

The National Council of the Union of Students in Ireland

Minutes

National Council USI, NC 58.4

Trinity College Dublin

3rd November, 2017

Chairperson: Richard Hammond

Deputy Chairperson: Cathy Pembroke

NAMES APPEARING ON THE ATTENDANCE LIST:

(No liability and/or reproach accepted for difficulties deciphering manuscript notations)

CCSU

Adam Clarke

CITSU

Stephanie Fogarty

DITSU

Boni Odoemene
Roísín Ó'Donovan

Pierre Yimbog
Oluwasegun Seriki

Diarmuid Cleary

GMITSU

Mark O'Brien

Aaron Burke

Emma-Louise Duffy

IADTSU

Andrew Martin

Sorcha Carey

ITBSU

Conor Dempsey

ITCSU

Naomi McGuire

Alyson McFadden

ITTDSU

Jason Kavanagh

LITSU

Philip Desmond
Ashling McGrory

Gavin Farrell
Michael O'Connell

Ciara Smyth
Shauna Ní Chruadhlaóich

MSU

Niamh Halpenny

Aoife Fennell

NCADSU

Sam Casey

Ross Kelly

NUIGSU

Lorcán Ó Maoileannaigh Andrew Forde Megan Reilly

QUBSU

Stephen McCrystal Jessica Elder Lucy Gault
Rachel Powell

STACS

Marie Lyons

TCDSU

Kevin Keane Alice MacPherson Damien McClean

UCCSU

Seán O’Raibgaigh Anna Heverin Ben Dunlea

UUSU

Kevin McStravock Oisín Kinsella

WITSU

Michael Murphy Marie Sheedy Celine Casey

Bord na nOifigeach, AMLÉ

Michael Kerrigan, President

Síona Cahill, Vice President for Equality and Citizenship

Oisín Hassan, Deputy President and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Níamh Murtagh, Vice President for Welfare

Amy Kelly, Vice President for Campaigns

Jimmy McGovern, Vice President for the Border, Midlands and Western Region

Aisling Cusack, Vice President for the Dublin Region

Michelle Byrne, Vice President for the Southern Region

Laoighseach Ní Choistealbha, Vice President for the Irish Language/Leas Uachtarán don Ghaeilge

NAMES FOR WHOM APOLOGIES WERE OFFERED TO THE MEETING:

CCSU; Adam Kane, CCSU; Daniel O’Keeffe, GMITSU; Liam Deasy, ITBSU; Hayley Keogh, ITTDSU; Isabelle Delaney Jones, ITTDSU, Jamie McMahon LITSU; Desmond Fahey, STACSU; Aoife Deasy, QUBSU; Faisal Kadiri UCCSU; Martin Scally, UCCSU; Tadhg Casey, UCCSU; Kelly Coyle, UCCSU; Barry O’Shea, UUSU; Hannah Rooney, UUSU; Andrew McAnallen, UUSU; Emma Bonner, UUSU; Meghan Downey, UUSU; James Colgan.

Preliminary Notes

- Item 6; Items for Information, was moved to follow after, Items for Discussion.
- Item 8(d); USI Budget 17/18, was removed from the agenda and will instead be covered under Item 7(a); Finance Report.
- It was agreed to accept the attendance of USI General Manager to the meeting.

1. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting which occurred at LIT, on 23rd of September were proposed by GMITSU and seconded by CCSU and **passed without objection.**

2. Matters Arising

None.

3. Pre-Nominated Any Other Business

- QUBSU pre-nominated Beyond the Binaries Campaign.
- The Vice President for the Irish Language/Leas Uachtarán don Ghaeilge pre-nominated the Irish Language Sub Committee.
- The Vice President for Campaigns pre-nominated the Teacher’s Campaign and the Union Development Survey.
- The President pre-nominated Christmas National Council date and engagement from Sabbatical Officers.

4. Media Report

The President outlined in detail the circulated media report document. It was brought to the attention by QUBSU that they had difficulty in opening the document which was noted and was explained that it will be looked at and fixed for future meetings.

5. Officer Reports

The Vice President for the Irish Language/Leas Uachtarán don Ghaeilge had nothing to add to her report. There were no questions.

The Vice President for the Dublin Region had nothing to add to her report. DITSU wished to know more about the SAVES2 Survey. The VPDR explained that the survey is looking at the sustainability of energy usage in the University sector and is being coordinated by the Switch Off Dormitory Co-Ordinator.

The Vice President for the Southern Region noted that she has been selected to the ESU Taskforce on women participation in the student movement and she will be circulating a work plan soon. There were no questions

The Vice President for the Border, Midlands & Western Region had nothing to add to his report. There were no questions.

The Vice President for Campaigns had nothing to add to her report. QUBSU requested more information on the meeting with the Coalition for Homelessness. The VPC confirmed that a draft proposal with other organisations has been prepared and that USI was invited to attend in order to be brought up to speed on everything. The VPC confirmed that once the manifesto document has been prepared, she will circulate the document.

The Vice President for Welfare had nothing to add to her report. GMITSU requested an update on what option SUSI will be going with in terms of the Integrated Grants Processing Systems (IGPS). The VPW confirmed that option two had been selected but it will be delayed until 2019/2020 in order to ensure sufficient training had been completed. IADTSU wished to clarify if SUSI will be taking away all paper based documents when they introduce the new IGPS. The VPW explained that the new system will be more efficient and she assumes that a digital copy of a student SUSI grant confirmation will be sent by email and students will be able to request a paper copy if needed. TCDSU asked what other changes student will notice in terms of the new grants system process. The VPW responded by explaining that students will see no real immediate difference. However, the following year students will see changes in the web interface and as a result of less paper work, the system should become more efficient.

The Vice President for Academic Affairs had nothing to add to his report. UUSU requested an update regarding the meeting with Helen McEntee. The VPAA explained that she was very receptive and that they stressed the need for student issues to be on the agenda in terms of the Brexit discussion. The VPAA did note that there was a lack of clarity on certain things but they did discuss potential collaboration in the future. DITSU requested more information regarding the meeting with the HEA about international students. The VPAA explained that the meeting was on the topic of the international strategy and development of an International Student Character. DITSU requested more information regarding the meeting with the Head of the FOCAS Research Institute. The VPAA noted that the meeting was very beneficial and they discussed how research funding is approached in Ireland. CITSU wished to know if the Bologna process will look to expand to countries outside the EU such as the USA and Australia. The VPAA explained that it was his understanding that it was only a European qualification recognition agreement but noted that he can get more clarity if required.

The Deputy President and Vice President for Equality & Citizenship had nothing to add to her report. LITSU requested to know if USI will be supporting the UNCRPD protest. The DPVPE&C noted that she has created links with TCD student Laura Beaton and has committed that USI will try support this issue and will encourage MO's to attend. LITSU also extend their congratulations to the DPVPE&C for the recent GALAS award. The DPVPE&C acknowledged that this award was down to the work that USI, Students' Union and local societies had achieved.

The President had nothing to add to his report and accepted questions on the behalf of the NUS-USI President. DITSU requested an update on TU Bill. The President explained that he has had a meeting with Mary Mitchel O'Connor and USI got a chance to submit amendments to the bill. The President confirmed that the TU Bill has now moved to the Oireachtas Committee for Education and Skills to be discussed.

6. Items for Agreement

6(a) Motion: Implementation of Official Languages Act (2003)

The motion; Implementation of Official Languages Act (2003)/ Fiosrúchán maidir le hAcht na dTeangacha Oifigiúla (2003) was proposed by the Vice President for the Irish Language/Leas Uachtarán don Ghaeilge and seconded by TCDSU and **was passed without objection.**

Fiosrúchán maidir le hAcht na dTeangacha Oifigiúla (2003);

Tugann An Chomhairle Náisiúnta faoi Deara;

Go bhfuil polasaí ag AMLÉ a thacaíonn le cur i bhfeidhm agus síneadh Acht na dTeangacha Oifigiúla maidir le heagraíochtaí san earnáil phríobhaideach.

Sainordaíonn An Chomhairle Náisiúnta;

An Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge chun fiosrúchán a dhéanamh maidir le hAontas na Mac Léinn in Éirinn a chcludú faoi scáth Acht na dTeangacha Oifigiúla, 2003, agus má tá sé indéanta, chun coinníollacha agus riachtanais an Achta a chomhlíonadh.

Anuas air sin, sainordaíonn an Chomhairle Náisiúnta;

An Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge chun fiosrúchán a dhéanamh ar na féidearthachtaí a bhaineann le Scéim Teanga a chur i bhfeidhm, a thuarann agus a dhaingníonn plean AMLÉ maidir le cur chun cinn na Gaeilge san eagraíocht, agus seirbhísí agus acmhainní trí Ghaeilge a chur ar fáil.

Anuas air sin, sainordaíonn an Chomhairle Náisiúnta;

An Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge chun fiosrúchán a dhéanamh maidir leis an fhéidearthacht a bhaineann le haistriúchán a chur ar fáil ar pháipéarachas, chomharthaí, fhograí, agus phostaeir, agus anuas air sin, fiosrúchán a dhéanamh maidir le foilsiúcháin dhátheangacha de thuiriscí bliantiúla a chur ar fáil, faoi scáth an Achta.

Investigation of the Implementation of Official Languages Act (2003) in the operation of the Union of Students in Ireland

National Council Notes;

USI's policy supporting the implementation and extension of the Official Languages Act, 2003 to bodies in the private sector.

National Council Mandates;

The Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge to investigate the potential of bringing USI under the umbrella of the Official Languages Act, 2003, and, if applicable, to fulfil the conditions and requirements of the Official Languages Act, 2003.

National Council Further Mandates;

The Leas- Uachtarán don Ghaeilge to investigate the potential of implementing a Scéim Teanga (Language Scheme) which forecasts and cements USI's plan for promoting, and providing access to, services and resources through Irish.

National Council Further Mandates;

The Leas - Uachtarán don Ghaeilge to investigate the potential of translating stationary, signs, advertisements, and posters, and well as publishing annual reports bilingually, under the remit of the Official Languages Act, 2003.

6(b) Motion: To condemn the actions taken by the Burmese Government against the Rohingya population

The motion to condemn the actions taken by the Government of Myanmar against the Rohingya population was proposed by Carlow College Students' Union and seconded by LITSU and **was passed by a majority.**

To condemn the actions taken by the Burmese Government against the Rohingya population

USI Notes;

That due to ongoing 'Clearance Operations' in Myanmar, over 3000 Rohingya civilians have been killed, at least 140 villages have been burned down, and more than 200,000 people have been internally displaced, with a further 600,000 civilians having fled to Bangladesh.

USI Also Notes;

Little action has been taken at EU level to respond to the Rohingya Crisis.

USI Therefore Mandates;

The USI publicly denounce the ongoing 'Clearance Operations' currently being implemented by the Government of Myanmar.

The VP Equality & Citizenship to work with Amnesty International Ireland in the call to immediately end the military's campaign of violence and human rights abuses and ensure free and unimpeded access to Rakhine state to humanitarian actors, the UN, independent journalists and human rights monitors and ensure their security.

6(c) Motion: Road Traffic (Amendment) Bill Support

The motion; Road Traffic (Amendment) Bill Support was proposed by the Vice President for Welfare and seconded by NUIGSU and **was passed without objection.**

Road Traffic (Amendment) Bill Support

National Council Notes;

Research shows that alcohol is a factor in 38% of fatal crashes, yet Irish people continue to drink and drive. An average of 180 drivers are being arrested per week in 2017 on suspicion of driving under the influence.

National Council also Notes:

Under the proposed legislation, drink driving offences committed at BAC levels between 50mg and 80mg will incur an automatic disqualification of 3 months instead of the current penalty of a €200 fine and 3 penalty points.

National Council Notes with Concern;

That the Road Traffic (Amendment) Bill 2017 proposed by the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport 13/07/2017 fell with the last government.

National Council also Notes with Concern;

Some rural TDs have suggested it is unfair - particularly for those in rural Ireland who cannot easily get home from the pub and many vested interest groups and their supporters continue to deny the factual evidence about drink driving

National Council Mandates;

The VP Welfare to actively lobby TD's to support the Road Traffic (Amendment) Bill 2017 and to collaborate with and support the work of the Road Safety Authority in striving to have the bill enacted.

6(d) Motion: Engaging Postgraduate Issues

The motion; Engaging Postgraduate Issues was proposed by the Vice President for Academic Affairs and seconded by WITSU and **was passed without objection.**
National Council Recognises;

That the USI membership includes a large body of postgraduate students, and that there is currently no dedicated event or campaign focused on their issues.

National Council Further Recognises;

That in order to fully represent postgraduate students, to engage them in our work, and to build the capacity of our Member Organisations (MOs) in this crucial area of union development, it is imperative that there is an annual event focused on those issues.

National Council Mandates;

The Vice President for Academic Affairs, alongside the Officerboard, to run an event aimed at engaging postgraduate students in the work of USI, developing the postgraduate student voice nationally, and building the capacity of MOs to represent postgraduate issues. This annual event should take place in the second semester of the academic year.

6(e) Congress Director

The President proposed the USI General Manager; Ben Archibald as the Congress Director, which was seconded by GMITSU and **was passed without objection.**

7. Items for Discussion

7(a) Finance Report

The President and the USI General Manager presented a detailed breakdown on USI financial position and the organisation yearly budget.

8. Items for Information

8(a) European Students' Union Board Meeting - Jerusalem

The VPAA highlighted that next ESU meeting will be held in Jerusalem and noted that USI will be attending to solely represent the students in Ireland. The VPAA further noted that applications to attend this event will be sent out soon but there will be a short turn around.

8(b) Pink Training, NUIG

The DPVPE&C confirmed that the upcoming Pink Training will be happening in NUIG from the 17th to the 19th of November. The DPVPE&C strongly stressed that there will

be no admittance from anyone who is not registered to attend and that registered pink delegates who will be given a wristband to wear. The DPVPE&C also explained that student delegates will be asked to present a valid college ID and stressed the importance of the role that the SU Support Officer position will play in order to assist in the successful running of the event.

8(c) Voter Registration

The President outlined that the national day for voter registration will happen Wednesday the 8th of November followed by a media launch of the campaign. The President strongly noted the importance of MO's to continuously push efforts to increase the number of students registering to vote in order to assist USI work in lobbying politicians on the discussion of Higher Education funding.

8(d) Oireachtas Committee for Education and Skills update

The President explained that the role of this committee was to make a recommendation on how Higher Education is to be funded. The President noted the importance for MO's to make contact with members of this committee and to highlight the student position on this important topic.

8(e) Update from Independent SU's Committee

The President explained how the meeting of the Independent SU's Committee was cancelled so there was no update. The President did mention that the VPAA and VPC were working hard on this area and noted that things will take some time due to the large workload.

9. Any Other Business

QUBSU noted that as part of their Trans Student Week, they will opening some of the planned events to USI, NUS/USI and NUS members and they will be sending an Eventbrite link and more information soon. QUBSU encouraged that MO's kindly pass this information onto any interested students.

The Vice President for the Irish Language/Leas Uachtarán don Ghaeilge noted that she is the only policy officer that has no access to a working group structure. She further noted that she will be setting up an Irish Language Sub Committee in order to help coordinate campaigns such as Seachtain na Gaeilge. The VPIL urged Officers to consider putting their name forward for the committee at the next National Council.

The Vice President for Campaigns confirmed that there have been 2,800 responses to the Teachers Campaign survey and encouraged MO's to make one last push to get more students to complete the survey.

The Vice President for Campaigns explained that the Union Development Survey will be open to edits until next Friday and then it will be circulated out for the following Monday. She stressed the importance of getting people to complete the survey.

The President proposed that the next National Council, move from Friday the 8th of December to Saturday the 9th of December in order to facilitate a two-day National Council (it was explained that this will follow the same format as the recent National Council in LIT on the 23rd of September). This proposal was seconded by GMIT and **was passed by a majority.**

The President outlined that Officerboard have experienced in recent weeks poor engagement from Sabbatical Officers at times and urged MO's to responded back to messages in order to allow the organisation achieve its goals.

The Vice President for Campaigns explained that this year as part of the Educational Roadshow, USI will be sending out pen's/highlighters and study tips materials/planners. The VPC confirmed that she will be letting MO's know of all of the relevant dates soon.

NUIG wished to clarify if local MO's can use the USI Accommodation Survey for the own individual data review. The VPW confirmed that she will get this point clarified by the Student Housing Project Co-ordinator.

The President confirmed that the location for the upcoming Congress is the Shearwater Hotel, Ballinasloe in Galway. A more detailed updated with costs etc. will be presented soon.

The President expressed sincere thanks to everyone for their participation throughout the day and continued by thanking TCDSU for their amazing hospitality and efforts.

The Chairperson thanked TCDSU for hosting this evening meeting and wished everyone a safe journey home before closing the meeting.