



L-Università
ta' Malta

Faculty for Social Wellbeing

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From the Office of the Dean

Newsletter: 'Connect' | No 9

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Dear Colleagues,

The Academic Year has taken off, as always at full throttle. This promises to be a very busy year with a number of events and activities scheduled for this academic year.

If you would like to link up with the Faculty FB Pages these are the URLs:

- **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 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>
- **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 here:

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

Faculty activities in brief:

- The following new academic staff have **joined the ranks**; Dr Gianmarco Alberti (Department of Criminology) and Dr Olga Bogolyubova (Department of Psychology) both as full-time resident academics.
 - A number of **new administrative members of staff** have been appointed to serve within the Faculty for Social Wellbeing; Mr Nico Agius has joined the Department of Criminology, Ms Amanda Degiorgio has joined the Department of Family Studies, Ms Josienne Falzon has joined the Department of Disability Studies and Ms Daniela Galea has joined the Faculty Office. We wish the best of luck to Ms Angelique Fenech who has moved to another job.
 - Ms Renita Agius is currently on **maternity leave** following the birth of her daughter. In the meantime Ms Charlene Fabri has moved to Faculty Office.
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- Ms Marija Grech (Department of Social Policy and Social Work) is the new Secretary of the **College of Heads**. Ms Charlene Fabri will be assisting Ms Alison Darmanin, Faculty Officer in the **Faculty PhD Committee and Faculty Board**. Ms Fabri will be assisting the Dean in the administering of the MoUs.
- Ms Dorianne Cortis (Faculty Office), Ms Renita Agius (Department of Family Studies), Ms Shirley Gilson (Faculty Office) and Ms Charmaine Agius (Department of Gerontology) were **promoted** to Administrator 2.
- Dr Claire Azzopardi Lane is the **new** Head of the Department of Disability Studies and Dr Marceline Naudi is Head of the Department of Gender Studies. Our appreciation is extended to Dr Anne Marie Callus and Dr JosAnn Cutajar respectively for services rendered to the Department of Disability Studies and the Department of Gender Studies.
- The Department of Gender Studies, supported by Ms Jamie Bonnici (Research Officer) are leading a **Gender Audit** of the Faculty for Social Wellbeing. Results on the outcomes should be out shortly.
- Dr Greta Darmanin Kissaun, Head, Department of Psychology has been confirmed as **Deputy Dean**.
- Dr Katya Degiovanni (Department of Psychology), Dr JosAnn Cutajar (Department of Gender Studies) and Dr Claudia Psaila (Department of Social Policy and Social Work) will be on **Sabbatical** during this academic year.
- Ms Jamie Bonnici has been appointed **Research Officer 2** to support the Faculty and the Cluster for Migration.
- The Administrative Staff have organised an **away day** at Villa Psaignon. It was a very successful event supported by Agenzija Zghazagh.
- A series of **Business Breakfasts** for the Administrative Team will be organised during this academic year as well.
- The HoDs had their new academic year **away day** at the Hilton Malta partly sponsored by the *Tumas Fenech Foundation for Education in Journalism*.
- The Faculty organised the **Let's Toast the Faculty** annual wine tasting event. Over 120 members of staff attended this event. It was held in the foyer of the Faculty for the Built Environment, gently supported by the Dean, Prof. Alex Torpiano.
- Ms Daniela Galea (Faculty Office) is taking care of the **Reception Desk** located at the Ground Floor of the FEMA building. This should be an added help to give direction to students and guests.
- The Freshers' were welcomed in the **annual event**. Over 230 students attended this successful welcoming event that was compèred by Ms Marija Grech, Administrator 2 (Department of Social Policy and Social Work). The organisation of this event was taken care of by Ms Lara Ellul (Dean's Assistant) and Ms Lucienne Brincat (Department of Social Policy and Social Work) and supported by all the Administrative Staff.
- Another encouraging number of students have applied for our 35 courses. Our **student numbers** for the second year running have topped 1,100.
- Work is progressing well on the **M.Sc. Mental Health** (Child & Adolescence Mental Health/Addiction Problems/Rehabilitation and Recovery in Mental Health) in collaboration with the Faculty of Health Sciences and the Faculty of Medicine and Surgery.
- Over 30 **MPhil/PhD candidates** are currently at different stages reading a doctorate with our Faculty. We have an estimated 3 inquires a month of people interested in reading an MPhil/PhD with our Faculty.
- Circa 300 students will be **graduating** this year. Of these, two will be PhD graduates; Ms Elaine Grech (Department of Family Studies) and Mr James Carabott (Department of Social Policy and Social Work).

- Filming is currently underway for the first ever **Faculty documentary**, a project in collaboration with Caritas Malta. This is an initiative of the Community Engagement Committee led by Dr Andrea Dibben (Department of Social Policy and Social Work).
- The Faculty has just launched **two videos**; ‘Our Faculty’ and ‘Freshers’. Production was entrusted to Mr Karl Azzopardi.
- Prof. Andrew Azzopardi, Dean, has recently published a **study** called, *Voices of the Young and Vulnerable in Malta: A Qualitative Study*. This research was funded by Agenzija Zghazagh and is part of the 25th Anniversary celebrations since the setting up of the Department.
- We are currently in the process of **designing and printing**, A2 posters, A4 posters and a Backdrop as part of our Faculty awareness campaign for the coming academic year.
- Recording of the third edition of **Konnect on Campus FM** anchored by Dr Albert Bell (Department of Youth and Community Studies) has started. This is an initiative of the Research, Publications and Scholarship Committee Chaired by Dr Anne Marie Callus (Department of Disability Studies).
- Work has started on the second edition of the **Dean’s Forum**. If interested contact marija.grech@um.edu.mt.
- The second edition of the magazine, **UNITY**, edited by Ms Lara Ellul and the sub-committee has been launched with more features, more photos and an improved design.
- The Faculty Office has started having it’s regularly **team meetings**. The work that the Faculty Office together with the rest of the admin team has accomplished these last weeks is simply next to incredible. Kudos to the leadership of Ms Alison Darmanin, Faculty Officer.
- The Dean, Prof. Andrew Azzopardi will be inviting and hosting the staff for **Coffee and Cake**. An opportunity for staff to meet up informally.
- Prof. Marvin Formosa has been **elected** President of the Maltese Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics.
- Work is progressing well on the MoU that was signed with **CRPD**. Shortly another MoU will be signed with Agenzija SAPPORIT.
- The first **Faculty Board** was held. Two student representatives will have to be replaced as they have finished their studies with the Faculty. We extend our appreciation to Ms. Hanien Alouzi (Department for Social Policy and Social Work) and Ms Shanice Borg (Department of Psychology) for services rendered.
- Dr Claire Azzopardi Lane (Head, Department of Disability Studies) will be representing the Dean on the **National Autism Council**. Dr Azzopardi Lane was also involved in defending the Disability State Report at the UN.
- The Dean, Prof. Andrew Azzopardi, sat on a panel discussion that debated **Mental Health**, an event organised by MEP Dr Miriam Dalli.
- The Dean, Prof. Andrew Azzopardi, **delivered a speech** during a Piano Concert, ‘Music Speaks’ that saw Alessia, a 13-year old girl, daughter of Cynthia Bonnici, a BPsy student, the protagonist of the evening. Alessia, this highly talented pianist, has autism.
- Following pressure by Dr Claire Azzopardi Lane (Head, Department of Disability Studies), all **display tents** were made accessible by KSU during Freshers’.
- Work is underway on the first ever **Research Festival** – *more on this soon*.
- The Faculty has concluded the first two phases of the **Star Kids** project in collaboration with MCA. The researcher officers, Dr Maria Brown and Ms Ann Marie Cutajar did excellent work. The project was led by the Dean, Prof. Andrew Azzopardi.

- Two nominees of the Faculty will be awarded an **Honoris Causa**; Dr David M. Boswell and Rev Dr Alfred Darmanin. The Oration will be delivered by Pro-Rector Prof. Godfrey Baldacchino.
- The Department of Youth and Community Studies in collaboration with Agenzija Zghazagh and EUPA have organised a special activity for Freshers' being the **25th Anniversary** of the Department's setting up and the first youth policy. A number of activities are being scheduled for this occasion.
- The Dean, Prof. Andrew Azzopardi has been nominated to give the **Oration** during the post-graduate graduation ceremony.
- An innovative activity will be held for all students who will graduate this year with our Faculty – a first for the Faculty, a first for our University - *more on this soon*.
- The Faculty **Vlog** has been launched. It will be another opportunity for the Faculty staff to share their views.
- The Dean, Prof. Andrew Azzopardi has been nominated to deliver an **Oration** during one of the graduations.
- Work is currently underway on a **Faculty conference** focusing on the theme of 'Loneliness'.
- Work is underway, led by the Dean, Prof. Andrew Azzopardi, on the possible signing of two more **MoUs**.
- In collaboration with the Ministry for the Family, Children Affairs and Social Solidarity, we are embarking on a research on '**Homelessness**' and another on '**Quality of Life**'. Ms Ann Marie Cutajar is the Research Officer responsible for the project led by Dr Sue Vella (Department of Social Policy and Social Work).
- **Digest** is in its 74th issue – kudos to Ms Dorianne Cortis (Faculty Office) for compiling it. Kudos to Ms Cortis for taking care of the Faculty Website (with Ms Jeanessa Bezzina) and the Monitor as well.
- We would like to thank Dr Ruth Falzon (Department of Counselling), supported by Ms Dorianne Cortis (Faculty Office) for managing the **BA (Hons.) in Social Wellbeing Studies**.
- Senate has adapted the **Disability Research Guidelines** prepared by the Department of Disability Studies.
- A delegation from the Faculty led by Prof. Andrew Azzopardi had a **courtesy meeting** with the new CCF Director, Mr Alex Dalli.
- The Faculty and Ministry for the Family, Children's Rights and Social Solidarity signed an **MoU**.
- Work is underway on the **Inclusive Language Guidelines**, an initiative being led by Dr JosAnn Cutajar (Department of Gender Studies).
- Prof. Angela Abela has been appointed as the University representative on the **Psychotherapy warranting board**. She has also been appointed by the Minister for the Family, Children's Rights and Social Solidarity on the Inter ministerial Task Force charged with the implementation of the Positive Parenting Strategy.
- The Ministry for the Family, Children's Rights and Social Solidarity and the Department of Family Studies signed an **MoU**.
- A delegation from the Faculty led by the Dean, Prof. Andrew Azzopardi had a **courtesy meeting** with the Commissioner of Police, Mr Lawrence Cutajar.
- Abela, A., & Sammut Scerri, C. (June, 2018). *Child and Family scholars and practitioners offer their reflections to the Embryo Protection (Amendment) Bill. Bill no 38*. A research paper signed by 50 child and family academics and practitioners and sent to the Media and the Members of Parliament, including the Prime Minister, and to the President to Malta.
- The Dean issued two **Press Releases**; '*Safeguarding our environment – protecting future generations*' and '*Amendments to the Embryo Protection Act: Laying the cards on the table*'.

- Both Prof. Angela Abela and Dr Clarissa Sammut Scerri were invited to attend; *A High level Global Conference on the Universal Prohibition of Corporal Punishment – a 2 day conference* by the Minister for the Family, Children’s Rights and Social Solidarity, held on the 31st of May and 1st of June 2018 under the patronage of Her Excellency the President of Malta. Dr Clarissa Sammut Scerri was also invited for the *Konferenza Nazzjonali 2018 Hajja Hielsa mid Droga- Flimkien b’ Ghan wiehed*, organised by the Ministry for the Family, Children’s Rights and Social Solidarity on the 26th June, held at the Parliament of Malta, Valletta. Prof. Abela was also invited to attend the conference *Qualitative Research in Mental Health* in Berlin where Ms. Janice Sargent and Prof. Abela presented a paper entitled *It is and it is not a thing in the world. Perceptions of schizophrenia and its recovery*.
- The Dean, Prof. Andrew Azzopardi was invited to **speak** at the Planning Authority’s conference, *Planning for Liveable Spaces*.
- A delegation from the Faculty led by the Dean, Prof. Andrew Azzopardi had a **courtesy meeting** with the new MCAST Principal, Dr James Calleja.
- A delegation from the Faculty led by the Dean, Prof. Andrew Azzopardi had a **courtesy meeting** with the Leader of the Opposition, Dr Adrian Delia.
- The Department of Counselling led by Dr Dione Mifsud, Head, have recently signed an **MoU** with University of Cumberland, Kentucky.
- Dr Dione Mifsud (Head, Department of Counselling) has led a delegation to the **IAC Conference** in Rome.
- The first ever Faculty for **Social Wellbeing text**, *Perspectives on Wellbeing: A reader*, edited by Dr Sue Vella (Department of Social Policy and Social Work), Dr Ruth Falzon (Department of Counselling) and Prof. Andrew Azzopardi (Department of Youth and Community Studies) has been concluded and will soon be in print. This is an initiative by the Research, Publications and Scholarship Committee.
- Work has started on the first ever **Faculty Research Journal**, a project to be led by Dr Maureen Cole (Department of Social Work and Social Policy). This is an initiative by the Research, Publications and Scholarship Committee.
- Work on the second **Social Wellbeing Text** has started. The editorial team is made up of Prof. Marilyn Clark (Department of Psychology), Dr Ruth Falzon (Department of Counselling) and Prof. Andrew Azzopardi, Dean.
- **FREC** is now being led by Dr Trevor Calafato (Department of Criminology). We would like to thank Dr Katya Degiovanni (Department of Psychology) for services rendered. Our appreciation also extends to the following administrative staff; Ms Charmaine Agius (Department of Gerontology), Ms Josienne Falzon (Department of Disability Studies) and Ms Marica Galea (Department of Gender Studies) and the rest of the Committee for processing over 570 applications during the academic year 2017-2018, 110 in July and 55 in September.
- The Dean will embark on a schedule to start **meeting all the students individually** and all the **cohorts** of the Faculty. Kudos to Ms Lara Ellul, the Dean’s Assistant and Ms Dorianne Cortis (Faculty Office) who will be organising the logistics. Students can ask for an appointment any time on andrew.azzopardi@um.edu.mt.

I would like extend my heartfelt appreciation to:

- the team of **HoDs** that are incredibly supportive, namely; the Deputy Dean, Dr Greta Darmanin Kissaun (Head, Department of Psychology), Prof. Marvin Formosa (Head, Department of Gerontology), Prof. Saviour Formosa (Head, Department of Criminology), Dr Claire Azzopardi Lane (Head, Department of Disability Studies), Ms. Alison Darmanin (Faculty Officer), Dr Dione Mifsud (Faculty Senate Representative and Head, Department of Counselling), Dr Marceline Naudi (Head, Department of Gender Studies), Dr Clarissa Sammut Scerri (Head, Department of Family Studies) and Dr Natalie Kenely (Head, Department of Social Policy and Social Work).
- 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;
- finally, I would like to thank all **the administrative staff**, both those serving the Faculty in the Departments as well as in the Faculty Office, for their unwavering support and commitment. In my eyes they are equal members of staff but having a different role. A Faculty depends on the collaboration and sharing of the different responsibilities.
- My appreciation is extended to **Ms Lara Ellul** (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 lara.ellul@um.edu.mt



Prof. Andrew Azzopardi
Dean