

I approached my Summer 2 Leadership in Action project with a two-pronged approach: in-person with the National Irish Visual Arts Library and online for *Sick and Tired*. This dual approach allowed me to focus on a multitude of skills in multiple different settings. While in person, I was able to focus on collaboration, project management, and hands-on application of research in a new environment. To contrast, I was able to further develop my time management and problem solving skills while working from home while also working on outreach and logistical coordination. My project developed, changed, fell apart, and changed again between my Laidlaw application and the actual beginning of Summer 2. I very confidently affirmed plans to myself while receiving no responses from organisations or blunt rejection. However, I persevered and committed myself to the strong outputs I knew I could produce. Now, at the end of my time with Laidlaw, I couldn't be happier with what I have produced and the opportunities I have been provided.

For my Leadership in Action project, I worked with the National Irish Visual Arts Library (NIVAL) to put together a special collection surrounding Irish creatives during the pandemic, highlighting queer voices and reactions to the Arts Council's emergency aid. I also created two editions of my charity zine series *Sick and Tired (SAT)* to showcase the queer experience over lockdown under the two themes of 'Talking to a Void' and 'I'll See You Again'. When structuring this project and looking for organisations to work with, my plan changed multiple times due to Covid-related complications, change in personnel, and a lack of response from many organisations. However, my work with NIVAL, when connected through my Trinity contact Dr Jane Suzanne Carroll, was extremely fulfilling and insightful into the world of library science, archiving, and record management. I expected the hybrid format to be two separate aspects, and the support from NIVAL during the online portion would be less involved, but upon beginning the second half of my LiA, the connection to NIVAL had not been lost or lowered in any sense. I was able to effectively manage my time curating and editing the zines with the knowledge that, should I have any doubts, the NIVAL team would be there to aid me. More so, the combined methods I utilised this summer allowed me to advance my outputs to their full potential by exercising and strengthening my applied working skills across multiple areas.

The main outcomes of my project are both physical and emotional. The tangible outcomes are my two SAT zines, a short run literary magazine that sold far better and faster than I expected it to. I also have the connections I made at NIVAL, with the contributors, and the people that bought my zines because they wanted them despite having never met me. The experience I gained working in NIVAL is incomparable. Archiving and library science is a difficult sector to enter as an undergraduate, and the physical proof on my CV and reflected in my work will no doubt help me develop my career after Trinity. The special collection I put together will remain in NIVAL's catalogue for anyone to view and

may contribute to research in the future. Beyond the physical outputs, this summer tested me emotionally on multiple levels. I had to be better at time management, collaboration, and outreach than I have ever been. While there were minor bumps that just required time and patience, such as learning the mechanics of InDesign from scratch, other challenges were ongoing and required personal introspection. I had multiple moments where I wanted to give up or diminish my project into something smaller, as all the logistics were overwhelming, but I persevered and delivered the highest quality products I knew I was capable of and more. I am extremely proud of all my LiA outputs and the journey I went on to deliver them, even after the summer concluded.

Despite my trouble initially organising my LiA and facing rejection from multiple fronts, the end result was well worth it. I raised over €500 for LGBTQ+ Ukrainians to aid them during the war crisis, the outcome I am most proud of in my time as a Laidlaw Scholar. Compared to other bigger charities and organisations donating to emergency funds, €500 may not seem like that much, but the impact of directly contributing to the aid of a marginalised population already facing discrimination during a war crisis comes from more than just myself. I am just one person, and every one of my friends, family members, and peers who donated any amount of money pushed this project forward. There were points where I was extremely self-critical and doubtful, but the knowledge that something I created with the help of contributors and donors allowed me to break out of that cycle of criticism. After almost two years of LEAD sessions and two summers of work, I have learned that impact isn't measured by monetary value or individual effort, but rather by the collective motivation to help on any scale. €500 may not cover rent or education fees, but it will cover a lot of meals and clean water. Refocusing my lens on the size and purpose of impact has been crucial to my personal development this past summer. There will always be more money to be donated or another cause to support, but the important thing to remember is the drive to help others, not ourselves.

As I reflect on my past two years in the Laidlaw Programme, I think of the opportunities I would not have had access to otherwise, the connections I have made, and my personal growth on a research, professional, and personal level. The two main goals I set when entering the programme were to explore and develop my research sensibilities and to advance my collaborative leadership skills. I can confidently say that I have achieved both of these and more. I always knew from the beginning that I would take a research-focused view throughout my project and LiA. Research is a field and skillset that I am confident of my abilities and this programme has solidified that passion and prominence for me. To contrast, I have always preferred to work independently rather than in groups of any size. While we covered this somewhat in our LEAD sessions, I knew if I wanted to advance this skill I'd

have to put myself in situations slightly out of my comfort zone. I dedicated many parts of my LiA to collaborative work: actively seeking out input and support from the NIVAL team, recruiting contributors for the SAT rather than just myself, and coordinating and conducting interviews in a different setting to social research. Through this, I have achieved my goals and propelled myself forward towards success beyond my undergraduate career. I truly believe either of these goals, or anything other personal goals I achieved through the programme, would not have been possible without the support of the Laidlaw Foundation, and particularly the team from the Trinity Careers Service. The guidance and freedom we were given has not gone unnoticed, and I am extremely grateful for every opportunity I have been allotted. After returning from the Laidlaw Conference, I know other universities are not as flexible with their scholars and the ability to shape both my summers the way I wanted to run them has been invaluable.

The past two summers of work, research, and outreach have been fulfilling beyond expectation. Looking at the diversity of portfolios and projects among Laidlaw Scholars and the difference in structure between universities, I can confidently say that Trinity has it right. More so, I would recommend Laidlaw to any interested student who may be undecided on applying. The innumerable opportunities and connections made alone are worth applying, but the impact you can make as an individual a part of a greater whole is extremely gratifying. Because I have had access to organisations like NIVAL and have more research experience than many of my peers, I know the effect of these opportunities on my future career will be exponentially helpful. I know after dedicating so much time to organising my LiA into a project I was morally and ethically proud of, that anyone who applies themselves can get as much out of the programme as they wish.