By submitting this declaration form I am verifying that the material which you submit for assessment for the Uaneen Module is entirely my work and has not been taken from the work of others save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work.
Log Of Activities

Events Officer of DCU LGBTA Society

Duration: 3 years (Academic Year 2016-2019);

Summary: Idea generation and organisation of all weekly events – including room bookings, event pages, sharing with members, set-up/clean-up and oversight. Contributory organisation of large-scale society events (DCU Drag Race, trips abroad, etc). Supportive role for any tasks required by Committee. Attending weekly committee meetings, and overseeing events (at minimum) twice weekly.

As events officer for DCU LGBTA Society (and having served in that position since my first year in college), I feel I can say that I’m a veteran in the role. Through my involvement, I’ve discovered an enjoyment and affinity for organising events and have been able to engage in the advocacy and human rights work that I’m so passionate about. My role is one of the most rewarding experiences I’ve had in college – I’m in charge of coming up with event ideas and facilitating the ideas of others, organising the logistics (room bookings, contacting speakers/societies, getting materials, setting up etc) and overseeing the events themselves.

Organised DCU Drag Race 2017

Duration: 4 months of preparation and event (Weeks 1-10, Semester 2, 2017)

Summary: Liaised repeatedly with DCU Clubs and Socs, St. Patricks Campus event manager and DCU registry office over the course of two months to book St. Patrick’s Campus auditorium as the venue. Created event page and worked with PRO to create event poster. Liaised between committee and contestants to relay updates and information. Organised logistics on the night – props, running order, etc. Worked backstage with committee, contestants, judges and host providing support and ensuring smooth running of show.

Organised Sleepover

Duration: 5 weeks of preparation and event (Weeks 1-5, Semester 2, 2017);

Summary: Created and organised first ever ‘sleepover’ event for DCU LGBTA Society. Worked with estates office and security to ensure safety of event (email exchanges, meetings, phone calls, etc) and registry to ensure booking of Henry Grattan for the event. Created event page and notified members. Held sign-ups and provided attendee information to security. Organised itinerary for event. Worked with security as designated liaison throughout the event and oversaw smooth running of event on the night.

Organised Trip to Brighton 2017

Duration: 7 weeks of preparation and event (Weeks 1-7, Semester 2, 2017)

Summary: Worked with treasurer to research and book flights and accommodation. Worked with treasurer and chairperson to organise signups. Researched and planned itinerary. Researched, enquired and booked
restaurants for group meals. Presented itinerary to committee for approval and implemented any necessary amendments. Acted responsibly in a leadership capacity during trip as a designated point of committee contact for society members.

Organised DCU Drag Race 2018

**Duration:** 7 weeks of preparation and event (Weeks 1-7, Semester 2, 2018)

**Summary:** Worked with DCU Clubs and Socs, St. Patrick’s Campus event manager to book St. Patrick’s Campus auditorium for event. Planned event date to ensure eligibility for DCU Clubs and Socs Awards. When venue fell through, researched alternative venue and worked with chairperson, treasurer and DCU Clubs and Socs to find one. Negotiated with new venue along with chairperson to confirm price and booking. Created event page and worked with PRO to create event poster. Liaised between committee and contestants to relay updates and information. Organised logistics on the night – props, running order, etc. Learning from previous year - worked in sound and lighting booth with sound/lighting technicians to ensure synchronisation with running order. Delegated with chairperson to ensure there were committee members working backstage with contestants, judges and host. Won award for Best Society Event at DCU Clubs and Socs Awards 2018.

Organised Trip to Brighton 2018

**Duration:** 9 weeks of preparation and event (Weeks 10-12, Semester 1, 2017; Weeks 1-7, Semester 2, 2018)

**Summary:** Sat on sub-committee to organise trip. Worked with treasurer and chairperson to organise signups. Researched and planned new itinerary drawing on experience from previous year. Researched, enquired and booked new restaurants for group meals. Presented itinerary to committee for approval and implemented any necessary amendments. Acted responsibly in a leadership capacity during trip as a designated point of committee contact for society members.

Organised Trip to Glasgow

**Duration:** 9 weeks of research over the holidays (Week 12, Semester, 1 2018 – Week 1, Semester 2, 2019) and 7 weeks of preparation and event (Weeks 1-7, Semester 2, 2019)

**Summary:** Sat on sub-committee to research and plan trip in a new location. Presented research and ideas of sub-committee to committee. Worked with treasurer and chairperson to organise signups. Researched and planned new itinerary for a new location, including an optional day trip to Edinburgh. Researched, enquired and booked restaurants for group meals. Presented itinerary to committee for approval and implemented any necessary amendments. Acted responsibly in a leadership capacity during trip as a designated point of committee contact for society members. Lead the society on a day trip to Edinburgh in place of chairperson.
Organised LGBTQ+ Sporting Events

**Duration:** 3 weeks of preparation and events on a monthly basis over 5 months (Weeks 9-12, Semester 2, 2018 continuing events over the summer until September 2018);

**Summary:** Created ‘LGBTA FC’ Facebook group for members interested in sporting events. Bought sporting equipment for society. Organised sporting events and booked astro pitches every month. Due to interest, continued organising events over the summer, outside of academic year.

Photo: LGBTA and Postgraduate Society intersoc football match. (Appendix 2.3)

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Vice-Chairperson of DCU Feminist Society

**Duration:** 1 year (Academic Year 2017-2018)

**Summary:** Assisted in oversight and liaised on behalf of society. Assisted in chairing of weekly committee meetings. Supported the chairperson in their duties. Contributory organisation of society events and campaigns.

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Organised DCU Repeal Campaign

**Duration:** 1 Year (May 2017 – May 2018)

**Summary:** Continuously engaged with USI and DCUSU to establish and develop DCU For Choice. Maintained DCU Repeal Working Group established by chair. Assisted in design, purchase, and storage of repeal banner. Organised and lead campaign events (launch, canvassing, stalls, protests etc). Organised and delivered training and information for campaigners. Represented society at national steering groups, conferences and training events.

Photo: Myself and the chairperson holding the newly delivered repeal banner. (Appendix 2.4)
Chairperson of DCU Feminist Society

**Duration:** 1 year (Academic Year 2018-2019)

**Summary:** Overseer, spokesperson and designated liaison for society. Chairing of weekly committee meetings. Contributory organisation of society events.

This year I am the chairperson of DCU Feminist Society, after serving as Vice-Chairperson last year. As chairperson of DCU Feminist Society, my involvement consists of all the usual duties of chairperson – chairing meetings, facilitating communication, delegating tasks, representing the society – as well as shaping the society and facilitating the ideas and vision of our bright new committee members.

Organised Men’s Mental Health Campaign

**Duration:** 2 weeks of preparation, campaign and event (Weeks 6-8, Semester 1, 2018);

**Summary:** Proposed campaign idea to committee and after approval, delegated tasks. Worked with Vice-Chairperson, PRO and events officer to organise campaign. Researched male role models and mental health for social media campaign and worked with PRO and committee as a whole to develop. Contacted DCU Mental Health Society for intersoc event and contacted panellists for event. Reviewed panel questions with events officer before event to ensure appropriateness. Introduced panel discussion as chairperson.

Brought ‘Ask for Angela’ to DCU

**Duration:** 2 days of meetings (Week 7, Semester 1, 2018) and follow up communications. Launch in Week 3, Semester 2, 2019.

**Summary:** Researched campaign and devised proposal. Held meetings with DCUSU and NuBar to propose bringing in ‘Ask for Angela’ campaign to DCU. Discussed design, logistics of bringing in campaign and planned accordingly.

Organised Sex Myth Campaign

**Duration:** 2 weeks of preparation, week long campaign (Weeks 1-3, Semester 2, 2019);

**Summary:** Proposed campaign idea to committee and after approval, delegated tasks. Worked with Vice-Chairperson, PRO and events officer to organise campaign. Researched sexual health and sex myths for social media campaign and worked with PRO and committee as a whole to develop. Managed social media campaign
with PRO to ensure timely posting of campaign posters each day of campaign. Printed and hung up posters on campus (along with ordinary member) to coincide with social media campaign.

Organise Review of Consent on Campus

**Duration:** 4 months of research, preparation, meetings and events (Week 7-12, Semester 1, 2018 and Weeks 1-3, Semester 2, 2017);

**Summary:** Researched issues of reform and devised proposals with committee. Held meetings with DCUSU to review consent culture on campus and discuss opportunities for reforms and consent campaigns (Week 7). Discussed design, logistics of bringing in campaign and planned accordingly. As chairperson, proposed reforms with backing of DCUSU to class rep council and passed them. Worked with DCUSU to ensure expansion of SMART Consent programme and provision of additional training day for Week 3, Semester 2, 2019.

Photo: Certificate of Completion from the additional SMART Consent workshop I helped organise. (Appendix 2.6)

Reflection Section

**Introduction – Who Am I?**

My name is Amy Ní Cholgáin. I’m a final year student of Economics, Politics and Law in DCU. I’m chairperson of DCU Feminist Society and Events Officer for DCU LGBTA Society. I’m an access student who cares deeply about equality for everyone, and the studies I’ve pursued reflects that. However, I believe it is my engagement in extracurricular activities that have allowed me to develop that passion into something productive and given me the most rewarding experience in college.

My drive for social issues and equality began taking shape as a child. I’m the eldest of five children, from a single parent family. I can trace my interest in social issues and my community back to the values instilled in me as a child by my mother. One of the earliest memories I have is holding her hand during a protest to save my local village’s round tower. I was only three at the time, so when my mother explained to me that our little walk around the village had stopped the demolition, it stuck with me for life. That early lesson – that each of us can affect change, no matter how small we are – has underpinned and shaped my values ever since. A line she often repeats is that “Those who can do something, should.” and it’s a mantra that motivates me to get involved where I can.

I wasn’t a huge fan of sports in secondary school, I was too physically awkward and I preferred to exercise in the gym. Instead I found my ‘team’ in social projects. In TY I joined Eco-Unesco, a youth group that focused on issues like climate change and sustainable development. It was my experience here that really set me off on the path I’m on today – I was able to learn about issues that interested me like climate change, gender equality,
poverty, etc. Developing my critical thinking and discovering more nuanced ideas of justice, equality and global citizenship sparked an interest in law and politics in me, which I would eventually go on to pursue in DCU.

**Personal Development – My Involvement Journey**

Having only recently come out, I joined DCU LGBT& straight away in first year. I had been attending their weekly events and socialising with my new friends there, and with some encouraging words from the chairperson I found the confidence to run for the position of Events Officer in their EGM. I’ve held that position ever since and it’s been the most exiting personal journey of my life. Looking back, that moment was a clear catalyst for me. Up until then I’d been attending events and enjoying myself, but I definitely wanted to be more involved in something. I’d been actively involved in campaigns throughout my life and I believe that getting involved in DCU LGBT& gave me a channel for that drive in a new, exciting way.

Being a part of a committee for the first time was like finding a new family, and it gave me a purpose. Being an access student from a disadvantaged background, so much of my life had been leading up to just *getting* to college, and looking back I know I felt a little lost in those first few weeks. Joining the LGBT& committee helped me find a purpose beyond that, gave me structure, a community and something new to look forward to each week.

I’ve been Events Officer for three years now, I love the role. It’s very exciting and rewarding for me to see something I’ve conceived come into being – sometimes in the space of week, sometimes after months of preparation. Watching people enjoy themselves at something I’ve organised is an incredible feeling, and it really motivates me to provide our members with the best experience I can.

My journey with DCU Feminist Society was a little easier after taking that first step with LGBT&. Gender equality has always been something I’m passionate about. Though I hadn’t yet been old enough to vote, I’d campaigned and canvassed for marriage equality and had been involved sporadically in other ‘repeal’ campaigns before college. I was curious to see what kind of campaigns this DCU society ran. FemSoc was more political and campaign-focused that LGBT&, and but the atmosphere felt familiar to me. It felt natural to become more involved, getting elected as Vice-Chairperson at the end of the year.

As Vice-Chairperson I had the task of supporting the chairperson in their duties. My term as Vice-Chairperson coincided with the repeal referendum and looking back it was a very busy year. It was also an emotionally draining year and I recall now there were more than a few tears. The chairperson and I had a lot of meetings and late-night phone calls bouncing ideas around, discussing campaign approaches, how to best co-ordinate with national campaign, USI and DCUSU, etc. I think now that was the most crucial year in terms of my personal development and maturity – though I’d become more experienced in my role as Events Officer for LGBT& and was simultaneously fulfilling that role, being Vice-Chairperson placed me in a position of more responsibility and management than ever before.

Ultimately though, it was an unforgettable experience – being part of that team and organising an incredibly successful repeal campaign in DCU and the local area. It was definitely hard work, but we had some amazing experiences and made wonderful memories. I also think it prepared me for the challenges of Chairperson and
more importantly, what it takes to work well as a team in stressful periods (the answer, I find, is continuous communication, emotional ‘checking-in’ and self-care).

As Chairperson this year, I feel like I’ve been able to draw from my experience not just in FemSoc, but from my work with LGBTAs as well. I took over as chair just before we repealed the eighth amendment. FemSoc was founded with that being the main goal in mind, so it was incredibly emotional and impactful on me seeing that come to fruition, knowing that I was coming in to take the baton at the end of that story. This year I lead my committee and facilitated their ideas to expand FemSoc into something accessible for all students and sustainable after ‘repeal’. We’ve ran incredibly successful campaigns and events around everything from men’s mental health to feminist pornography; we’ve challenged and shaped a better consent culture on campus; we’ve worked closely with the SU to resolve issues when students felt it easier to come to us than them. I really feel that instead of dying out with the referendum it was founded for, there’s a permanent place for FemSoc on campus. It’s been carved out by the continuous work we’ve done for students, and that’s something I’ll always be proud of.

Difficulties and Challenges of Society Life
Apart from the general challenges of managing time, energy and priorities that extracurricular involvement brings, there have been some specific challenges to overcome. This year, I had to make the decision to go back to therapy as part of general self-care. I also gave up my part-time job. The challenges of final year and being actively involved on two society committees has really brought home the importance of looking after myself and my mental health. My passion for the societies I’m involved in is part of something that defines me, and not anything I’d ever give up – but finding balance with my energy, mental health and degree has required me to re-evaluate my own needs and become better at delegating. Giving up my job was difficult for me – I’ve worked weekends all through college and like having spending money and savings. But final year was always going to be a challenge and I realised I needed my weekends for studying if I was going to continue to be involved in societies and still have time left for myself.

Events Officer, Vice-Chairperson and Chairperson are all very demanding roles and I definitely needed support in figuring out the best way to do things. I’m quite independent (sometimes to my detriment) so asking for help can be something I struggle with. I struggled with it a lot more in those early days in my first year, but through seeing the way a committee supports each other, help is something I’ve actually become less self-conscious about asking for over time. That change has had a positive effect on my personal life as well – its the reason I was finally able to make the decision to go back to therapy. It’s a grateful development I can credit my society involvement with.

DCU Drag Race is my biggest event every year and organizing it is always a challenge. In my second year, our venue fell through. As Events Officer, informing the chairperson was tough. I felt it had been my responsibility and I’d somehow let the team down. The chairperson put those fears to rest and we all banded together to find a solution. I spent many long nights researching alternatives; between classes, the chairperson and I would traverse Dublin holding meetings with venues, negotiating prices and dates, etc. It was difficult and stressful but within two weeks we’d found an alternative venue – better than what we’d had before. Then, just when everything was going well again, the ‘Beast from the East’ came. The snow storm forced us to postpone our event mere days before. Everything had to be reorganized and I felt incredibly stressed. With the storm, the acts we were flying in from London could no longer come, and the new date didn’t work – cue long phone calls to
Ryanair trying to get our money back and last-minute searches for new acts. Our afterparty also had to be reorganized entirely to suit the new date, and we ended up having to host it in a different venue. We also had to organize refunds for some people who couldn’t make the new date. Every day seemed to bring a new challenge.

We learned to keep clear, consistent communication within the committee, and tried to present potential solutions with any bad news. Other societies suffered with the storm too and found it easier to cancel their events altogether, and at times we discussed doing the same. But in the end we worked together and I realize we managed it taking one day at a time. At times it felt like a nightmare to organize, but in hindsight I can understand it taught me how to respond quickly and problem-solve creatively when things go wrong. We ended up raising more money than ever that year and winning Best Society Event at DCU Clubs and Socs Awards. After overcoming everything that could’ve possibly been thrown at us, it was the best feeling in the world to accept the award with the rest of the team. Though I have to say, if I could do things again differently, I’d make sure to have gotten proper confirmation from our first venue in the first place.

Being Vice-Chairperson for FemSoc during the repeal referendum was another big challenge. As a campaigner outside of FemSoc, it’s always been an issue that brings up emotions for me, but something I hadn’t anticipated was that being in a management position in FemSoc meant I could never really ‘switch-off’ from campaigning. We were continuously training, informing and advocating. I was dealing with shifting developments every day, and I couldn’t afford not to be tuned into the debate, which was often frustrating and toxic to listen to. People would send us vitriolic messages and stand outside campus holding graphic posters. It began to have an effect on my mental health.

However, the thing that kept me going was that I knew I wasn’t alone. Looking back I was incredibly lucky to have been part of such an incredible group of campaigners on that committee. We all suffered with burnout, but we also leaned on each other. We listened to each other and started hosting regular ‘safe spaces’ were campaigners could come together to vent and support each other. Our committee group-chat was often filled with pictures of puppies, positive messages and motivational reminders. I incorporated ‘self-care’ to our committee agenda, where we checked-in on each other and talked about what we did to look after ourselves that week. We shared hopes about the future we were campaigning for. And even though we were all elected for specific roles, we re-delegated tasks if someone needed a break.

Reflecting on it now, I don’t think there’s anything we could have done much differently. If I could go back in time the one thing I would do would be to implement our self-care rules and safe spaces from the beginning instead of when we needed them. Campaigns like these are always difficult and draining – mentally, physically, emotionally. What I’ve learned however is that sometimes the best thing you can do is to just look after yourself, be there for each other and see it through.

**Proudest Achievements**

Bringing ‘Ask for Angela’ to DCU. This was an idea I’d had coming into the role as Chairperson of FemSoc. I did the research and approached the SU about it in my capacity as chairperson. After a meeting with Aisling and Vito, I arranged a meeting for myself, Aisling and NuBar the next day to discuss bringing it in and we made logistical arrangements to do so afterward. I was so proud to see it officially launched during KISS week, and emotional that an idea I had now ensures students are safer and more comfortable on campus.
Organising with the SU for more SMART Consent workshops and helping to shape a better consent culture and society atmosphere on campus. This was something that was highlighted as an issue in a really unfortunate way at the start of the year, and something many students approached FemSoc about. It’s definitely one of my proudest moments that continuous hard-work, seemingly endless meetings, late night phone calls and many tears translated to the resolution of an awful issue and a better, safer atmosphere on campus for all our students.

Seeing DCU Drag Race take off. Every year we raise more money than the last and one of my most emotional nights ever in college was when it one Best Society Event last year. This year for the first time ever, the SU recognised and supported our charity event as part of an official Rainbow Week. We sold more tickets than ever this year and raised over €3,000 for TENI. When I first started, this was a small charity event on St. Pat’s Campus and over my tenure it’s turned into a sell-out fundraiser at the Button Factory. It feels like such a huge achievement that because of the hard work the committee and myself as Events Officer have put in, a huge difference had been made this year for the lives of trans and non-binary people in Ireland.

This year we decided to go to Glasgow on our annual trip, having gone to Brighton every year previous. This was huge for me, and I’m proud to have researched the trip and organised the itinerary, etc for us. I decided to bring up the idea of somewhere new because I’d realised something in my tenure as Events Officer: just because something always works out well doesn’t mean there’s no room for change or improvement. Running and re-imagining weekly events over three years (and trying to keep things fresh) gave me a certain perspective about re-creating the past. Researching and organising a trip somewhere completely new was a challenge, and of course we ran into some problems – one of the markets we’d planned to tour had actually closed down, and I hadn’t realised from my online research. Unlike our old trips, we couldn’t draw on previous experience as we’d never been there before. But in the end we were able to improvise and find alternative museums and sights to entertain ourselves with, and we made completely new memories so overall, I think the change paid off. While we’ve had great fun in Brighton in the past, the trip to Glasgow was a huge success and that breakaway has allowed us to grow past old nostalgia the society felt tied to.

**Looking Back – Legacy**

I feel like I can say, hand on my heart, that the contributions I’ve made to the societies I’ve been involved with will outlast my presence here in DCU. That is the single greatest achievement I could ever hope for. During my time in DCU LGBTA I was never just a committee member, but an active member first and foremost. My first thought has always been what the ground experience should be. Over my years in LGBTA I’ve managed to continuously build on my work and expand the society with new and improved events. I’ve been able to notice the shifting needs of our members through my years on the committee, and as a result I’m delighted to say that this year we’ve focused more on trans and non-binary representation than any year before.

In LGBTA I’ve put accessibility on the forefront of event planning. Historically we’d hold our events in CA124, a windowless room tucked into the corner of the Henry Grattan extension. It’s a private, secretive space that LGBTQ+ students can feel secure out of the way, but it’s also not the most accessible of rooms. Over my tenure as events officer, I’ve branched us out from that room for all kinds of events and allowed us to grow passed that feeling of hiding from the rest of campus, instead of being out and proud where we belong.

I also introduced the sleepover. In my first year on committee, I realised that there were always going to be members who would never be able to attend LGBTQ+ conferences (Pink Training, etc) or our trips away. Either
they weren’t out, had financial constraints, couldn’t get time off work, etc. Conferences and trips are a huge source of bonding and development for our members, and I realised that these people would always be excluded from them. I came up with the sleepover – once a year we take over a building on campus and run our own internal ‘Pink Training’ conference. We hold safe spaces and workshops throughout the night, interspersed with games and movies. It takes the educational elements of Pink Training and the bonding experiences of our trips away, but it’s held on campus, on a weekday, it’s free, and it’s accessible to all our members. This event is now looked forward to every year and has become a hugely important event to our society.

Through a concerted effort I’ve also successfully integrated typically oppositional topics like sports and religion into our society culture. For a long time in LGBTZA there was a pushback against any sports events, because of a view that gay people and sports couldn’t mix. I believe that this is a harmful perpetuation of stereotypes – one that hurts the ‘sporty gays’ we have among our members. Last year I set up a sports group for our members called ‘LGBTZA FC’ and ran monthly 5-a-side games throughout semester two and over the summer. This was something that positively changed the discourse within our society culture. Similarly, back in my first year I organised an intersociety coffee morning with Kingdom Café. This was the first event of its kind, and now it’s run every year and is one of our most looked forward to intersocs – from both societies. Instead of just running events in our comfort zone, I was able to positively influence our culture so that we can challenge ourselves as a society, and help reconcile differences with others.

I also feel that my society work has had an impact on campus life in general. This year, my involvement with FemSoc has resulted in reformed procedures to combat toxic masculinity and hazing, and a better, more open discourse of consent on campus. There are young LGBTQ+ students who have had positive, formative experiences, and who now have a support network because the events and communities I’ve created for them. I know that there’s a bunch of bright young men and women who, through their experience in FemSoc have been empowered to get involved in society life, set up their own societies and pursue their own causes. I’ve poured so much of my heart into making the DCU I know and love a safer, more inclusive, accepting space for students. That’s something I leave behind long after I graduate.

In recognition of my service, I was nominated for Individual Contribution to Society Life in the DCU Clubs and Socs Awards by both FemSoc and LGBTZA, and though I didn’t win, it was incredibly humbling to have been considered for it. I was also nominated anonymously in the SAAIs for Outstanding Contribution to Student Life, and was hugely surprised and humbled to learn that out of all the nominees, I’d been shortlisted.

At the end of my tenure in LGBTZA, I was surprised with a society contribution award: ‘The Colgan Award’, named after me. It honours “Outstanding Dedication and Commitment to DCU LGBTZA Society” and was created to commemorate all I’ve done for the society. It was most emotional, humbling thing I’ve ever experienced, and learning that it will be continued to be awarded after I’m gone is the greatest legacy I could’ve ever imagined.

**Looking Forward – Skills for the Future**

Over the years I’ve spent involved in societies, I’ve developed some practical skills: presenting ideas and solutions to my team members, facilitating workshops and discussions, resolving conflicts, etc. I believe that
these are skills you have to develop when you take on a committed and involved role in any job or society, and it happened so naturally that I didn’t even notice it – it wasn’t until I was reflecting for this module that I even realised I’d developed them.

I’ve reflected on what I’ve learned from particular challenges I’ve faced, but I’ve realised that it’s not just big events and difficulties that have allowed me to develop. In fact, being in charge of events every single week for three years has probably taught me more than any big project ever could. By coming up with events for every academic week of the last three years (and sometimes on the holidays too) I feel like I’ve become a much more creative person and open to new possibilities. I’ve learned to how to evaluate past events using critical thinking and research to improve them.

A lot of my role in both societies involves some degree of researching and applying that research. Whether it’s organising an entire trip abroad, sourcing speakers/materials for an event, or finding a last-minute venue for our biggest event of the year, good research skills have been a must – especially when it comes to problem solving, which I’ve also become better at because of the responsibilities I’ve had.

Before college and my involvement in society work I used to dislike group projects and had some bad communication habits. Over the last three years, my serious involvement on committees has taught me the best ways of approaching things, and the invaluable skills required for success in any team. I’ve come to love weekly meetings and have learned how to best communicate within a team, formally liaise, represent my society/organisation and really work as a team and rather than an individual.

Managing two intense committee positions, student activism, coursework and a job has pushed me to develop excellent skills of management. Juggling weekly deadlines for events while balancing assignments and a job has taught me a lot about time management and delegation. Knowing my limits and learning when to say “No” is something that I’ve learned through my involvement.

I’m quite passionate, and learned what I would consider one of the most important skills from my involvement in societies: how to curb my enthusiasm, take a step back and facilitate others (who might be shier) to contribute. This is something that I’m always working on, because it can be easy for me to get carried away sometimes when I’m excited by a project, but developing that crucial skill of facilitation rather that dictation has served me best throughout everything I’ve worked on or been a part of.

I’m nearing the end of my degree, and I believe these skills are things I can transfer to any career I end up choosing. I feel like I’ve matured a lot in my time in college, and I credit a lot of that to taking on responsibilities and stepping outside my comfort zone. Looking back, I could have never imagined the things I could achieve as part of a community like this and the memories I’d make. It reminds me of how my mother’s words to me as a child are still shaping my life for the better.

**Appendix 1 - Testimonials**

1.1 Michael Kavanagh – Chairperson of DCU LGBTA Society, 2016-2017

Amy joined the DCU LGBTA committee in her first year and immediately showed a passion and dedication to creating events for all. From reunion nights for alumni to sleepovers, Amy always produced original events that aimed (and succeeded) in making everyone feel welcome.

Amy has consistently been the backbone of DCU LGBT+ for the full three years of her degree. As Events Officer, she has brought through new events that we have never done before (including our annual sleepover/safe space), has always been reliable as a committee member, and has ensured each and every week that our members get the most out of our society. Not only has she brought experience to the role, but she has an unwavering sense of dedication that perseveres through all of our challenges. When our venue cancelled last year for DCU Drag Race, she was the first to jump to action and source alternative venues. She has reminded us to keep our events accessible, and has always brought positivity and openness to events even when in the height of stress. She has been an invaluable addition to this society.

1.3 Isha McDonnell – Chairperson DCU Feminist Society, 2017-2018

Speaking as a member of the FemSoc Committee 2016-2017 and as Chairperson of FemSoc 2017-2018, Amy has been an invaluable member of the society since she started DCU in 2016. Her passion and enthusiasm, both for the society’s mission and overall success, has been clear from the start. She attended our meetings and contributed meaningfully throughout the 2016-2017 year by promoting our events, offering up ideas, and helping out with society activities whenever she could.

I was delighted when Amy was elected Vice Chairperson of FemSoc 2017-2018 at our AGM as she had already proved her commitment to working hard and engaging with the student body on behalf of the society. It was a pleasure to witness her development from a first-year student, eager but new to university life, to becoming someone fully capable of organising events, attracting and engaging new members, producing high-quality and professional communications content, and representing the society to its fullest.

We faced a few crises throughout the 2017-2018 year (Storm Emma and developments involving the 8th Amendment referendum to name a few), but Amy was always there to support me and the rest of the committee. She maintained a calm demeanour and offered solutions when we were struggling to stay motivated, and her attendance and reliability throughout was impeccable. She worked well with everyone in the committee, always friendly and happy to help. We had an amazing year overall, and Amy was a vital part of that success.

Sincere regards,
Isha McDonnell
Former Chairperson, FemSoc 2017-2018

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Amy is one of the most hardworking and compassionate people I have ever met. She put her whole heart into every campaign and event. As the chair of FemSoc, she has proved herself to be a true asset to the DCU community. Her dedication to every cause she believes in and her love of DCU is evident in everything she does. On a more personal level, she is one of the kindest, funniest and most genuine people I have had the pleasure of meeting. She cares so deeply about feminist and LGBTQ+ issues in DCU and outside of DCU and what’s more she puts in the work to help.
Appendix 2 – Some Photographs

2.1 and 2.2: Myself holding the Colgan Award.
2.3: LGBTIQA+ and Postgraduate Society intersoc football match.

2.4: Myself and the chairperson holding the newly delivered repeal banner.

2.5: Ask for Angela poster in DCU women’s bathrooms.
2.6: Certificate of Completion from the additional SMART Consent workshop I helped organise.

2.7: Involvement in awareness campaign and fundraiser for LGBTQ+ causes.

2.8: Election as Vice-Chairperson to DCU Feminist Society.