

J E N N A
B A R R Y



F O R N E X T V P
P O S T G R A D U A T E
O F A F F A I R S



Connect

Communicate

Collaborate

Change



Hello!

Thank you for taking the time to look at my manifesto. My name is Jenna and with your vote, I will be the next VP for postgraduate affairs. I have completed a taught masters in Interactive Multimedia and I am currently doing a research postgraduate in Information Technology on the subject of Virtual Communities of Practice. I have set up a virtual community of practice for our postgraduate students here at Limerick Institute of Technology. I would like to carry on from Adam's work building on technology and its usefulness to the USI and the Postgraduates of Ireland.

"Unity is our Strength, Diversity is our Power"

Kamla Harris

Postgraduate Connection - Create Community

Ireland has a growing postgraduate community with students from all over the world, researching across various disciplines. Students are based across multiple locations with a consequential lack of communication and peer support. With all aspects of campus life moving online due to the ongoing pandemic, students have expressed that they are feeling increasingly isolated. I aim to support postgraduate students interaction by developing a virtual Community of Practice. As students are increasingly busy with coursework, virtual communities will give them a space to interact socially resulting in increased communication thus decreasing isolation. It is envisioned that these communities would become a permanent feature for students within their learning environments and contribute to long term engagement and collaboration. There are many studies available that discuss the benefits of being part of a Virtual Community of Practice.

It will enable students to:

Connect: networking, build companionship, create an interactive community

Support: knowledge sharing and learning, peer support, peer feedback

Share work: post what you are working on, what you read, what you are learning

Innovate: multimedia sharing, communicate ideas, collaborate,

Interact: Ask questions, answer questions, share resources, collaborate

Personal: build confidence, share the research journey (up and downs), find your tribe

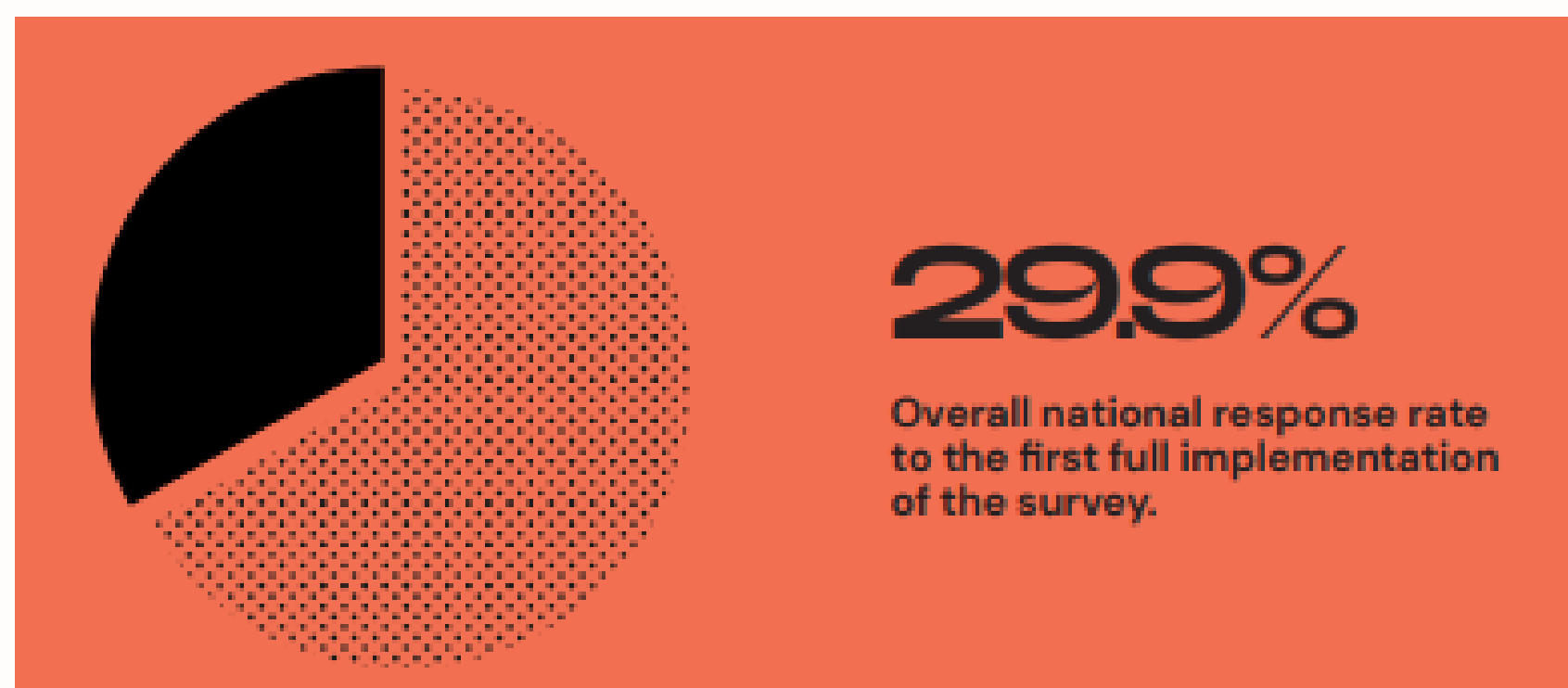
Unity: Build a stronger Postgraduate presence in Ireland and abroad

It will also have the potential to be used for communities involving institutions, student bodies and student representation groups at a national or global level.

Once established, it is envisioned that these communities would become a permanent feature for students within their learning environments and contribute to long term engagement and collaboration.

Develop Communication - Increase Engagement

Only 29.9% of Postgraduate Students engaged in the National Student Survey in 2019. To make a real change we need to be more engaged as a community. We are leaders in generating and using new knowledge for economic and social progress and this needs to be harnessed and communicated to make change possible. I aim to support Postgraduates to create more peer engagement and engagement with their Higher Education Institutions. I propose to organise regular meetings with Postgraduate Representatives to develop a plan of action.



The two areas I would like to focus on engagement are

Postgraduates: Train Postgraduates to set up their own communities within their institutions. Setting up a training and development plan and delivering the program supporting postgraduates set up these platforms for their regions/colleges/events.

HEI: Enable Postgraduate Representatives to communicate with their respective HEIs. Students' ability to learn key strengths such as critical thinking, problem-solving, writing skills, teamwork, and communication skills is seen as dependent on their ability to engage in college life. To assist HEIs in recognizing problems and challenges; to recognize good practice that increases the student experience. Enabling postgraduates to build engagement with their institution will increase transparency for all.

Supporting Postgraduates and HEIs to have some certainty in a time where there is little to no certainty.

Collaborate with Organisations - Create Change

There are numerous issues facing both students and institutions alike. Institutions lacking in financial resources, unfunded or underfunded postgraduates, little to no academic support, social spaces and workspaces that are non-existent or unsuitable are somethings I have already encountered. I have no doubt that there are many more and I want to learn and understand what these are in your Higher Education Institution and bring these issues to the table.

I will have a seat at the following committees/boards; Eurodoc, Student Survey, National Framework for Doctoral Education Advisory Forum (HEA).

Opportunities to collaborate with the following agencies; The National Student Engagement Programme (NStEP), SIPTU and the Irish Research Council (IRC).

Opportunity to collaborate on the #ResearchMatters Campaign

Dates and Times of meetings to follow to create a plan around these meetings with postgraduate representatives to optimise what is communicated.

Thank you!

Thank you for taking the time to read through my
manifesto



With Thanks,
Jenna

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Kamla Harris