

Working Group Agendas

Meeting: Presidents' Working Group

Clár

- 1) Matters Arising
- 2) Items for Discussion/ Le Bheith Pléite
 - (i) HEA Update
 - (ii) Funding Survey
 - (iii) Mergers and Alliances
 - (iv) Referendum Strategy
- 3) A.O.B./A.G.E.

Meeting: Campaigns Working Group

Clár

- 1) Matters Arising
- 2) Items for Discussion/ Le Bheith Pléite
 - (i) Campaign 2014: The Value of Education
 - (ii) SERD Voter Reg Re-launch/ Local & European Elections Campaign
- 3) A.O.B./A.G.E.

Meeting: Education Working Group

Clár

- 1) Matters Arising
- 2) Items for Discussion/ Le Bheith Pléite
 - (i) Motions for Congress (Chair)
 - (ii) Degree Classification (TCDSU)
 - (iii) Impact of grade inflation on Teaching and Learning (IT Tralee SU)
 - (iv) Learning Impact Awards/National Teaching Awards (Chair)
 - (v) Postgraduate Issues
- 3) A.O.B./A.G.E.

Meeting: Equality and Citizenship Working Group

Clár

- 1) Matters Arising
- 2) Items for Discussion/ Le Bheith Pléite
 - (i) Marriage Equality
 - (ii) Potential actions for Russian Olympics (STACS)
 - (iii) Sexual Violence - Reporting Procedures in Colleges
 - (iv) Equality and Citizenship motions for Congress
- 3) A.O.B./A.G.E.

Meeting: Welfare Working Group

Clár

- 1) Matters Arising
- 2) Items for Discussion/ Le Bheith Pléite
 - (i) Welfare Motions for Congress
 - (ii) Future of PleaseTalk (PleaseTalk Founder)
 - (iii) Condom vending machines (UCC)
 - (iv) SHAG
- 3) A.O.B./A.G.E.

Meeting: Events & Marketing Working Group
Clár

- 1) Matters Arising
- 2) Items for Discussion/ Le Bheith Pléite
 - (i) Student Summit
 - (ii) Ents. Networking Event
 - (iii) 'Extra' Card
 - (iv) Shop Promo. Strategy
 - (v) RAG Weeks
- 3) A.O.B./A.G.E.

Meeting: BMW Regional Council
Clár

- 1) Matters Arising
- 2) Items for Discussion/ Le Bheith Pléite
 - (i) Mystery Tour
 - (ii) Motions for Congress
 - (iii) What is USI campaign
 - (iv) MOU's
 - (v) Semester 2 projects
 - (vi) Manifesto Commitments
- 3) A.O.B./A.G.E.

Meeting: Southern Regional Council
Clár

- 1) Matters Arising
- 2) Items for Discussion/ Le Bheith Pléite
 - (i) Motions for Congress
 - (ii) What is USI campaign
 - (iii) Semester 2 projects
 - (iv) SERD / Voter Reg
 - (v) Technological Universities
 - (vi) USI Social Media and Newsletter
- 3) A.O.B./A.G.E.

Meeting: Dublin Regional Council

Clár

- 1) Matters Arising
- 2) Items for Discussion/ Le Bheith Pléite
 - (i) Motions for Congress
 - (ii) What is USI campaign
 - (iii) Semester 2 projects
 - (iv) SERD / Voter Reg
 - (v) Technological Universities
 - (vi) USI Social Media and Newsletter
 - (vii) MOU's
- 3) A.O.B./A.G.E.

**USI National Council – 18/01/14
Comhairle Náisiúnta AMLÉ – LYIT NC**

**Report of the President
Tuairisc an Uachtarán**

Key Points since last National Council:

- **More money for the Student Assistance Fund**
- **Getting the team ready for the second half**
- **Ministerial meetings on Alcohol & Mental Health**
- **Planning National Campaign for 2014**
- **A Vision for Post-Bailout Ireland**

1. **Higher Education Authority**
2. **Ministerial Meetings**
3. **Team Development & Planning**
4. **Campaign 2014: The Value of Education**
5. **Student Apprentices Campaign**
6. **Commercial Development**
7. **Media Engagement**
8. **Constituent Engagement**
9. **Jobs, Enterprise & Employability Campaign**
10. **Additional Meetings & Events**

1. **Higher Education Authority**

My efforts to secure additional funds for the Student Assistance Fund finally bore some positive outcomes at the Finance Committee meeting on December 18th.

An amount of €350,000 has been secured from accrued interest within the overall HEA Budget. This has subsequently been approved by the HEA Finance Committee and subsequently by the Department, to be allocated to the SAF in the New Year.

Whether this sum will be allocated equally across Institutes or a more targeted approach taken to support HEI's most in need is yet to be determined. I have requested that SU's be consulted on this matter at our National Council in Letterkenny before a final decision is taken on how the money will be allocated.

Secondly, Institutes of Technology have received a positive transfer of additional end of year monies from the HEA, from a share of unallocated grants, and unspent Strategic Investment Development Fund money. Details of what was made available as part of this Final Allocation will be made available in Letterkenny

The HEA have written to each of the IOT's to ask and advise them to strongly consider making additional monies available to the SAF from this transfer. In following up on this correspondence, the Chief Executive has reported a generally positive response. This will allow you to make this case internally.

We are hoping that these two developments in tandem may result in an overall additional allocation of in the region of €1 million euro to the system.

The Finance Committee was also updated of the impact on HEI budgets of the €25m reduction in funding carried over in Budget 2014. I will report further on this at NC.

The Presidents of DIT, ITT and ITB Students' Unions and I met with the HEA Chief Executive Tom Boland on January 8th to update on developments with the DTU Alliance from a student perspective.

I also used this opportunity to update Mr. Boland on progress on our Funding

Policy, and developments on postgraduate loans. It was agreed that Tom Healy of NERI and I would be invited to present our funding policy to the HEA Board prior to the publication of the HEA Report on Sustainability.

The date for the meeting requested by National Council in respect of independent/estranged students has been set at 30th January, as this suits all of the HEA, the Department and SUSI.

2. Ministerial Meetings

On 13th December, the Deputy President and I met with Minister Alex White to discuss a new USI Alcohol Campaign and our recent decision to cut ties with Drinkaware.

The meeting was very positive, and the Minister welcomed our decision and pledged to support a new student campaign as much as possible.

We highlighted aspects of USI's alcohol policy with the Minister, such as sports sponsorship, and also discussed the possibility of commissioning a student survey on alcohol. We will continue to engage with the Department to work together on these issues.

On 17th December, I met with Minister Kathleen Lynch to discuss student mental health.

The Minister confirmed she will be pushing for a €50m allocation for community mental health services in Budget 2015, which would include the unallocated balance of €15m from Budget 2014, plus the full €35m for next year pledged in the Programme for Government.

We were encouraged to pledge for HSE Lottery funding for our More Talk, More Action campaign, which was complimented by the Minister.

It was also agreed that USI would be consulted on the new National Suicide Prevention Strategy, and that the Minister would speak at the Student Achievement Awards Ireland, which will also act as a fundraiser for our National Charity, Headstrong.

3. Team Development & Planning

As we reached the halfway point of the year, a big focus since the last National Council has been reviewing Semester 1 with the team, and looking ahead to Semester 2.

On December 11th, we held a very productive Officer Board meeting, reflecting on outcomes from National Council in Athlone, and discussing some of the key challenges which faced us after the Xmas break, and outstanding items which needed to be addressed prior to then.

On December the 19th, Coly McGivern facilitated a Mid-Term review exercise with the team. Despite our Christmas party taking place the previous night, this was a very worthwhile and engaging session! In particular, we looked at successes and challenges of the first half of our year, and potential risks and opportunities presenting themselves for the second half.

Our mandated re-focusing exercise is taking place in Clomantagh Castle in Kilkenny on January 13th and 14th. As well as a series of exercises designed to prepare and plan for the months ahead, we will be doing a set of team-building exercises such as archery and orienteering.

Pat Brady of Workplace Solutions is facilitating our work on Tuesday the 14th. I met with Pat on January 7th to discuss the exercise and what we wanted to get out of it.

I will also be covering the 2nd of our individual quarterly review sessions with all Officers on the team, as part of a performance management system I have put in place.

4. Campaign 2014: The Value of Education

On December 12th, Officer Board and members of National Council met for a planning session of the next steps of the National Campaign, following the National Council resolution on the Value of Education.

A comprehensive series of outcomes from this meeting were agreed by the group, which will be circulated with the National Council documentation, and presented at a special hour-long session in Letterkenny for feedback and potential NC approval.

An EU-funded project workshop, 'Young People Challenging the Crisis', was also held in USI HQ on the same date.

The first of the stakeholder consultation meetings has already taken place, with the Defend the University group on January 8th. Their message of education as a public good as opposed to a commodity fits well with the USI position, and they have agreed to support our campaign on funding as much as possible.

5. Student Apprentices Campaign

Following the decision in Budget 2014 to remove State funding for student apprentices (bringing about a saving of €1.6 million), which results of the imposition of a new fee of over €500 for 10 weeks of college for these apprentices, USI launched a campaign on Friday January 10th with their relevant Union, the TEEU.

As I was in London, the VP for Academic Affairs & Quality Assurance ably deputised in my stead. The coverage for the launch was excellent, with RTE News covering the event, and MEP Emer Costello speaking at it also.

I will be meeting with TEEU reps in the coming week to discuss joint actions on the campaign, and a representative will present to National Council on our course of action.

6. Commercial Development

Things are progressing steadily on our the two major commercial projects we are focused on, with our timeline of a USI Congress launch still deemed achievable at this juncture.

A meeting was held on 17th December with consultant Michael Horgan and

our potential joint venture partners in Green IT on the development of the USI Online Shop for refurbished computers. Significant progress was made on an agreement for the JV, and actions for all sides were agreed. NUS have agreed to allow us to host the site using their new Digital platform.

The porting of the NUS Extra Card to the Irish market is also on track, with NUS sending a member of staff to Ireland to work on key Irish-based commercial partners to go with the discounts relevant to both jurisdictions for the launch. There will be an opportunity for members of NC to engage further with this subject when I present my report on the Trilateral meeting in Letterkenny.

7. Media Engagement

Outside of the launch with the TEEU, the key media release of the New Year was that of our 'Vision for Post-Bailout Ireland'- 10 key areas we would like the Government to focus on in the post-Bailout environment we are now in.

The vision statement was drawn up predominantly from USI policy which has been passed this year, and mandates from Congress.

The response from stakeholders and partners to the document has been extremely positive.

It was picked up by several news outlets, and covered by Newstalk and many regional radio stations. It also received a considerable amount of traction on social media.

I also attended the Prime Time Special on 'Post-Bailout Ireland' on January 7th, with the TCDSU Education Officer (who commented on the Reform Alliance and their stance on the Protection of Life in Pregnancy legislation) and the ITTSU Welfare Officer.

8. Constituent Engagement

- The Trilateral Committee meeting took place in London on Friday, January 10th. I will report on outcomes from this at NC.

- The Christmas engagement events took place in Tralee, Athlone and Dublin, thanks to ITTSU, AITSU and TCDSU for their help and support in the organisation and running of these events.

- I attended TCDSU's Council on December 10th. I also acted as an external member of their Constitutional Review Group on December 17th.

- I have been collating responses for the funding survey requested by Presidents' Working Group, and will be reporting to Letterkenny NC on findings.

9. Jobs, Enterprise and Employability Campaign

- The Vice-President for Campaigns and I met with HAYS Recruitment on January 8th to agree the design template for the Jobs.USI.ie website, and also to discuss the HAYS-USI employability skills roadshow.

- I met with Carr Communications on January 7th to discuss their support for the Jobs website and a Student Summit on Enterprise & Innovation we have planned for April, as well as the 'Job-Ready Graduate' programme we are pitching to the Department for funding for.

- We will be presenting to National Council on the plans for this campaign.

10. Additional Meetings & Events

- I spoke at the Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE) launch on December 13th.

- I met with the President of DCUSU on December 17th to discuss arrangements for their referendum on affiliation with the USI in February.

- There was a meeting with Moira Murphy to discuss design work required over the coming weeks, including the re-launch of SERD, the Student Finance Survey and concepts for Campaign 2014.

- I will be meeting the Head of Organising in SIPTU, Joe Cunningham, on January 15th to discuss implementation, launch and next steps for the USI-SIPTU Agreement, and a joint campaign on the Living Wage.

Appendix

All meetings and events attended, media engagement and membership engagement covered in the main body of the report.

Leave	Date
Annual Leave	None taken since last report

Report of the Deputy President/VP for Welfare Tuirisc an Táiniste/Leas-Uachtarán Léasa

Key Points since AIT National Council.

- Ministerial meetings
- Review and planning
- SHAG Week 2014
- Mental Health Strategy

- 1. ASIST**
- 2. Challenging the Crisis Workshop**
- 3. Value of Education**
- 4. Meeting with Minister Alex White**
- 5. Minister Kathleen Lynch Meeting**
- 6. USI officer Board planning and reviewing**
- 7. CIT Congress Prep**
- 8. Mental Health Strategy**
- 9. Student Achievement Awards 2014**

1. ASIST

At the December National Council, I organised ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training) for Students' Union officers in Athlone IT. Officers from a number of colleges took part in this training which is a two-day interactive workshop in suicide first-aid. I also took part in the training and feel it was very beneficial and will assist officers in the case work and understanding of suicide intervention. Well done to the officers that took part in the training.

2. Challenging the Crisis Workshop

Members of USI Officer Board and some members of National Council, took part in a workshop with Irish Development Education Association (IDEA) called “Challenging the Crisis”. In this workshop we identified and discussed issues affecting young people globally and spoke about the links between them. The aim of the Challenging the Crisis project is to engage young adults from Greece, Italy, Ireland, Portugal, Slovenia and Spain to understand the interdependencies of local and global inequality and to enable them to become active advocates on global justice issues; thereby anchoring development policies despite austerity measures at home. I really enjoyed the workshop and learned a lot from it.

3. Value of Education

Before the Christmas break, I took part in a working group with members of Officer Board and National Council on a potential pre-budget campaign for USI. In the Value of Education working group, we discussed a number of ideas and various possible phases of this campaign, we look forward to hearing the opinions of National Council on these. The Working group format was very successful and would encourage me to hold similar events.

4. Meeting with Minister Alex White

In mid December the President and I met with Minister Alex White to discuss the following: Independent alcohol awareness campaign, a student survey, National Substance Misuse Strategy and USI’s alcohol policy. The meeting went very well and the Minister commended USI on our move away from Drinkaware.ie. We discussed E-pub for HEIs and gave the example in UCC (<http://www.ucc.ie/en/studenthealth/epub/>), the Minister and his team will look into this more and would like more information on this so I have been researching it. The Minister agreed that surveying young people is a necessity and would fully support a survey like this, we will now approach some colleges in terms of their research and health promotion departments to look at possibilities. The President and I highlighted aspects of the USI alcohol policy and discussed our stance on sponsorship, availability and marketing. We are hoping to arrange a meeting again in the coming months.

5. Meeting with Minister Kathleen Lynch

Unfortunately due to personal reasons I was unable to attend this meeting, however I met with the President to discuss the agenda set out for the meeting and what we were looking for. After the meeting, the President and I had a debrief and I sent a document to Welfare Officers on the results of that meeting, the president or I will take any questions on this.

6. USI officer Board planning and reviewing

Before the Christmas break, I took part in a 6 month review with Officer Board that was facilitated by Coly McGivern. We reviewed the first half of the year and look at what we had set out to achieve and what we wanted to achieve for the next six months. It was very beneficial to Officer board to review our work, set plan for the rest of the year and assess how we can improve the work we do and how we do it together.

7. Congress Briefing

As CIT Students' Union have not attended USI Congress for a number of years, the VP for the Southern Region and I were asked to assist in briefing the team. We organised a conference call with CIT SU to ensure that our plans for the training were going to meet their needs and the VP for Southern Region and I set out a plan to develop a half day introduction session on attending Congress. We will meet with members of CIT SU on the 20th of this month for a Congress introduction. If any other SU would like to do this, please let me know.

8. Mental Health Strategy

As you may know, I am mandated to update USI's Mental Health Strategy which is out of date since December 2013. I have approached a few organisations to assist with various aspects of the strategy and have asked Welfare Working Group to get involved. The strategy document will assist local Students' Unions as well as future National Welfare Officers in their work in mental health promotion and suicide prevention. I would like to invite any member of National Council to get involved in the development of this strategy.

9. Student Achievement Awards

The second Student Achievement Awards run by USI will be held on April 24th. I have begun planning for this and welcome suggestions by National Council.

Appendix

USI Meetings/Events Attended:

Date	Meeting/Event	Details
05-06/12/13	ASIST	Athlone IT
06-07/12/13	National Council	Athlone IT
09/12/13	Sexual Health & students	DCU Journalism Postgraduate student
11/12/13	USI Officer Board meetings	USI Ceann Aras
13/12/13	Minister Alex White	Meeting with USI President
13/12/13	Student Survey	Launch of pilot report in RCPI
18/12/13	TCD/USI Christmas event	TCD
19/12/13	End of semester review	USI Officer Board & Coly McGivern

Meetings/Events Attended:

Date	Meeting/Event	Details
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09/12/13	Student Sport Ireland	Meeting members of new committee
12/12/13	Workshop	Challenging the Crisis with IDEA
12/12/13	Focus Group	Value for Education

Membership Engagement

Date	MO	Details
02-03/12/13	GMIT	Affiliation Referendum

Media Engagement

Date	Description	Topic
09,10,11/12/13	Spin1038 SpinSW Last Word - Today Fm Q102 FM104 Lmfm Limerick live 95fm Cork 96fm C103 Redfm U105 Midlands 103 Flirt Fm Metro Kfm Northern Sound Journal.ie Irish Examiner Irish Times Evening Echo	Gonorrhoea Campaign

Declaration of Gifts and Hospitality:

Date	Description	Purchaser
05/06/07-12-13	Lunch, tea, dinner	AITSU

Leave	Date
Annual Leave	-

Report of the VP Academic Affairs and Quality Assurance
Tuairisc an Leas-Uachtarán do Ghnóthaí Acadúla agus Dhearbhú Cáilíochta

Key Points:

ISSE: Launch of the 2013 report and the distribution of 2014 materials were significant milestones

Teaching Awards: Many developments including the design work, funding structure and launch have been finalised

1. **ISSE**
2. **National Teaching Awards**
3. **National Forum for Teaching and Learning**
4. **Learners and Quality Assurance**
5. **USI Student Finance Survey**
6. **Grant Reform Paper**
7. **Value of Education**
8. **Equity of Access**
9. **Apprenticeship Fees Campaign**
10. **International Affairs**

1. **ISSE**

On December 13th we hosted the Pilot Report Launch in the Royal College of Physicians, Dublin. This marked a very important milestone for the project and the was supported by many across the sector. In the lead up to the launch I worked with the other communications working group members to prepare and manage the event and media. On the day I assisted with logistics and facilitated the Q&A section and photography.

The redesign of the survey promotion has been quite dramatic and the variety of materials being distributed to colleges has been greatly expanded. On January 9th the Communication working group met to discuss the final plans and timeline for the survey roll out. This will commence on February 3rd and run through to March 31st. We also put together a box of materials for each participating college including posters, t shirts and branded pencils. A dropbox folder with design work is also available for online use. There are four pull up banners and a number of cut out signs available to colleges.

Though the preparation for the 2014 roll out is mostly completed at a national level there are still a number of colleges which have not selected/indicated dates. There are also decisions to be made about incentives for participants and what level of detail will be reported on. I will have updates on these by National Council.

2. National Teaching Awards

On January 23rd we will be hosting a launch event to mark the opening of the Teaching Awards and announce Mary McAleese as the Forum Patron. I have worked with the Forum Director to set up a sign up system for colleges and this will help us in the administration of the funding (up to €1,000 per SU). We spent a day shooting a promotional video in IT Tallaght and TCD with the support of the sabbats. This will be ready for the launch and the poster designs have also been finalised.

3. National Forum for Teaching and Learning

There are many other projects ongoing with the forum in addition to the Teaching Awards. We hosted sectoral consultation events in Limerick, Dublin and Cork. An international panel has been established and will meet with the board on January 31st. We are still looking for a suitable student in the Dublin area to establish a presence on social media. The full work plan can be found on teachingandlearning.ie.

4. Learners and Quality Assurance

I have been working with Hugh Sullivan to progress the mandated project to establish a Quality Assurance Student training initiative similar to SPARQS in Scotland. We have drafted a plan to complete a six month feasibility study and approached the QQI for funding and support. We will also be presenting to the National Forum for Teaching and Learning board in March for endorsement.

5. USI Student Finance Survey

We have worked with Amarach Research update the survey and launched it on social media over Christmas. We received over 200 responses over Christmas and will close the survey when we reach 1,000 responses nationally. I drafted a poster, worked with the Media and Communications Executive to schedule posts and secured vouchers for prizes.

6. Grant Reform Paper

The timeline for the Grant Reform paper has been finalised and we plan to pass and launch the paper at Congress. The next draft will be circulated for consultation widely in early February. I have received a lot of support from other NUSes in researching other schemes and met with other stakeholders to discuss issues in with the Irish scheme.

7. Value of Education

I joined the working group on December 12th by phone. We discussed many different possible events and initiatives which can roll into the the pre-budget campaign. The overall ethos will tie into many other campaigns and events focusing on Equity of Access, student supports and the

funding of Higher Education. The proposals will be brought to the Working Group in Letterkenny ahead of National Council.

8. Equity of Access

The HEA Equity of Access meeting took place on December 10th and I attended with the VP for Equality and Citizenship. There was a very interesting presentation about an initiative running College weeks in secondary and primary schools. The aim is to establish going to college as a culture for everyone. This will be an excellent project for USI to contribute to in terms of access equity but also in communicating the role of USI to potential members. The HEA Access Plan was also discussed but was still to be drafted so it was difficult to comment on due to the lack of detail.

9. Apprenticeship Fees Campaign

Budget 2014 announced that apprentices would be required to pay a pro rata student contribution charge. In January student apprentices were informed this fee was €833 to €1400 and was to be paid immediately. USI has joined with the TEEU to campaign against the charge and I spoke at a press conference on January 10th.

10. International Affairs

The ESU Task Force on commodification met by skype on January 2nd. We finalised our work plan and discussed how projects can be initiated. I am working on the study plan by drafting questions and briefings. We also evaluated the seminar at the Board Meeting in Zagreb. I am also awaiting details of the next European Student Convention which I hope to bring a delegation selected from National Council attendees.

Appendix

USI Meetings/Events Attended:

Date	Meeting/Event	Details
4&5-12	GMIT Referendum	96% :)
7/12	National Council	AIT
7/12	Christmas 5km	AIT (Walked)
11/12	Officerboard	
12/12	Value of Education	Participated by phone
19/12	Term 1 Review	
6/1	Officerboard	Term 2 planning

10/1	TEEU/USI Conference	Press	Apprenticeships Fees
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Meetings/Events Attended:

Date	Meeting/Event	Details
6/12	National Forum Teaching & Learning	Board meeting
9/12	National Forum T&L	Cork Sectoral Dialogue Event
10/12	HEA Equity of Access	
10/12	Hugh Sullivan	Learners & QA
11/12	ISSE Comms	Launch & roll out planning
13/12	ISSE Launch	Pilot Report
17/12	QQI	Board Review
18/12	Terry Maguire	Teaching Awards
2/1	ESU Commodification TF	Skype Meeting
7/1	Terry Maguire	Teaching Awards
8/1	Teaching Awards Video	IT Tallaght & TCD
9/1	ISSE Comms	Material distribution and planning
10/1	Terry Maguire	Teaching Awards

Membership Engagement

Date	MO	Details
4&5/12	GMITSU	Referendum

Media Engagement

Date	Description	Topic
13/12	Irish Examiner	ISSE Launch
10/1	Irish Times	Apprenticeship fees

10/1	98fm	Apprenticeship fees
10/1	RTE News	Apprenticeship fees

Declaration of Gifts and Hospitality:

Date	Description	Purchaser
8/1	Juice & fruit	IT Tallaght SU
5/12	Lunch	GMITSU

Leave	Date
Annual Leave	16/12

**Report of the Vice President for Equality and Citizenship
Tuirisc an Leas- Uachtarán do Chomhionannais agus Saoránacht**

Key Points since last National Council:

- Marriage Equality Consultations
- Working on Gender Conference (GenCon)
- Meeting with Google
- Review of Work and Planning for Semester 2

1. Value of Education- Focus Group
2. Unpaid Internships
3. Meeting with Google
4. Marriage Equality, LGBT Ally Campaign, Blood Ban, Winter Olympics
5. Equity of Access to Education
6. Semester 1 Review and Semester 2 Planning
7. GMIT Affiliation Referendum
8. Gender Equality
9. Planning Day with STACS SU
10. Challenging the Crisis Workshop

1. Value of Education - Focus Group

I participated in a planning session on the potential options and opportunities for USI's pre-budget campaign along with members of USI Officer Board and some members of National Council in USI HQ on the 12th of December. Key issues raised in this session included the shifts in thinking

and public opinion which may occur this year in terms of how education should be funded and how USI needs to be prepared to communicate effectively our own proposals in the face of any threats of a deferred payment system. We discussed a wide range of opportunities and actions that could be taken to ensure that USI has a successful pre-Budget 2015 campaign and that we are prepared to tackle any proposals for a deferred payment scheme for education. We are 9 months out from Budget 2015. It was noted in the meeting that, among other things, the research USI receives from the Nevin Economic Research Institute will be fundamental to shaping our arguments on this area as well as the Higher Education Authority's new National Access Plan and Sustainability Report, the USI Grant Reform proposals and the results of the USI Student Finances survey. I'm looking forward to the discussion at National Council on this issue.

2. Unpaid Internships

I participated in a panel discussion in NewsTalk's studios on the Pat Kenny Show on the 2nd of December on the issue of unpaid internships. Other participants included Ben Dunne, owner of Ben Dunne Gyms and recruitment manager with CPL Recruitment, Peter Cosgrove.

I did a pre-record interview with Morning Ireland on the 3rd of December on unpaid internships.

I wrote a piece for the University Times also on the youth crisis in Ireland today and on the culture of unpaid internships.

3. Meeting with Google

On the 18th of December, I met with Google in their HQ. We are looking to organise a USI/Google half-day event for USI member LGBT students on innovation, employability and CV development. The event will be in Google HQ and will be free to attend. All costs will be covered by Google. This will take place in March. I also brought our Pink Training booklet and some LGBT Ally bands and explained the work we do in terms of diversity. Google seem keen to work with USI to connect with students. They were also very interested in our work with international students. I would like to invest some time on working to develop this relationship further through future meetings and then revisit conversations around sponsorship after the joint event and after it is clear how both organisations can mutually benefit each other.

4. Marriage equality, LGBT Ally campaign, Blood Ban, Winter Olympics

For the month of January, I am inviting submissions from students on how they would like to see USI's campaign for marriage equality develop. I compiled a suggested list of questions and have sent them to all USI MOs and LGBT Societies as well as informing people in selected social media groups. The purpose of this is to give students ownership of the campaign from the very start and these ideas will help to shape our USI 'Students for Marriage Equality' campaign in the lead up to a referendum in 2015. I have received a number of submissions so far. The Task Force on Volunteering and Citizenship will work on this topic also. A proposed strategy will be brought to National Council for your approval in February.

One of the actions USI are hoping to do is to post all TDs and Senators a Valentine's Day card from USI along with an LGBT Ally wristband asking them to publicly declare their support for the campaign. The card itself will call for the referendum to be held in early 2015 and it will outline our stance. We are working with a designer on the layout. This is a positive campaign and will be one of many actions in the coming months. We are also looking at ideas for the LGBT Ally re-launch, options for USI to organise an event at Dublin Pride, the creation of a marriage equality section on the USI website and I am hoping to get the ball rolling on creating local campaigning and lobbying chapters as was outlined in my manifesto.

I delivered an LGBT+ presentation to DIT Students' Council on the 10th of December. It was very well received and the students were very engaged and eager to discuss the issues. I have also provided some insight into the DIT Students' Union's blog series on LGBT. I have been approached by a number of LGBT societies across the country in relation to assisting with their Rainbow Weeks.

I have been in touch with LGBT Noise and we are looking to host a roundtable discussion with the Irish Blood Transfusion Service in February to endeavour to get them to commit to reviewing their policy on the MSM blood ban. Currently, a man who has had sexual intercourse with another male is banned for life from donating blood in Ireland. This is despite the fact that for other high risk activities, there are deferral periods as opposed to outright bans and despite vast improvements in screening procedures since the policy was introduced in the 1980s. The UK changed their policy recently from a lifetime ban to a one-year deferral period.

The Winter Olympics will begin in early February in Sochi, Russia. USI hopes to organise an action timed with their commencement to highlight our abhorrence at the human rights abuses that LGBT Russians are being subjected to. This will be a topic for the Equality and Citizenship Working Group to discuss also and to feed into.

5. Equity of Access

I attended the Higher Education Authority's National Office for Equity of Access meeting on the 10th of December. The USI VP for Academic Affairs and Quality Assurance also attended the meeting. There was a representative from Pavee Point at the meeting also. This was the first time in a number of years that there's been specific representation in this area on the group. I had previously asked that there be a representative of Traveller education on the group and it was me who made contact with them to ensure they were made aware of the details of the meeting. Given that Traveller access to education is not adequately covered in the current National Access Plan, USI believes that this area needs to be highlighted in the new plan which will be published in the coming months. USI is hoping to organise a focus group with Pavee Point on this topic with a view to launching a joint position paper on the area in 2014.

Other items of note at the meeting included a College Awareness Week which is being run nationally in November 2014. The purpose is to raise awareness of college and its value and also to raise aspirations of prospective students. We also discussed student finances and the

structure of the new National Access Plan.

6. Review of Semester 1 and Semester 2 Planning

On the 18th of December, I participated in a review of the first 6 months of the term with Coly McGivern in USI HQ with the rest of Officer Board. We discussed team and individual success and challenges from the year and what we have learned. We also conducted planning for semester 2 in terms of opportunities and risks. I have also reviewed my manifesto, my strategic plan of work for 2013/2014 and mandates. Pursuant to this, I have set out our provisional dates for Equality and Citizenship campaigns and events for 2014. It was very useful to take the time to reflect on our progress individually and as a team and to plan ahead for the future.

7. GMIT Referendum

I canvassed in GMIT on the 4th and 5th of December with others on the 'Yes to USI' team. The result was overwhelming with the 'Yes' winning 97% of the vote. It was great to get to talk to students in GMIT about USI and our work.

8. Gender Equality

The proposed date for the USI Gender Conference (GenCon) is March 1st. I am currently compiling a timetable for the event that is inclusive of all genders and relevant to the work being done by students' unions and gender equality officers/societies on campuses nationally. The National Women's Council's Y-Factor project are hoping to partner with USI on the event and have agreed to partially fund the conference costs for us.

On the 6th of January (traditionally known as women's Christmas/Little Christmas), I compiled a document with 'USI's 8 Little Resolutions for Gender Equality in Ireland.' The points included were all based on current mandates.

9. Planning Day with STACS SU

I was invited to meet with STACS SU on the 9th of January to assist with semester two planning for their Students' Union in terms of campaigns, events on campus and budgets for 2014. We had a very productive meeting.

10. Challenging the Crisis Workshop

Members of USI Officer Board and some members of National Council, took part in a workshop with Irish Development Education Association (IDEA) called "Challenging the Crisis". We identified and discussed issues affecting young people globally and spoke about the links between them. It was a useful exercise in that it helped us to examine how political decisions and events globally affect us all and the interdependence that exists between countries. It also reminded us how influential and far reaching USI is in terms of areas we work on, organisations we work with and our membership of the European Students' Union. We examined the economic crisis in Ireland and we discussed what got us to where we are at in Ireland today politically, socially and economically.

Appendix

USI Meetings/Events Attended:

Date	Meeting/Event	Details
12/12/2013	Value of Education	USI HQ
17/12/2013	Officer Board	USI HQ
18/12/2013	Semester 1 Review	USI HQ
06/01/2014	Semester 2 Planning	USI HQ
06/12/2013	National Council Athlone	Athlone
13/12/13	Student Survey	Launch of pilot report
18/12/13	TCD/USI Christmas event	TCD

Meetings/Events Attended:

Date	Meeting/Event	Details
02/12	TENI Survey Launch	Attended the launch of Transgender Equality Network Ireland's survey on the experiences of Trans people- the first study of its kind in Ireland
02/12	IFPA Seminar on Abortion Rights	This took place in the Shelbourne Hotel and had a range of high profile speakers.
03/12	NWCI	Meeting on Gender Conference
04-05/12	GMIT Affiliation Referendum	
10/12	HEA Equity of Access	
10/12	DIT Students' Council	LGBT presentation
12/12	Tackling the Crisis workshop	USI HQ
18/12	TCD Xmas event	Helped set up and attended the event

19/12	Met Google	Discussed collaborations
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Membership Engagement

Date	MO	Details
09/01/13	STACS SU	Campaigns planning day
04-05/12	GMIT SU	Affiliation Referendum
10/12	DIT SU	LGBT presentation

Media Engagement

Date	Description	Topic
02/12	NewsTalk - Pat Kenny Show	Unpaid Internships
03/12	RTE Morning Ireland	Unpaid internships pre-record, I also provided the researcher with information and statistics for the two-part piece that aired on this issue before the break.
December	University Times	I contributed an article on the youth crisis and unpaid internship culture
	Irish Times	I have been assisting a journalist in terms of information and contacts for a piece on teachings in schools around abortion - it will be published in coming weeks
December	LIT Radio	USI and LGBT Rights, social justice

Declaration of Gifts and Hospitality:

Date	Description	Purchaser

Leave	Date
Annual Leave	

**Report of the Vice President Campaigns Officer
Tuirisc an Leas-Uachtarán do Feachtais**

**Student Summit 2014
Nurses Campaign
Christmas Community Event**

Key Points since AIT National Council.

Website & Venue for Student Summit 2014

#ilovenurses

Santa visits Trinity College Dublin.

Save the date February 6th launch of Nurses Campaign outside Dail Eireann

Work plan until Tralee National Council.

Secure Investors and Speaker lineup for Student Summit

Film Nurses campaign video

Launch Nurses Personal Stories website

Secure sponsorship and free products for SNAG week

Launch Nurses Campaign 2014

Coordinate and assist with affiliation referendums.

1. Student Summit 2014

Coinciding with the “Your Future” motion passed at Congress 2013 mandating USI to run a employability campaign. In conjunction with the DITSU Entertainments Officer we aim to hold the first innovation conference called the Student Summit 2014. This stand alone event will be the first of its kind that caters purely to students in 3rd level. Currently there is no event that allows students the opportunities to meet, learn and speak with startups, entrepreneurs and government bodies setup to create youth entrepreneurship. A full work plan will be presented to at LYIT National Council. In the early phases of this event and campaign it has involved many hours on finding, budgeting and communication with the venue, creating a project plan of what networking events to attend and what companies to attend and individual to speakers. The next phase of the project is to meet and present to potential investors to the event.

2. Nurses Campaign

I’ve been working heavily with the NUIG SU President and the final preparations of the Student Nurses Campaign. Following AIT we have worked on developing the website, design of posters and ordering of badges. The campaign will launch on February 6th outside Dail Eireann. From here I will be working with the other MOs with nursing courses on ensuring successful coverage in all campuses.

3. Christmas Event

In conjunction with Trinity College Dublin Students’ Union. We held a Christmas community event. I working heavily with the Dublin event along with the Communications Officer in TCDSU. We organized childrens entertainment, invites for various groups and communicated message to Dublin Colleges. I worked with USI General Manager on costing for food, gifts and entertainment for location which is took place on December 18th. I also communicated with Regional VPs on progression of their events and dealt with any situations they’ve encountered. Thank you to all involved.

USI Meetings/Events Attended:

Date	Meeting/Event	Details
17/12/13	Red Bull	Sponsorship Congress
18/12/13	Christmas Event	Community Engagement Trinity College Dublin event
19/12/13	Enterprise Ireland	Met communications officer of Enterprise Ireland
7/1/13	Morgan Hotel	Ents Networking Event

7/1/13	Hays Recruitment	Entrepreneur Campaign
7/1/13	DITSU	Student Summit
8/1/13	Scope Media	Semester 2 videos for USI
9/1/13	Conference Centre	Student Summit Venue
10/1/13	Dublin City Council	Student Summit Venue
10/1/13	NUIG President	Students Nurses Campaign

Membership Engagement

Date	MO	Details
17/12/13	TCD	Christmas Event Preparation
18/12/13	TCD	Christmas Event
7/1/13	DIT	Student Summit
9/1/13	DIT	Student Summit
10/1/13	NUIG	Nurses Campaign

Media Engagement Declaration of Gifts and Hospitality:

Date	Description	Purchaser
N/A		

Leave	Date
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Sick Leave	December 9th-13th
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**Report of the Vice President of the BMW Region
Tuairisc Léas-Uactarán Ceantar Teoireann/Lár/larthar**

- 1. Referendum**
- 2. 5k Fun Run**
- 3. Value of Education Working Group**
- 4. Toy Appeal**
- 5. Semester 1 Review & Semester 2 Planning**

1. Referendum

We had our first referendum of the year in GMIT, across all campuses. The campaign lasted a number of days and USI had a presence on all campuses with the exception of Mount Bellew. I personally canvassed, along with Sam O'Neil and Mike Kerrigan in Letterfrack on the first day of the campaign.

We met with a number of the class reps and discussed issues around renting and prices charged, which seemed to be in tandem with city centre rates despite the fact that Letterfrack is based over 50km outside of the city. Rents were available at lower prices from privately owned landlords but demand was high. I hope to meet with Letterfrack reps in the future to discuss how we might address this issue.

I spent two days in Castlebar. Sam and Mike attended on one day. I had the pleasure of canvassing the students of GMIT Mayo Campus with Feidhlim Seoige and would like to thank him for his trojan effort on the day.

Mark Duffy and James McArdle should be commended on the level of engagement with their exec and students.

The overall result was fantastic, both for the USI affiliation referendum and GMIT own constitutional amendments, particularly the introduction of an education officer based out of their Dublin road campus.

95% of students who voted in the referendum voted in favour of remaining affiliated to USI. This was a great result for USI and its members and is a testament to the working relationship between USI and GMIT.

2. The 5k fun run was held just after national council in Athlone. The event was designed to encourage people who, like myself, were not at their athletic peak. The event rewarded participation and not performance. Despite this relatively few people participated in the event, which was somewhat disappointing.

However it is the first in a series of events based around physical activity that I hope to run and the paintballing in Letterkenny already has nearly thirty people signed up.

Retrospectively, running the event after national council and the christmas party probably had a major impact on numbers however there was no other suitable time.

Congratulations to both Michaela Hannick and Andrew Slevin who won the (completely fair and transparent) draw for participants. Also to Danny O'Donovan and Stephen Doak who won the race.

3. The value of education working group was held just before christmas in USI HQ and was a very beneficial event. We made a number of recommendations that we hope to bring to campaigns working group and national council for the Letterkenny NC.

I look forward to discussing the concept with all of the MO's and getting their feedback on what we should do in the coming months. USI is facing into what is arguably one of the more difficult fights we have had in a decade. It is important that we plan for the future, particularly in light of the fact that the marriage equality referendum will likely be held during the lifetime of the next officer board.

The meeting was of great benefit and I feel we have put together a good skeletal framework for what I hope will be one of USI's most successful campaigns.

4. I attended a toy appeal for IT Sligo SU in the run up to christmas. The event was held in the major shopping centre for the town. It also provided us an opportunity to engage with the community. The event was a huge success and we collected dozens of toys for families in need in Sligo.

A similar event was held in GMIT Dublin Road Campus. There was a grotto and sweets for the children and santa was also in attendance. The lads also collected a huge number of toys on the day. I attended briefly to help out on the day.

5. Prior to Christmas I attended a review session in Dublin to look back at the first semester in USI and forward to semester two. The meeting was beneficial in that we were able to engage in a candid review of our work in the past six months and how we could better ourselves for the rest of the year.
6. Met with Aidan McNally regarding the constitutional amendments. I reviewed four constitutions GMIT, IT Sligo, DCU and NUIG. I made comparisons to the constitutions reviewed. I was careful not to make recommendations and made factual observations. MSU have put together a solid constitution and, if accepted, their union will be in a stronger position for years to come as a result of the hard work put in by the sabbatical officers there.

Appendix

USI Meetings/Events Attended:

Date	Meeting/Event	Details
12/12/2013	Value of Education	USI HQ
17/12/2013	Officer Board	USI HQ
18/12/2013	Semester 1 Review	USI HQ (Colly McGivren)
06/01/2014	Semester 2 planning	USI HQ

07/01/2014	PT Officer Training Planning	USI HQ
06/12/2013	NC Athlone	Athlone
18/12/13	TCD/USI Christmas event	TCD
08/01/2013	MSU	Aidan McNally - USI HQ

Meetings/Events Attended:

Date	Meeting/Event	Details
07/12/013	5k Fun Run	Athlone NC

Membership Engagement

Date	MO	Detail
14/12/2013	ITSSU X-Mas event	
16/12/2013	GMITSU X-Mas	Galway
02/12/2013	GMIT Mayo Campus Referendum	Castlebar
05/12/2013	GMIT Mayo Campus Referendum	Castlebar
03/12/2013	GMIT Dublin Road Campus Referendum	Galway
04/12/2013	GMIT Dublin Road Campus Referendum	Galway
04/12/2013	GMIT CCAM Campus Referendum	Galway

Media Engagement

Date	Description	Topic
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Declaration of Gifts and Hospitality:

Date	Description	Purchaser
02/12/2013	Lunch Castlebar	GMIT SU
05/12/2013	Lunch Castlebar	GMIT SU

Leave	Date
Annual Leave	

**Report of the Vice President for the Southern Region
Tuairisc Léas-Uactarán don Deisceart**

- 1. Christmas community engagement**
- 2. Value of Education Planning**
- 3. Challenging the Crisis Workshop**
- 4. Irish Student survey Launch**
- 5. Semester 2 Planning**
- 6. Congress Training Preparation**

1. Christmas community engagement

On the 10th of December I made liaised with ITTSU in rolling out their community engagement on campus. ITTSDU invited local the local community and also staff and Students within the institute to come along with their small children and meet Santa and partake in festive themed games. The day was a great success and seen all those involved thoroughly enjoy the experience.

ITCSU and CCSU also planned to have an Christmas community event in the local farmers market on the 14th of December. unfortunately due to unforeseen weather conditions the event had to be cancelled. I would like to thank all SU teams involved in planning and implementing events.

2. Value of Education Planning

On the 12th of December i attended a planning session with members of USI Officer board and members of National Council in USI HQ to put our heads together and work on a new campaign on 'The Value of Education'. The day proved to be most successful and all those involved made huge contributions in the shaping of the next step in this ongoing struggle. The

planning session was ever so valuable to the shaping of our next step as a movement to ensuring the protection and enhancement of higher education in Ireland. I look forward to helping and implementing the next steps in the campaign.

3. Challenging the Crisis Workshop

On the morning of the 12th of December members of USI Officer Board and members of National Council, partook in a group session ran by IDEA Ireland.

“Challenging the Crisis is a joint project involving the Irish Development Education Association (Ireland), IMVF (Portugal), Economistas son Fronteras (Spain), Sloga (Slovenia) Fair Trade Hellas (Greece) Fondazione Culturale Responsabilità Etica (Italy), Solidarieta e cooperazione cipsi (Italy).

The Project's main aim is to engage young adults from Greece, Italy, Ireland, Portugal, Slovenia and Spain to understand the interdependencies of local and global inequality and to enable them to become active advocates on global justice issues; thereby anchoring development policies despite austerity measures at home.” Source Challenging the Crisis Facebook page.

The session was most enjoyable and inspirational to say the least. To me it was an eye opening experience and most possibly one of the most enjoyable workshops i have attended in a long while. For more information on the project follow @IDEAIreland on twitter.

4. Irish Student survey Launch

On the 13th of December with members of Officer Board and members of National Council I attended the launch of the National Student Survey. I had a keen interest in the launch of the results as when I was a local officer I worked closely with college authorities in the rolling out and promotion of the survey on campus. The study launched last year was only a pilot and surveyed only a small fraction of the student body (first and final year students only) the results were welcomed by all whom attended.

I am looking forward to the roll out and implementation of this years survey. If any MO requires any assistance with the survey etc, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

5. Semester 2 Planning

On the 19th of December along with USI Officer Board we took part in an extensive evaluation and planning session with Colly. We reflected on both team and individual performances and used those reflections to build toward the coming six months.

Since returning from the festive break, i have used the outcomes from the evaluation and planning day spent in USI to revamp my plans for the coming semester and I have also reviewed the policy manual with the help of the BMW regional Officer.

6. Congress Training Preparation

During the week myself and the deputy president sat down and began planning an extensive introduction to USI Congress, which we plan on delivering to our new members CITSU in advance of this years annual congress. We also facilitated a conference call with CITSU to ensure that our plans and aims of the training were inclusive of their needs. I am looking forward to delivering the training with the Deputy President on the 20th of this month.

Appendix

USI Meetings/Events Attended:

Date	Meeting/Event	Details
11/12/2013	Officer Board	USI HQ
19/12/2013	Work Shop with Colly	USI HQ
6/01/2014	Planning Session	USI HQ
8/01/2014	Congress Training Planning	USI HQ

Meetings/Events Attended:

Date	Meeting/Event	Details
4/12/2013	GMIT Ref	GMIT
5/12/2013	GMIT Ref	GMIT
10/12/2013	Christmas Community Event	IT Tralee
12/12/2013	Value of Education	USI HQ
12/12/2013	Challenging the Crisis workshop	USI HQ
13/12/2013	Irish Student Survey Launch	Kildare Street Dublin

Membership Engagement

Date	MO	Details
10/12/2013	ITTTSU	Community Engagement

Media Engagement

Date	Description	Topic
N/A	N/A	N/A

Declaration of Gifts and Hospitality:

Date	Description	Purchaser
05/12/2013	Lunch Castlebar	GMIT SU

Leave	Date
Annual Leave	N/A

Tuairisc an Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge

- 1. Seoladh Feachtais Céarta Teanga**
Irish Language Rights Campaign Launch
- 2. Seachtain na Gaeilge '14**
- 3. Acht na dTeangacha - Moltaí AMLÉ á chur os comhair an Rialtas**
Irish Language Act - Recommendations from USI to Government
- 4. Careers/Gairmeacha le Gaeilge**
- 5. Cearta agus Comhionannas - Cearta Teanga**
Rights and Equality - Language Rights
Conradh na Gaeilge Forum in Liberty Hall, Sat 11 January 2014

1. Seoladh Feachtais Céarta Teanga AMLÉ lasmuaigh den Dáil ag tús Mí na Nollaig.
USI's Irish Language Rights Campaign was launched outside the Dáil at the start of December

2. Tá Seachtain na Gaeilge AMLÉ le tarlu idir an 17-28 Feabhra 2014
USI's Seachtain na Gaeilge Campaign will be held between the 17-28 of February.

3. Tá AMLÉ chun a gcuid moltaí i dtreo achpmhraic ar Acht na dTeangacha Oifigiúla a chuir os comhair an Rialtas.

USI is to present its recommendations for the review of the Official Languages Act, to the Government, and the Minister of State for Gaeltacht Affairs.

4. Mar chuid de SnaG AMLÉ, beidh an chuid brú á chur ar an tábhacht agus an táirbhe a bhainneann leis an Ghaeilge agus Mic Léinn ag fágáil na hOllscoile, agus ag lorg Post.

As a part of USI SnaG, the positives aspect of being able to communicate in Irish will be

highlighted o student in their search for a career/job after their studies.

5. Ar an 11 Éanair, 2014, bíonn cruiniú mór pobail ar son céart teanga, agus comhionannas na nGael a Teanga dúichais a labhairt i Halla na Saoirse.

On the 11th of January, 2014, a public meeting was held in Liberty Hall to discuss the Future of the Irish Language rights Campaign in the coming months. This meeting was organised by Conradh na Gaeilge.

Appendix

USI Meetings/Events Attended:

Date	Meeting/Event	Details

Meetings/Events Attended:

Date	Meeting/Event	Details
11/1/2014	Irish Language Rights	Liberty Hall
9/12/2013	USI/Conradh na Gaeilge Protested Planning Meeting	Plan for protest outside Leinster House

Membership Engagement

Date	MO	Details

Media Engagement

Date	Description	Topic
9/12/2013	Irish Times	Gardaí Compliance with Language Policy
9/12/2013	Irish Times, RTÉ Nuacht, TG4	USI's and CnaG - Irish

	Nuacht, Raidio na Gaeltachta, Gaelport,	Language Campaign Launch, outside Leinster House
8/01/2014	Raidio na Life	USI's Vision for post-bailout Ireland

Declaration of Gifts and Hospitality:

Date	Description	Purchaser
5/12/2013	Lunch	GMIT Mayo

Leave	Date
Annual Leave	N/A