanding Masters’ Students’; 8 nominations for the ‘Social Commitment Award’ and 9 nominations for the new ‘Jacqueline Social Engagement Award’;
- The Ministry for Civil Liberties got **funding for a project** which our Faculty is part of. Prof Marilyn Clark (Department of Psychology) and Dr Marceline Naudi (Department of Gender Studies) will be working on this project, ‘to develop and implement multi-sectoral and multi-disciplinary cooperation that enables relevant professionals to effectively collaborate to prevent and respond to violence against women’;

- Dr Maria Pisani (Department of Youth and Community Studies) was one of the speakers in the **one-day workshop** organized by the Departments of Anthropological Sciences, and International Relations, University of Malta, and the Organisation for Intra-Cultural Development (OICD) 'At the Borders of Identity: Forces of Cohesion and Division in European Migration at Local, National, & European levels';
- A **symposium** led by Dr Gordon Sammut (Department of Psychology), 'Multiculturalism, Integration and Contact amongst socio-ethnic groups in Malta' will be held on the 18th January 2017. *More information soon;*
- A **Faculty International Conference** is being planned for July 2017. Dr Ruth Falzon (Department of Counselling), Dr Andrea Dibben (Department of Social Policy and Social work), Dr JosAnn Cutajar (Department of Gender Studies), Dr Katya Degiovanni (Department of Psychology and Dean Delegate) and Dr Andrew Azzopardi (Dean) are working on this initiative;
- A **Faculty Staff Christmas Party** was held at the Londoners Pub in Smart City. Kudos to Ms Lara Ellul (Dean's PA), Ms Sandra Zammit Giordano (Department of Youth and Community Studies) and Ms Rowena Leontijevic (Faculty Officer) for organizing this event;
- The **Faculty website** (<http://www.um.edu.mt/socialwellbeing>) is being constantly updated - kudos to Ms Jeanessa Bezzina (Faculty Office);
- The Dean is working on the **Faculty building** issue supported by the Dean Delegate Prof Saviour Formosa (HoD, Department of Criminology);
- Kudos to Prof Saviour Formosa (HOD, Department of Criminology) who has encouraged academics to partake in funding through the **ESPON** (European Spatial Planning Observatory Network) Programme;
- A delegation made up of HoDs and Dean Delegates led by the Dean will be having a **courtesy visit** at Castile Palace with the Hon Prime Minister Dr Joseph Muscat MP. Visits are being scheduled with the Leader of the Opposition Dr Simon Busuttil MP and the Speaker of the House, Dr Anglu Farrugia.
- Dr Andrew Azzopardi (Dean) happens to have a weekly **Column on the Malta Independent** newspaper (and its on-line version). If there is anyone who has a project, an experience, an event in the field of wellbeing and quality of life, that they feel would have a public interest, please do not hesitate to contact him on andrew.azzopardi@um.edu.mt;

- The Dean is having **1-to-1 meetings** with all members of staff – however if anyone would like to meet up to discuss an issue/initiative or to pop over for a coffee please call on 79266344 or send an email on andrew.azzopardi@um.edu.mt;
- Finally, I hope you enjoy some holidays during this festive season. I know that there are some amongst us where **Christmas** might mean pain and bring up sad memories – please rest assured of my understanding and support.

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



Dr Andrew Azzopardi
Dean