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Getting Involved at the University of Galway

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Katie Jones

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Ireland

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Getting Involved at the University of Galway

Hello!

Much like my brief hiatus from blogging to work on midterms, I have recently finished my finals-induced blogging hiatus and am back with another entry. Our semester at the University of Galway runs for 12 weeks of lecture/class, followed by a 2 week break and a 3 week exam period, which means my final week of instruction was last week.

While class is in session, societies and clubs on campus host events, meetings, fundraisers, and trips. There are over 60 societies (what we would consider the equivalent to clubs) and about 40 clubs (sports teams) on campus, so there's no shortage of things to get involved with. At the start of the semester, all of the societies get together for an activity fair, and it's an excellent way to meet people from different societies, hear about upcoming events, and sign up for email reminders.

Over the course of the semester, I attended events from the following societies: African & Caribbean Society (ACS), Lit & Deb, Dansoc, Galway University Musical Society (GUMS), International Students Society, Photography Soc, Granny Soc, and FanSci.

ACS hosts both weekly meetings as well as large-scale public events. The event I attended was their fashion show, which showcased clothing designed by African and Caribbean designers and featured music performances in the breaks between when the models walked.



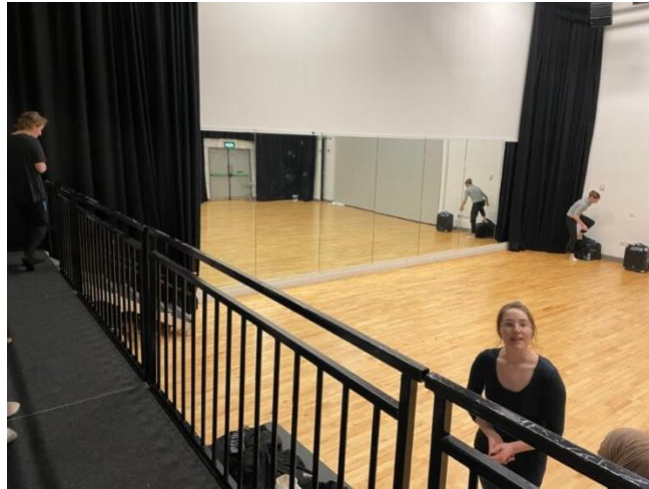
ACS's fashion show

Lit & Deb functions similarly to the speech and debate program back at Linfield (which I happen to be a member of), so I immediately knew I wanted to get involved. Over the course of the semester I attended weekly public speaking workshops and debate events, culminating in an end of year party the last week of classes.



Post-meeting pizza at Lit & Deb! Our workshop of the day was “Frankenstein poems”, where each person completes a different line of the poem.

Dansoc, or Dance Society, hosts weekly dance classes and occasional workshops with professional dancers, has audition only competition teams, and puts on a dance showcase at the end of spring semester. I took a six week contemporary dance class, where we learned choreography for a song and performed it at showcase.



Taking a ballet workshop with Dansoc! This is also where we met for weekly classes



Dance showcase! Performers could watch for free, but we also got the seats facing the back of the performance space.

GUMS holds auditions for about two musical productions a semester. I auditioned for both, and, while I ultimately wasn't cast, the audition process was still a lot of fun both times.



Me at auditions

International Student Society hosts events catered towards international students, both those like me who are visiting for a semester, as well as long term international students. They organized a bus tour to explore the Connemara region north of Galway and it was an amazing trip. We stopped in the village of Cong – famous for being the place where John Wayne filmed *The Quiet Man* – and Kylemore Abbey, an absolutely beautiful castle turned Abbey that doubles as a museum/tourist destination.



Posing with the Abbey

Photography Soc holds events like photo walks and film photography workshops, as well as partnering with other organizations to take professional quality photos. The campus also boasts its own darkroom for black and white film developing, which I was able to get a tour of. I've been taking photos this entire trip on a 35mm point and shoot film camera, and to get to learn more about the development process was very neat.

Granny Soc hosts events themed around crafting, and offers weekly knitting, crochet, or sewing. lessons, as well as meetings to bring your own projects to.



Working on a crochet project at Granny soc

Finally, FanSci, or Fantasy and Sci Fi Society, hosts weekly card game events (think Magic: the Gathering), as well as bi-monthly TTRPG (tabletop roleplaying games) or board game nights. These were some of my favorite events to attend, as it gave me the opportunity to learn more board games and meet new people.



Trying (and failing) to learn how to play Wingspan.

The moral of this post is that there are so many ways to get involved on campus, and your level of involvement in any society could be as little as attending one event a semester or as big as going weekly and taking up a leadership role in the society. Especially going from a smaller university with a limited amount of clubs to one with over 60, there were so many more options when it came to getting involved on campus. Getting involved allowed me to explore new places, meet new people, and try new things. While it may not be as exciting as a travel post, I hope you enjoy this glimpse into my everyday life as a university student in Ireland these past few months 😊

Until next time!

Katie